



Sharing a bird's eye view of God's Story at Pella Christian  
AUGUST 2024



Dear Friends of Pella Christian Schools,

You're reading the first edition of the new Pella Christian Eagle Eye, our new, society-wide newsletter for the merged Pella Christian Schools. The Eagle Eye will consolidate the PCGS Focus, the PCHS Link, and the PCGS Quarterly Offering letters into a single publication. This will reduce overall printing, delivery, and costs and allow us to clarify our communications into a single publication.



Why call it the Eagle Eye? As our schools grow in complexity, we want to maintain a vision clearly centered on our mission. The Eagle Eye will provide a high-level overview of Pella Christian, draw your gaze toward specific areas where staff and students are fulfilling that mission in exceptional ways, and zero in on areas where we desire our Society's prayer and support.

Each campus will continue to send communications targeted to different constituents, including the PCHS student Daily Eagle, Classroom Announcements, and weekly Parent Announcements. For calendar and general information, the website is an outstanding resource! We know God has amazing things in store for Pella Christian. We look forward to keeping our supporters informed through the Pella Christian Eagle Eye.

In His Service,

Dan Zylstra  
PC Head of Schools

"Snacks, Stories and Crafts with Mr. Dirksen" is just one of many events that the PC Connections Committee plans. The Connections Committee works to build relationships with families new to Pella Christian and deepen relationships with current families.

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# New Faces at PC

It is a joy to welcome new staff and faculty to Pella Christian Schools this year!



## **Mrs. Maacah Arns - PCGS Kindergarten**

Mrs. Arns and husband Greysen moved to the Pella community recently after he got a job at Vermeer as a design engineer. She graduated from the University of Iowa in 2023, and shared, "Becoming one of PCGS's new kindergarten teachers is a dream come true, and I have yet to stop smiling about it. At PCGS, I am excited to teach young students in the context of their faith as they develop their love of God and their desire to follow Him." Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Arns to the Pella Christian community, her email address is [arnsm@pceagles.org](mailto:arnsm@pceagles.org).



## **Mr. Cameron Beach - PCHS Social Studies & Bible**

Mr. Beach shared "I like to lead by example and show students how to live their life as a strong Christian man or woman. I will make sure that they are loved and feel safe in my classroom and know that God loves and cares about them as well." He graduated from Northwestern College in Orange City this past May. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Beach to the Pella Christian community, his email address is [beachc@pceagles.org](mailto:beachc@pceagles.org).



## **Ms. Mackenzie Biggs - PCGS K-4 Music**

Ms. Biggs shared "As a recent Central College graduate, it is through my experiences that I have determined what I value as an educator. For me, that is prioritizing a supportive and engaging learning environment that encourages students to be lifelong musicians. I am delighted to have the opportunity to incorporate Jesus into my teaching, as He is an integral part of my everyday life." Please join us in welcoming Ms. Biggs to the Pella Christian community, her email address is [biggsm@pceagles.org](mailto:biggsm@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Gabrielle (Allread) Dirksen - PCHS Science & Math**

Mrs. Dirksen previously taught middle school math and science at Denver Christian School in Denver, Colorado. She shared, "I deeply believe that Pella is a place of fertile soil and that God is doing a beautiful work through the people He is growing in this place. I want to partner with Him in the work He is doing, as He leads and guides students and staff alike. Mrs. Dirksen married PCGS Principal Ben Dirksen and moved to Pella in July. Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Dirksen to the Pella Christian community, her email address is [dirkseng@pceagles.org](mailto:dirkseng@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Bekah Gorkow - PCHS Language Arts**

Mrs. Gorkow shared, "It is important as a Christian to seek ways to allow God's word and a relationship with Him to permeate every aspect of your life. In applying Pella Christian's mission within my work, I envision infusing lessons with Biblical teachings, fostering connections between content and students' personal lives." Mrs. Gorkow is a 2022 graduate of Central College and is married to Patrick. She previously taught at Lynnville-Sully High School. Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Gorkow, her email address is [gorkowb@pceagles.org](mailto:gorkowb@pceagles.org)



## **Mrs. Leah Hoffner - PCHS Art**

Mrs. Hoffner and husband Jake have three daughters ages 7, 4 and 1. The family is excited to join the PC Eagles family. Mrs. Hoffner shared, "I am looking forward to watching the students grow their talents, and serve the Lord with their creativity. I have discovered that I love to work in a creative field, through instructing classes at the Pella Community Center the last two years. So much art is a beautiful reflection of God's creation." Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Hoffner to the Pella Christian community, her email address is [hoffnerl@pceagles.org](mailto:hoffnerl@pceagles.org).

# New Faces at PC

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## **Mr. Jordan Jaspering - Middle School PE & Assistant Athletic Director**

Mr. Jaspering shared, "I'm excited about sharing God's truth through education. I look forward to the opportunity to impact others by helping them know and honor God and make an impact for His kingdom." Mr. Jaspering, his wife Amber and 3 children feel blessed to be joining the Pella Christian family. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Jaspering, his email address is [jasperingj@pceagles.org](mailto:jasperingj@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Andrea Kacmarynski - PCGS Kindergarten & Head Varsity Volleyball Coach**

Mrs. Kacmarynski shared, "David and I are thrilled to be moving back to the Pella area and serve in our beloved community! I am passionate about working with young hearts and minds for Jesus. It is my deep hope that all children will know their Savior personally and intimately through the careful study of His word, His creation, and through the work of the Holy Spirit." Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Kacmarynski, her email address is [kacmarynskia@pceagles.org](mailto:kacmarynskia@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Mindi Kacmarynski - PCGS 3rd Grade & Head Varsity Softball Coach**

Mrs. Kacmarynski shares, "After working with education majors for the past eleven years at Central College, I am excited to return to the classroom. I am passionate about helping students grow spiritually and academically. We love God's children and I am excited to work with 3rd graders and their families." Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Kacmarynski, her email address is [kacmarynskim@pceagles.org](mailto:kacmarynskim@pceagles.org).



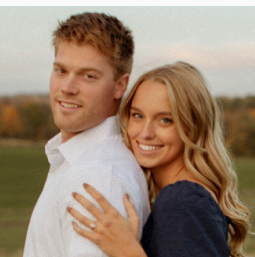
## **Mr. Steve Kaisand - PCHS Math**

Mr. Kaisand graduated from Dordt College and received his master's degree in teaching from Morningside. He was previously an instructional coach at Oskaloosa Community Schools. He shared, "What excites me most about Christian education is the opportunity to have authentic Biblical discussion with others. I value the ability to strengthen relationships with God through chapel, devotions, prayer, and conversations throughout the week." Please join us in welcoming Mr. Kaisand to the Pella Christian community, his email address is [kaisands@pceagles.org](mailto:kaisands@pceagles.org).



## **Mr. Curt Kelderman - PCHS Facilities**

Mr. Kelderman has worked as an electrician in Pella for the last 26 years and has extensive maintenance experience. He's a member at Faith CRC in Pella and he and his wife Carrie have 2 children, Greta and Grant. All four of them have attended Pella Christian. Curt stated, "I have been a part of Pella Christian for my whole life. I'm looking forward to serving the school and helping it to fulfill its mission." Please join us in welcoming Curt at [keldermanc@pceagles.org](mailto:keldermanc@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Ellen (Hungerford) Kelderman - Middle School Science & Math**

Mrs. Kelderman graduated from Iowa State University in the spring of 2023 and taught at West Marshall Elementary. She shared, "I am so excited to be a part of Pella Christian Schools! I am very passionate about working with children and helping them grow and develop. I will help them understand their role in God's plan, help them develop their unique gifts and use them to glorify God!" Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Kelderman, her email address is [keldermane@pceagles.org](mailto:keldermane@pceagles.org).

# New Faces at PC

It is a joy to welcome new staff and faculty to Pella Christian Schools this year!



## **Mr. Scott Merrin - PC 8-12 Band Director**

Mr. Merrin shared, "Music is an excellent avenue in guiding and challenging students to see that their musical and artistic gifts are given to them by God, and that all of us as Christians are called to use our gifts and talents to bring glory, honor and praise to God as our sacrificial act of worship." Mr. Merrin and his family moved to the midwest from Winchester, California. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Merrin, his email address is [merrins@pceagles.org](mailto:merrins@pceagles.org).



## **Dr. Cheyrl Newland - PCGS 5-7 Music, Band & Choir**

Dr. Newland shared, "I am excited for the opportunity to teach at Pella Christian! I am looking forward to inspiring students to reach their full potential of God's gifts of music in their lives, as well as working collaboratively with colleagues and staff for the benefit of students and families." Dr. Newland has taught music in five schools in Missouri and Iowa, as well as future teachers at Iowa Wesleyan University. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Newland, her email address is [newlandc@pceagles.org](mailto:newlandc@pceagles.org).



## **Ms. Kelly Noe - PCHS Study Skills**

Ms. Noe shared, "I envision applying Pella Christian High School's mission by ensuring that every aspect of my work is guided by the goal of nurturing students to serve in God's world. This means integrating faith into all teaching and learning activities, fostering an environment where students can grow academically, spiritually, and personally." Previously she was a Secondary Special Education/Study Skills Teacher at Knoxville High School and Knoxville Middle School. Please join us in welcoming Ms. Noe, her email address is [noek@pceagles.org](mailto:noek@pceagles.org).



## **Mr. Blake Recker - Middle School History**

Mr. Recker shared, "Each student has been gifted by God. I believe that it is my job as a teacher to help students realize their gifts and potential. They are the ones who can meet this potential, but I have an opportunity to help them realize it." He graduated in May from Central College. Mr. Recker and his wife live in Pella. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Recker to the Pella Christian community, his email address is [reckerb@pceagles.org](mailto:reckerb@pceagles.org).



## **Mrs. Lisa Ross - PCGS K-8 Art**

Mrs. Ross shared, "I am extremely excited to start this new adventure in my life, here at Pella Christian. I love creating artwork with the students as well as teaching them the tools to create all on their own and see where they take their talents." Previously she taught elementary art for twelve years at Miss May Vernon Elementary in Texas. Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Ross to the Pella Christian community, her email address is [rossl@pceagles.org](mailto:rossl@pceagles.org).



## **Mtro. Pablo Sanmiguel - Middle School Language Arts & Bible, Spanish Immersion**

Mtro. Sanmiguel shared, "I have been teaching the last 12 years and I have seen the power of a teacher in students' lives and society, teachers have the opportunity to speak life and truth to the hearts and minds of young people while encouraging them to find their purpose in God." Please join us in welcoming Mtro. Sanmiguel, his email address is [sanmiguelp@pceagles.org](mailto:sanmiguelp@pceagles.org).



Please keep these individuals in your prayers as we live God's Story together this year!



## Pella Christian Board of Trustees Update

On July 1, 2024 Pella Christian officially became one legal entity governed by a single Board of Trustees. These individual Trustees were named as part of the merger vote. The first board meetings, an orientation and strategic planning session (pictured above), were held on July 22 and 23 at the Stillwaters Cabin in Oskaloosa. Starting in August, the board will meet monthly, alternating meeting locations between the grade school and the high school. More information about the board can be found on the school's [website](#). The Nominations Committee, which will select the next group of incoming board trustees, met on June 18 and is planning an information session for prospective trustees on September 12. The Lord has richly blessed Pella Christian with years of wise leadership. We ask for your prayers as we seek out the Lord's leading in developing and refining our next strategic initiatives.

## Enrollment Snapshot

We praise God for his faithfulness in bringing over 120 new preschool to high school students to Pella Christian Schools for the upcoming school year. This brings Pella Christian's total enrollment to over 875 students who will be living and learning in God's Story - an increase of over 40 students from the 23/24 school year and over 100 students from 22/23 school year.

The increased growth is a blessing and planning for it included a recent delivery of over 100 new desks in our elementary classes. Kindergarten to 5th grade classes have grown to 3 sections per grade level!

Pella Christian Grade School's Building and Grounds Committee has also been busy supporting the increased enrollment and creating more group meeting areas and expanding the parking lot to create a better pick up and drop off process for families.

Pella Christian High School anticipates 300 students and has focused heavily on supporting this growth through hiring additional math, science and language arts teachers.

We praise God for the students at Pella Christian Schools. Please join us in prayer as we educate and nurture His children!

## Board of Trustees

Brad Meinders (2025)  
Cassia Boender (2027)  
Craig Roose (2026)  
Doug Uitermarkt (2025)  
Jenna Huitink (2026)  
Jodi De Vries (2026)  
Kent Breems (2025)  
Mark Van Wyngarden (2025)  
Mike Fransman (2027)  
Nicole Vos (2026)  
Zach Vander Linden (2027)

Thank you for serving our schools through your gifts and commitment to Christian Education!

## New in 24/25

### Cellphone Free Campuses

Technology has many positive benefits, but it can also be used in ways that lead to unhealthy imbalances that impacts family life, social connections, education, faith, culture and society as a whole. The PC Smart Device Policy is an intentional step to allow our school community to flourish in our academics, mental and social health without the pressures of technology.

### Family Service Hours

PC Family Services Hours are a way to partner with your child's school, build community with other parents and also help our school reduce costs by meeting school needs. With our new unified service hours, all K-12 families are asked to serve 10 hours each year. More information can be found at: [www.pceagles.org/support/service/](http://www.pceagles.org/support/service/)



  
**TRANSFORMED**  
BY GOD'S STORY  
**TRANSFORMADO**  
2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 • 2 CORINTHIOS 3:18

This year's theme is Transformed by God's Story | Transformado por la Historia de Dios based on 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." We look forward to a school year of reflecting on our transformation in our Lord Jesus as we live a life of service in His Kingdom. Will you please join us in prayer over our theme verse, that Christ will be glorified through it and our students will be challenged by it throughout this coming year?

## We Ask for Your Continued Support

Our Christian schools depend on financial support to continue operating. We've never charged the full cost of education to families. We've always reduced tuition through thrift, volunteer labor, and financial donations from supporters. This is how we balance the budget, pay our staff, and maintain our buildings. The gap between tuition charged and the cost of education must be bridged.

In 2024/2025, the combined budgets of Pella Christian Grade School and Pella Christian High School include over \$1.2 million in expected giving. This includes direct donations from supporters, fund drives of various sorts, and budgeted withdrawals off of earnings from schools' endowments.

We plan to dedicate the last section of every Pella Christian Eagle Eye as an update to our annual fund giving. This will replace the Grade School's Quarterly Offering Letters. We'll share our progress on our yearly goal, upcoming exceptional needs, and gratitude for the gifts God has given through His people.



## Dates of Interest:

August 22 - Pray over PC

August 23 & 26 - First Days of School 2024

September 27 - PC Fall Fest

October 4 - 20 Year Celebration of PC Football

October 31 to November 2 - HS Musical, "Fiddler on the Roof"

For a full calendar of activities, please visit our website at [www.pceagles.org/calendar/](http://www.pceagles.org/calendar/)



## Prayer Requests:

-Praise for the over 875 students attending Pella Christian Schools this year, that they will continue to be Transformed as they see God's Story revealed in all spheres of life and learning.

-Safety as we return to back-to-school routines, specifically for our student drivers and bus drivers.

-Wisdom, patience and encouragement for our teachers as they represent God's love within their classrooms.

-For the Pella Christian community as they use their gifts to be a light to others as we serve in God's Kingdom.