



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



## Eagle Eye Welcome from PC Head of Schools

Dear Friends of Pella Christian Schools,

We have been so encouraged by the response to the first issue of the Pella Christian Eagle Eye!

As our schools continue to grow, 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.

This school year is off to a great start. We've been blessed with the largest K-8 and 9-12 enrollments in recent history, which shows that more parents are seeing and understanding the value and power of Christian Education.

Our teachers, who deliver the mission, have been hard at work for over a month engaging our students in their subjects and teaching Christ's Lordship over all creation. New teachers received several days worth of training on Teaching for Transformation, the framework we use to help illuminate the world in light of God's word. It's been an amazing year so far, and God has even more amazing things in store for Pella Christian this year.

We hope you enjoy reading more about how God's story is unfolding here at PC and we ask that you join us in praising God for His faithfulness.

In His Service,

Dan Zylstra, PC Head of Schools

The first Caleb Crew of the school year kicked off on September 18. Caleb Crew is a PCHS Bible Study that meets at 7:30am on Wednesdays and is led by Bonnie Van Wyngarden. Over 100 students attended and ended the time praying over PC's Head of Schools Dan Zylstra. Join us in praising God for the strong attendance and that students are transformed by God's Word and the Caleb Crew ministry.

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# Pella Christian Board of Trustees Update

By Mark Van Wyngarden, Pella Christian School Board President

Pella Christian's Board of Trustees met for our regular meetings in August and September. The newly combined board began and ended business as we always have, with devotions and prayer. In addition to some personnel matters, minor policy adjustments, and reports from administrators and committees, the board spent the majority of our time on future-oriented, big-picture questions.

How does Pella Christian remain firmly rooted to its biblical and reformed faith while maintaining excellence and relevance for faith formation in the 21st Century? How does Pella Christian respond to the new reality of Education Savings Accounts? How do we, as a non-profit, remain competitive as an employer with the new \$50,000 minimum teacher salary for public school teachers? The board spent time discussing these questions and is working with administration on an updated mission statement to help clarify our direction and guide decision-making.

The board also spent time gathering names for future Trustees. The Nominations Committee hosted a public information session on September 12, 2024. Those interested in serving should contact a member of the board or a member of the Nominations Committee, which are available on the school's website.

It is an exciting time for Pella Christian. We ask for your prayers and support as we do our best to honor the Lord in how we guide and lead Pella Christian Schools.



Each year, PC fifth graders take on the responsibility of caring for the flags in front of the grade school. They reflect on the freedoms the flag symbolizes, such as the freedom to worship our Lord and attend a Christian school. A special thank you to our local veterans at the American Legion Post 89 of Pella for presenting information about the US flag and demonstrating how to raise, lower and fold the flag properly so we can be servant workers in this area.



PCGS students celebrate reaching the 100,000 Meals Club from Meals from the Heartland. Each fall, PCGS holds a Discipleship Field Day which includes packaging meals for Meals from the Heartland.





“5th Quarter Worship” was held under the stars following the PC football home opener against Des Moines Christian on Friday, August 30. This worship was a beautiful way to kick off our school year and worship with our friends from DMC.

A sincere thank you to the band and staff who were instrumental in executing this night for God’s glory!

Levi Nieuwsma, Vocals  
 Andrew Ter Louw, Acoustic Guitar  
 Amanda Ritzert, Vocals  
 Andrew De Haan, Bass Guitar  
 Ben Spronk, Keyboard  
 Joe Kempen, Drums  
 Paxton Bouma, Electric Guitar  
 Jacob Harman, Sound

Staff: Aaron Fitzgerald, Scott Merrin, Curt Kelderman, Scott Roose and Teresa Ulferts

## ESAs and Charitable Giving to the Christian School

By Dan Zylstra, Head of Schools

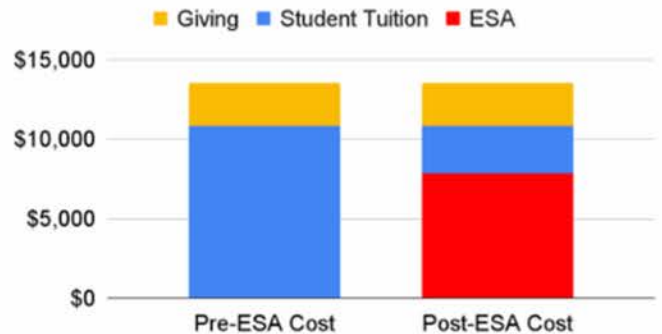
If you’re reading this, it means you’re connected to Pella Christian in some way. You understand the power of Christian education, and you can attest to the importance of bringing all of creation under the Lordship of Christ as we raise our children.

You also understand the financial cost involved. Iowa public schools spend between \$14,500-\$16,500 per student. Christian schools do it for less, charging tuition to parents and gathering donations from churches and supporters to cover the gap between tuition charged and the true cost of education. Remember that term, the true cost of education.

In 2023, Iowa began providing tuition support for students attending non-public schools called Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). In the 2025-2026 every student in Iowa will qualify for at least \$7,826 in tuition support.

Since ESAs became law, I’ve been asked again and again by supporters, “Is my donation really needed now that we have ESAs?” I can enthusiastically say, yes! Yes it is! Here’s why.

Let’s say a Christian school’s true cost of education is \$13,500 per child. Shown on the graph to the right, the school charges \$10,800 in tuition (blue) and raises an additional \$2,700 per student in donations (yellow) to cover the true cost of education.



When we add ESAs (red), tuition paid by families is less, but donations (yellow) continue to be necessary to cover that true cost. That need will likely rise to cover salary increases to keep teacher pay competitive, cover depreciation costs, and pay for potential expansion.

ESAs are a great blessing for families, but they do not reduce the need for donations from churches and supporters to cover the true cost of education. To ensure our schools exist and thrive for future generations, we need to continue supporting them with the gifts of prayer, engagement, and financial support the way our parents and grandparents did.

# Eagle Activities - Fall 2024

By Dan Branderhorst, PC Activities Director

August is always an exciting time of year as Fall activities begin even before the school year kicks off. We have over 125 events scheduled for our 7-12th grade students and we are excited to see how students will pursue excellence, develop into servant leaders, cultivate the joy of team and train for kingdom impact through PC activities.



Below is a snapshot of the participation of our fall activities:

## Football

- 91 athletes grades 7-12, making this year the largest ever for our high school program with 64 high school athletes
- 11 high school coaches and 4 managers
- 6 middle school coaches
- 2 support staff, 4 chain gang, 5 statisticians, 3 livestream technicians, 5 scoreboard/spotters/play clock and many more are involved in every Friday night home game

## Volleyball

- 45 athletes grades 7-12
- 7 high school coaches and 2 managers
- 4 middle school coaches



## Cross Country

- 60 athletes grades 7-12, 25 high school boys is the largest in school history
- 3 high school coaches and 2 managers
- 2 middle school coaches

## Cheer

- 16 athletes grades 9-12
- 1 coach

## Shine

- 17 athletes grades 8-12
- 1 coach

## PCHS Fall Musical - Fiddler on the Roof

- 56 number of students involved including actors, stage crew, sound, lights, student directors

Thank you to all who support our students in their curricular activities as we point our children to the Lord and grow in godliness through PC activities!



## Eagles Take Flight:

- Pursue Excellence
- Develop Servant Leaders
- Cultivate the Joy of Team
- Train for Kingdom Impact





WE ARE  
MORE THAN  
**CONQUERORS**  
THROUGH HIM  
WHO LOVED US  
ROMANS 8:37

## Are You a Crab or a Turtle?

By: Ben Dirksen, Early Education to 8th Grade Principal

Are you interested in being a part of a crab bucket or a turtle boil? This was a question posed to middle school students at the beginning of the year. You see, when crabs are all in a bucket together, they do not need a lid because when one of them begins to escape the bucket (risking something new, kind or courageous), the others will pull them back down. Sounds like a toxic culture!

Sea turtles on the other hand do something quite interesting, when they hatch and it's called a boil. Their hatching happens all at the same time and it's imperative that they get to the sea as quickly as possible. What scientists have discovered is that turtles actually help each other up and out of the sand and stronger turtles will help the struggling turtles. What a cool representation of what Paul is talking about in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Encourage one another and build each other up." God's creation is amazing!

*"Being part of a community means that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and that we are called to positively contribute to the Body of Christ."*

One thing we strive to emphasize here at PC is how important it is for all of us to recognize that being a part of a community means that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and that we are called to positively contribute to the Body of Christ.

The PCHS coaches room received a facelift this fall. Memorial funds in memory of Scott Spronk (father of senior Cooper Spronk and Bennett Spronk '22) and Jan Pothoven (mother of PCHS Volleyball Coach Kim Gritters) were used to create a welcoming space for athletes and coaches to learn and grow.

Middle School House "Caritas" practicing the literal meaning of building each other up during a House scavenger hunt.



In our first middle school assembly, students read through Romans 12 and came up with ways we could "boil" here at Pella Christian. This is our second year of building on this "turtling" theme. Last year, the Middle School Leadership class wanted to find a way to celebrate those in our community who were "turtling" and from that Turtle Cards were born. Turtle Cards are handed out to students when they are uplifting others and positively contributing to our community. There are drawings a few times a month for prizes as we seek to celebrate the Christlike posture in our students. This year, each turtle card is worth three House points as well!

This is one way we are uplifting and celebrating those who are embracing Romans twelve and their critical role in the Body. If you see a student "turtling" outside of school, please let Mr. Dirksen know as we'd love to celebrate them. And as you go about your day, look for opportunities that God has ordained for you to "turtle" today!



## Leave a Legacy with a Gift to PC

By: Pella Christian Development Committee

### Year-end Giving Simplified

As you consider your year-end giving, we ask you to remember the powerful, kingdom work taking place at Pella Christian. Here is a short guide to giving at PC this fall.

### Give to Your Passions

Do you delight in seeing young people grow their God-given gifts in Music, Athletics, Theater, VoAg, Industrial Arts, or another school program? A donation to a specific department can provide that extra-special experience for a lifetime of student impact.

Is student faith formation at Pella Christian a place you want to invest in further? Pella Christian Grade School and High School prioritize chapels, discipleship groups, and service & faith formation days. These activities require funding above and beyond dollars for curriculum and instruction.

Do you want to give to today's and tomorrow's students? Giving to one of the school's endowments means your gift will last well into the future. \$1,000 given today grows into \$1,500+ in its first ten years alone.

Do you simply love Christian Education and the ministry of Pella Christian? General, undesignated donations to Pella Christian Grade School, Pella Christian High School, or Pella Christian Schools are the most flexible at meeting the schools immediate needs.

### Tax-Advantaged Giving to Support Pella Christian

If you are making withdrawals from a tax-advantaged retirement account, make a qualified distribution directly to Pella Christian. This is tax free and qualifies as your required minimum distribution. Iowa provides a 75% state income tax credit to gifts that are given to a School Tuition Organization. Contact the school office for more information. The Barnabas Foundation works with individuals planning their estate giving. Designating a portion of your assets to a 501c(3) can reduce inheritance taxes and bless future generations.

Whatever stage of life you're in, and whatever area of Pella Christian you're passionate about, know that your financial gifts are being put to good use for His Kingdom.

Fall Fest 2024 was another beautiful night to build community from preschool through 12th grade!



## Dates of Interest:

October 4 - 20 Year Celebration of PC Football

October 25 - 8th Grade Visit Day at Pella Christian High School

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

November 8 & 9 - Middle School Play - "Once Upon a December"

November 14 - Middle School Music Festival at PCHS

November 22 - PCGS Thanksgiving Lunch with Guests

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



## Prayer Requests:

-Upcoming Parent/Teacher Conferences to be a time of partnership as we together grow students' academically, socially and spiritually for service in God's Kingdom.

-Praise God for the changing of the seasons and the beautiful weather that He has blessed us with. Pray that God will continue to bless our fall sports teams with wonderful weather for practice and competitions.