

# Truth Academy

## MEET OUR TEAM

### Lily Bargmann

**All Grades**



My name is Lily Bargmann, and I am a Truth Academy alumnus. Having been homeschooled for the majority of my schooling was a huge blessing in my life, as it allowed me to gear my learning toward my passions. This is how I discovered my love for music, especially piano. I have taught piano for the last two years, and I am excited to begin teaching at Truth Academy to spread the joy of music to more children! Along with music, youth group and church are a big part of my life, where I serve on the worship teams. Leading small groups and encouraging youth are some of my favorite things. I love seeing God's hand at work in my life and the lives of those around me. I'm looking forward to seeing what God does through this next year at TA!

### Jenni Brandt

**Elementary**



Jenni is a former public school teacher, homeschool mom, and lover of children's literature. Their family has been homeschooling since 2013 and has been a part of Truth Academy for the past three years. Homeschooled most of her growing up years, Jenni graduated from Crown College with a degree in Elementary Education and a concentration in Middle School Language Arts. She has taught at both the elementary and middle-school levels and has grown in her skillset over the years while teaching her own children at home. Her main influences include Charlotte Mason, Andrew Pudewa, Sarah Mackenzie, Susan Wise Bauer, and Julie Bogart. She is excited to share her love of writing and literature with the students at Truth Academy this year.

### Judy Brown

**Elementary**



Judy has a BA in Elementary and Special Education, and a MS in Literacy. With over 20 years of teaching experience, in both regular and special education, private, public, and homeschool settings, she has a passion for teaching children and especially for teaching children from a biblical worldview. Judy is a current reading tutor, piano teacher, and Bible teacher. It gives her great joy to teach in the student program at a local BSF (Bible Study Fellowship) group, and she also loves teaching a 6th grade biblical foundations class on Sunday mornings with her husband as her co-teacher. Each summer she teaches reading in the summer school program at Groves Academy, a school that meets the needs of students with many learning challenges that can often accompany diagnoses such as dyslexia and ADHD. A transplant from Long Island, New York, she now makes her home in a small town with her wonderful husband, three teenage sons (which includes a set of twins), and one miracle-girl daughter. A few of her favorites include reading Christian historical fiction, eating at Nautical Bowls, and going "home" to NY every summer. No trip is complete without swimming at her favorite ocean beach and eating New York pizza. She is absolutely thrilled to join the Truth Academy family!



## Mariella Engesser

Elementary

Being active has always been a part of Mari's life for as long as she can remember. As a teen, Mari played basketball and ran cross-country with the local high school. As the second born of 9 children, Mari has a vast amount of experience directing the activity of children while taking part in the fun alongside them. She has been on staff with Skyhawks Sports for three summers leading multiple sports camps for children ages 2-14. She has also coached youth sports for 5 years and is currently employed as an assistant cross-country coach at Westonka School District. Mari is currently working towards a degree in Exercise Science. Above all, Mari has a passion for Jesus and encouraging others, especially children, to glorify God by strengthening and appreciating the body God gave them! Plus she's a TA alumnus!



## Kimberly Grainger

All Grades

Kimberly (never "Kim") Grainger has taught for 40 years. From children's church and Sunday School to an Elementary Education degree and teaching at Pensacola Christian Academy, from writing and editing Christian school curricula to 16 years homeschooling four kids, she is an enthusiastic voice for bibliocentric education. As a mother of four, MIL of three, and grandma of five, Kimberly loves children and thrills when they grasp truth, grow in faith, and enjoy the process. Kimberly is eagerly anticipating successful collaboration with students and parents, growing, laughing and learning together.



## Laura Glassel

Jr. & Sr. High

Laura Glassel grew up in the New England area, Germany, and Minnesota. She received her associate's degree in Aircraft Maintenance, her bachelor's degree in Missionary Aviation, and her master's degree in Bible Translation from Bob Jones University. As part of her education, she earned both her aircraft mechanic's and pilot's certificates. During her college years, she tutored high-school students and learned a lot about teaching techniques and learning. She has been tutoring and teaching middle-school and high-school classes in the Twin Cities since 2008.



## Bonita Jerome

Jr. & Sr. High

Bonita Jerome fell in love with teaching while working as an administrator and tutor at a small missionary kids' school in the Philippines just after graduating from high school. Returning to the U.S. in 1990, she pursued a career in elementary and middle-school education with an emphasis on language arts. She then spent over a decade teaching elementary and middle-school students at several private Christian schools. Bonita has spent the last decade educating her own children at home, teaching and tutoring in the homeschool community, and trying to keep up on the laundry. She is incredibly blessed to be a part of the Truth Academy community and is looking forward to another year of introducing students to the joys of reading and writing well.

## April Klein

## All Grades



From an early age, April has had a passion to create art, focusing on graphite drawings and chalk pastels in high school before branching out to other mediums in college as an art major. She specialized in graphic design with an English minor and a concentration in music. April has taught 4th-6th grade art for seven years at a local homeschool co-op in Maple Plain and recently joined TA as the new elementary art teacher. Her personal art philosophy is that everyone is a fantastic artist, so she instructs in many different styles and mediums so students can find their specialty. In addition to April's love for art, she has an almost equal passion for literature. She worked at a library for three years, giving her insight how to freely access almost any book on the planet! April also began teaching middle-school literature in Maple Plain in the fall of 2025 and is usually actively in the middle of five or six fiction and/or nonfiction books (other than her Bible). "I can quit at any time. Really!" Despite the immense delight of teaching various subjects, April finds her second greatest joy as a wife to Shawn and a mother to her two children. Her highest delight, however, is in knowing Jesus Christ as her personal savior and walking in His truth.

## Sara Mehlhaff

## Elementary



Sara Mehlhaff is no stranger to Truth Academy or Calvary Memorial Church! Her roots go deep, being an active part of the church since an early age and then returning after college (degree in Elementary Education and minor in Early Childhood) to teach pre-K and K. Erik and Sara, married at Calvary (their home church) 25 years ago, have been homeschooling their 5 children for the past 16 years, with Truth Academy as a key element of their homeschooling plan. Their oldest three have graduated from TA and are now married. Erik and Sara are excited for time with their growing family and new grandbabies! Sara enjoys long walks, gardening, spending time with family and friends, and serving the Body in various capacities, especially the youth group, along with Erik and the rest of the youth team. She is pleased to partner with TA and parents who have chosen this worthwhile path to integrate God's Word into all learning, so that students may grow not only in knowledge of subject matters but more importantly growing in the wonder and love of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, as they add to their tool belt of practical skills to serve others in the Gospel!

## Andrea Merboth

## Jr. & Sr. High



Andrea Merboth has a BA degree in Occupational Therapy. Andrea has taken various art classes in watercolor and oil painting and has been involved in several art shows, exhibits, and canvas-painting parties with small and large groups. She has taught art classes for 15 years to varied age groups, primarily to the homeschool population. In addition to enjoying painting on canvas, Andrea paints furniture, walls, fabric, room murals, a 10x20' mural in the library in McGregor MN, a mural in Ciudad Juarez with locals, and done set painting for full-length plays with AGLOW homeschool theater experience. With her husband, they have helped young people in the Christian faith, realizing that all forms of communication, including art, have the ability to either draw you towards or away from the truths of God. She believes that beauty is a reflection of God, and art classes can empower students to find creative ways to share God with the world.

## Ann Pearson

## Elementary



My name is Ann Pearson. Born and raised in Spring Park on Lake Minnetonka, I am a true “lake girl.” I am so excited for my 3rd year at Truth! I taught at the elementary level, primarily in private schools, for 14 years before becoming a stay-at-home mom once my oldest child was born. This has always been my dream job! I hold an MA in Education from the University of Minnesota, and I particularly enjoy teaching history/social studies, especially American history. My family consists of my husband Carl and our three children: Abby (15), Nolan (14), and Evan (12). We’ve been homeschooling for five years now and are grateful the Lord changed our educational path. In my free time, I enjoy boating, swimming, reading, writing, nature walks, and spending time with my family.

## Terri Wood

## Jr. & Sr. High



Terri has been teaching Apologia Science classes at the high-school level since 2001. She has a passion for science and is able to explain difficult concepts in an organized and understandable way. Her classes are well-planned and enjoyable, and she takes a special interest in every student. She first pursued her interest in science by becoming a registered medical assistant and being employed in a medical clinic in Minneapolis. She homeschooled her own three children from kindergarten through graduation and has tutored dozens of math students at all levels. When she isn’t teaching science classes, you might find her riding her tandem bike along Rebecca Park trail with her husband.

## Gabe Wuetherich

## All Grades




From the moment I can remember, music has been a huge joy to me. I grew up with the sound of Randy Travis’ Hymns album on repeat, which sparked my love for playing guitar—and I’ve been hooked ever since! Over the years, I’ve expanded my musical talents to include bass, ukulele, mandolin, and drums. I spent several years deepening my knowledge of music theory with a tutor and have taken several years of voice lessons. Music is an integral part of my life. I am currently leading worship at a church plant in Carver, mentoring a local youth-group worship team, and organizing music for Calvary’s summer VBS program. I’ve also been teaching music lessons for the last couple of years, leading a small group at a local youth group, and hosting and leading a Bible study for teens. I am incredibly excited to share my joy and experience with your students! I’m also a TA alumnus!

# Truth Academy

## MEET OUR STAFF

### Angi Bitzan


### Onsite Coordinator



My name is Angi Bitzan. I am a wife of 23 years to my husband, Darby. We have three incredible kiddos - Genevieve, age 14, and twin 12 yr old boys, Douglas and David. We live on a small acreage in the Watertown/Mayer area where we have 2 dogs, 2 cats and a flock of chickens! I also own a horse and ride. . .when I find the time. Other hobbies and pastimes include reading, crocheting in the winter months, playing card games with family and friends, and I am known to diligently hit our family's weight room at least 4x/week. If you see me walking the loop around the halls of TA during the school day, I'm just getting my steps in! We made the move from public to homeschool in 2020 when we realized the restrictions of the pandemic would potentially have real consequences on our neuro-dynamic kiddos. I will tell you that the first year was no picnic. But I was committed to sacrificing my personal comfort for the sake of giving my children what they needed to thrive. It has been the BEST decision we ever made!

### Peggy Von Hagen


### Onsite Assistant



Peggy and her husband, Chuck, live in Waverly where they have been blessed to raise & homeschool their 6 children, ages 15-28. Currently schooling their last child allows Peggy to join TA as an Onsite Assistant. Peggy also enjoys all things homemaking, and using her skills as a biblical counselor to help women find true freedom as they see their struggles through a biblical lens.

### Meagin Wuetherich

### Administrative Director



We began homeschooling in 2013, thinking it would just be for the remainder of the school year. Now I praise the Lord that He quickly called us to persevere! I am passionate about furthering the Gospel message, especially to our youth. Born and raised in Minnesota, I appreciate the outdoors in every season. Nature is one of God's best classrooms. I love gardening, reading, cooking, hosting people in our home, and sharing the love of those things with my kids. When I am not at TA, you will probably find me feeding a whole bunch of people, pulling weeds, or frustrating my husband of 21 years by beginning another home project.