Monday, April 11, the sophomores led us in music with a couple of songs including “Forever” and “It’s all about you.” At the conclusion of our group sing, we were blessed by Molly who offered our opening prayer. Then Mr. Wright told a personal experience that took place just this last summer on the 5th of June at 11:00 pm. He said that it was getting late and his boys were trying every trick in the book not to go to bed. They were in fact just a bit frightened by the storminess taking place that evening.

Mr. Wright had just concluded a class in meteorology and now it was his turn to put that knowledge into practice. From that experience he knew that when warm air collides with cooler air, oftentimes storms will develop which may even cause severe wind, hail or, in some instances, tornadoes. Along with that class they gave him a free weather radio so that he could be informed at all times regarding any severe weather in the area. Now routine alarm testing does take place as a service from the local government in the area where he lives so that when the event actually occurs, all will be in readiness. Well, on that particular evening there was no alarm that was ever heard. So that free radio came in handy because it stated that a tornado had been sighted about 3 miles east and a bit south of Stevensville and was traveling east. Mr. Wright lives on Linco Road very close to where the tornado had been sighted. Immediately they all went straight down to the humid basement to play games and to take shelter. After an hour or two and well after the electricity had caused the lights to go out, they were able to come up and go to bed.

God knows our every need and He prepares for that well in advance of our knowledge or understanding of what is to take place. In this case he provided a weather radio to advise of a coming tornado – and oh, that tornado did go right down Linco Road. However, it was based mostly on the other side of the road from where they live. The storm ended up at Old US 31 blowing down a barn on the property of Regal Excavating. Mr. Wright was able to show us some of the pictures that he had taken of property damage in his neighborhood. He went on to say that he had suffered only very minor damage to his personal property.

We did not have general morning devotions on Tuesday because that was a part of the rescheduling process during the assembly time. Then on Wednesday, we had the class meetings at which time the juniors elected their officers for the senior year: President – Amane Gonzalez, Vice President – Zach Reichert, Pastor – Cooper Hodges, Secretary – Ashley Reichert, Treasurer – Kyle Whiteside, Public Relations – Daniel Mpano, Representatives – Christiana Atkins, Reginald, and Rachel Gray.

Congratulations to each one of these students for filling these lifetime leadership positions. They will always be called upon in years to come to invite their fellow classmates back to their alma mater for special alumni class functions. May God bless and support your leadership as you consecrate yourself to His service.

Mr. Robert Overstreet spent the last few days of this week working with faculty in planning for the new school year. As a function of his presence here this week, he spoke for our morning devotions on Thursday, the 14th of April. He began by referring us to Psalms 69:1, “Save me O God, for the waters have come up to my neck”. He then told us the story of one named Bill who lived in New Orleans at the time of the hurricane named Katrina. As Bill was watching TV, the warning came to get out of town because of the potential danger that they were in at that time. Bill made a decision early on that he was going to wait it out.

As the hours went by, he started to notice how the landscape began to change. At first there was a very small puddle in his front yard which continued to grow until it became a lake almost covering his entire front yard. It did not stop at that because it continued expanding to the top of the steps into his house and then he noticed that water began creeping into the house first just spoiling the carpet but rising up to the top of the coffee table so that it forced Bill to begin standing on the kitchen counter in order to avoid the water. When he became ankle deep in water on the counter, he found the ladder used to crawl up into the attic – finally safety (or so he thought) until he noticed the water springing through the ceiling into the attic. Now he became really worried. He kicked and kicked until he was able to open a small hole in the ceiling. Now floating in the water in the attic, he noticed a long PVC pipe which he poked through the hole and affixed it to his mouth. And for 13 minutes with his entire body now under water, he was able to breath air from the atmosphere. Once again we see how God has pre-planned our emergency equipment even before we have need of it. And so the challenge today is that because junk does happen in this world, we must always cling to Christ because He is our lifeline. Let Him keep us strong.

On Friday morning Mr. Wright gave a talk about painted turtles. These creatures are among the least of the endangered species. There are many of them right here in southwestern Michigan. They typically grow to be 4" to 10" in length and are olive to a black color as adults. They are cold blooded and you will often find them basking in the sun. Believe it or not, but in 1995 when some students in Niles discovered that Michigan had no official state reptile, they requested of the legislature that the painted turtle be considered and so today that is our official state reptile.

The painted turtle is rather docile and hibernates through the colder seasons of the year. In general, they begin moving around when the temperatures are anywhere from 60 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. During hibernation, they bury
themselves in mud under water and exist from October through March without breathing. As an experiment there were a number of turtles that were taken from their “home” and released quite some distance away. Within just a few days 41 out of the 98 had returned to their “home.” Their survival rate is rather low due to quite a few natural predators. Typically they will dig down in the dirt a couple of inches, lay their eggs and then the eggs will incubate over the long hot summer and will hatch out in the fall just in time for the baby turtles to hibernate for the cold winter. After incubation, only 19% make it safely through the first year of life. Then only 45% will make it through the 2nd year of life. If they can make it through the first two years of life, then about 95% of them will live full lives. He showed us two turtles from the same batch of eggs. One of them had been taken inside and was growing through the long winter months under tender loving care. The other was left in the natural state of hibernation in the dirt. It was amazing the difference in the size of the two turtles. The one that was allowed to remain in the natural habitat was only about 1/4 the size of the one that was taken inside. From this nature object lesson, Mr. Wright drew the conclusion that our parents and our teachers are there to help and assist us in the development process. He challenged us to accept their guidance as a gift from God so that we will end up with all of the advantages possible as we find our way in life.

Late last week, we were able to obtain 66 new chairs to replace the 32-year old chairs that were previously in the music rehearsal room. It had become time long ago for something to be done and so replacement was done with chairs that were designed to be excellent for students who were playing instrumental music while seated. A very special thank you goes to Mr. Boward who had the foresight and the determination to leave his department with proper and significant accommodations prior to his retirement.

Behind the scenes, there have been a number of people endeavoring to make another major difference in our gymnasium. In the near future just before the end of the school year, new lighting is to be placed in the gymnasium which is to make a significant change in the amount of lumens that reach the floor from the ceiling. Once again we are so thankful for those who support Christian education. With all of the positive changes occurring in preparation for the next school year, it would do well for you to get your applications in soon so that room can be saved for you in the classes of your choice.

This is a kind reminder notice to all parents who will need financial assistance for the 2011-12 school year to pick up forms at the academy office. Once you have the financial assistance forms please do not forget to fill them out completely and to include proof of income (such as tax return for 2010, your W2, Social Security income, any proof of income). Any financial assistance forms that do not include proof of income for 2010 will delay timely processing of your request. Please have all forms returned before or by 5/27/11. If you have further questions please contact Mrs. James at 269-471-2860.

“It may be that knowledge is power, but pulling the switch is enthusiasm.” – Anonymous

All class schedules are due to be submitted to the advisors not later than Thursday, the 21st of April. Once they have been submitted, the current juniors (the students that will be seniors in 2011-2012) will have the first pick at the new schedules. They will only be entered into the computer if their application is in along with the 60-day attendance letter. In the case that your junior son or daughter does not have one of these items, please make sure to obtain them from the academy office, fill them out completely and return them just as soon as possible. Schedules are entered based on the number of attendance points that the student has for the first and second semester of the current year. That same process is used for current sophomores and freshman with the exception that the underclassmen do not need the 60-day attendance letter.

Officer nominations for the National Honor Society have now concluded. Those names are posted and will be voted on after school on May 9. As in all class and NHS elections, the process is for there to be at least five (5) school days after names are posted until voted on by the general membership of that class or organization. This is the third and final organization to be organized prior to the beginning of the new school year.

Three sponsors – Mr. John Reichert, Mr. Alan Anderson, and Mrs. Sari Butler will accompany 15 students on their backpacking tour that leaves early Friday morning, April 22. After a week of nature in the Smoky Mountains, they are scheduled to return home on the 29th of the month. We wish them the very best as they enjoy the last major tour of this school year.

Next week will be a short week with the last interruption to routine classes. For the last several years, the day after Easter has been set aside for all who wish to participate in the Passion Play clean up task. That is a humongous job and every available hand of support would be welcome.

The assembly next week will not take place on Tuesday as usual but will occur at the 10:15 hour on Thursday, the 28th of April. Rio Lindo Adventist Academy will feature their handbells, orchestra, and choral group known as the Lindaires at that time under the direction of Ms. Rochelle White. We are all looking forward to this program.

Watch for further details regarding the AU/Senior graduation party that is to take place next Wednesday, April 27.