



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



Greetings from Pella Christian,

It is a wonderful time of year, that busy month between Thanksgiving and New Years, punctuated by Christmas Day!

For most of us, this season is rich with nostalgia. In the blink of an eye I'm transported back in time to grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We would sit around grandma's huge basement table, read a psalm together, give a prayer of thanks, and then we'd feast!

My school memories are similar at Lansing Christian. Toward the end of November, classroom and hallway decorations turned to green and red, as did teachers' sweaters. The songs we sang on Friday mornings and in music class were of Bethlehem, angels, and a promised savior, Emmanuel.

It's no different today at Pella Christian. During December, the activities and celebrations at Pella Christian remain rooted in Christ. We can name it, claim it, and openly proclaim the true meaning of Christmas to our kids. We're making memories in light of our Maker - memories that will live in our students' hearts and minds forever.

It's a joy to be a part of this here at Pella Christian. We're thankful for your encouragement, prayers, and support. And I pray you're making more memories this Christmas with family and friends.

In His Service,

Dan Zylstra  
PC Head of Schools

Pella Christian High School's Theatre Troupe kicked off their 75th Diamond Jubilee Season—with Broadway's favorite classic, *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The following weekend, PC Middle Theatre students performed "Once Upon a December," the story of Anastasia.

Bravo to both groups in worshipping God through theatrical performance.

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# 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 October and November. The budget, stewardship, and mission statement were key topics for board discussion and discernment.

2025-2026 brings many changes. By law, the minimum public school teacher salary will be \$50,000 per year. While not a requirement for Pella Christian, we want to pay our teachers fairly to continue attracting high-quality staff. Insurance, capital repairs, and supply costs also increased at an alarming rate recently, putting pressure on the expense side of the budget.

On the other hand, 2025-2026 is the first year every student is eligible for an ESA. We have never charged families for the true cost of education. ESAs bring the opportunity to raise more revenue at a time to meet these increasing costs and continue providing outstanding Christian education. Building a budget around these major changes is a prayerful act of stewardship.

The Board also invested time in our mission and vision process. In November we gathered stakeholders to garner feedback and direction. We are asking the big questions - with thousands of Christian schools around the country and world, what makes Pella Christian unique, special, distinct? Our foundation is surely God's Word. But how do we live that calling out uniquely in south central Iowa?

We know that God has big plans for each one of us and for Pella Christian! As leaders of the school, the Board of Trustees is working, praying, and discerning what those plans are and how to best accomplish them.

Utilizing teamwork and STEM skills, PC Middle School house groups constructed can creations with the 5,000 cans PC students raised for the Pella Community Food Shelf.





# Faith and Academics

By Craig Juffer, Director of Learning

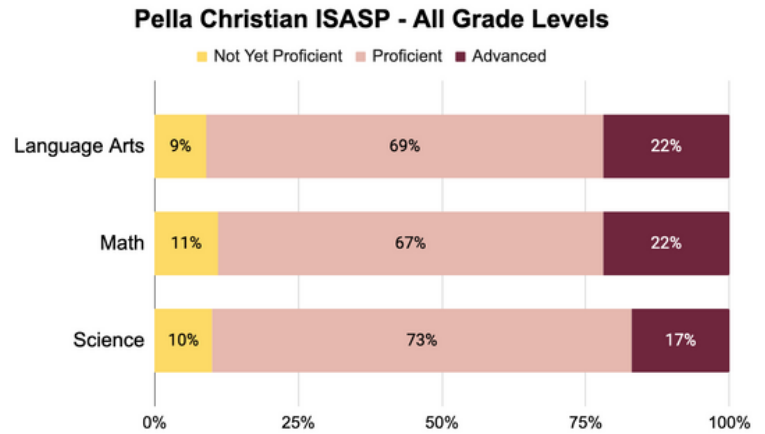
Throughout the Bible, names often hold a level of significance or meaning. For example, Abraham was given his new name to mark the covenant God made to make him the “father of many nations.” Under this idea of names, I would love to explore our school name, Pella Christian Schools. Each of these three words holds much significance to who we are and what we are called to do.

To begin, “Pella” marks our location. It is the place we are called to make an impact. It is not specific to a single town, but rather an area with unique traits, people, cultures, and background. How we go about our work is dependent on these things. As an institution, we must seek to understand our place in God’s world as we pursue the ministry He has invited us into. Our location holds significance to how we go about fulfilling our mission.

*“We must seek to understand the connections each piece of learning has in the eternal story that God has invited us into”*

Critical too, is the word “Christian” in our name. This marks the significance of a worldview that invites all our students, staff, families and supporters to recognize God’s great work in all things. As we unpack the learning that equips us for good work, we must articulate how this learning holds purpose for our Creator. This is much deeper than tagging a verse on a lesson, praying to launch the school day or providing instruction on “knowing” the Bible. While those are important, we must seek to understand the connections each piece of learning has in the eternal story that God has invited us into. The Teaching for Transformation framework continues to help us build this capacity.

A special shout out to both Jacob Harman ('26) and Kenyon Geetings ('20) for making our PC Livestream events so professional. They are constantly looking for ways to improve and update the PC Livestream product. We regularly hear from families about how thankful they are that their grandparents and relatives can watch from afar. We even heard from a parent on the way out of the Central Iowa Christian School Music festival that their grandparents in South Dakota loved being able to watch their grandkids sing and play their instruments on the PC YouTube channel. Thank you for serving God through your video production talents!



In the 2023-2024 school year, Pella Christian participated in the statewide testing program for the first year since the new test was written. The Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress has tests in three areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Students in grades three through eleven participate in the assessment. The graph above shows the results by percentages of all students that participated in the assessment last year.

Finally, we must remember that we are called to be a “School.” That may seem basic, but it really is not. School is a complicated endeavor that requires understanding people, pedagogy (methods of teaching), content and tools. The research on best practices in education have exploded in the last ten years, and as professionals, we must continue to learn and grow in the craft of teaching. It requires us to be mindful of the new things we must take on and the long-established things that are tried and true. All of this, of course, to best set into action the equipping of students with the knowledge and skills to make an impact.

Pella Christian Schools continues to live into its name. Like Abraham, we are imperfect, but with God’s help we continue to strive to hold true to the course He set before us.



# More Than the Final Score

By Dan Branderhorst, PC Activities Director

As we dive into the winter athletic season, I'm thankful for the ways I have witnessed our fall activities cultivate the joy of team. Whether on the stage, field, dance floor or court, Pella Christian's co-curricular activities are building lifelong relationships and two specific events come to my mind.

The first took place on a random Friday afternoon in November. PC alum and brothers Travis ('99) and Colt ('01) Ashman graced the PCHS front doors unannounced. This was their first return to the state of Iowa since living in Arizona and California the last 18 years. Colt and Travis were active PC athletes while in high school and it was exciting to watch them take in the PC stadium, baseball field, tennis courts and the entire PCHS campus. Their high school days were spent at our previous Jefferson Street school and this was the first time they have been to Eagle Lane. They enjoyed throwing a pitch from the baseball diamond and walking the turf at the stadium while recounting memories of high school and the fun they had as an Eagle.



PC Activities Director Dan Branderhorst is pictured with alums Colt ('01) and Travis ('99) Ashman during their visit to PC's new campus.

What struck me most about our conversation was the focus on relationships, asking about teammates and where the Lord has led them or sharing memories of the great coaches that molded them. The discussion was not focused on wins and losses. Pella Christian co-curriculars are more than a score, a performance or a state title, but an opportunity for lifelong friendships and memories as we cultivate the joy of team.


*“Pella Christian co-curriculars are more than a score, a performance or a state title, but an opportunity for lifelong friendships and memories as we cultivate the joy of team.”*

The very next day, I joined the boys and girls cross country teams at the State Meet in Fort Dodge. Previous PC teammates, who are now attending colleges in different locations, spent their Saturday traveling to Fort Dodge to cheer on our teams. They came to support former teammates and friends because of experiences and memories that were forged during long runs, bus rides and the thrill of competition.



Former teammates and PC graduates surprised Pella Christian runners by showing up at the State Meet in Fort Dodge.

I'm a firm believer that co-curricular relationships are lasting relationships. As we turn the page from one season to the next, let's focus on building relationships with teammates, with fellow parents and with the generations of fans that we are blessed to have at Pella Christian events. Let's cultivate joy in our PC activities.

 Go Eagles!



# PCGS Thanksgiving Lunch

Thanksgiving Lunch is one of our favorite PCGS traditions and is a special day when students invite VIP guests to join them as we celebrate the goodness of God. This year, over 967 students, parents, grandparents and special friends were served a thanksgiving lunch in just 75 minutes. Thank you to our incredible kitchen staff and all our fabulous volunteer servers.



## Recent Memorial Gifts to PC

Pella Christian Schools is grateful to receive memorial gifts in honor and in memory of:

Geneva June Rozendaal  
 Gladys Stravers  
 Bernice Vermeer  
 Marilyn Van Gorp  
 Cobie Spoelstra  
 Jan Pothoven  
 Les Klyn  
 Art Kuiper  
 Gretta Veenstra  
 Gladys Newendorp

Robert Hugen  
 Joyce Sietstra  
 Norm Dieleman  
 Tim Callahan  
 Frances Rus  
 Annette Van Wyk  
 Trudy Van Zee  
 Lois Van Wyk  
 Willis Van Wyk  
 Millie Van Zee





## Gifts with an Impact

By Pella Christian Development Committee

Do you remember Christmas presents from your childhood? Is there a particular gift that stands out? Which gifts made the most impact? Why?

The Lord has directed many gifts to Pella Christian in 2024. Some gifts stand out because of their size. Others are remarkable because of the giver's story. Still others carry meaning because they were designated for a specific purpose.

No matter the gift, they all have one thing in common: They positively impacted faith formation. Here are some examples.

- A \$100 gift could purchase library books where students can see Jesus more clearly
- A \$500 gift could purchase a new trumpet which creates life-long joy for music
- A \$1,000 gift could purchase new wireless mics which allow students to discover their creative gifts from the Lord
- A \$5,000 gift could purchase new volleyball nets, allowing a team of girls to compete and learn to relate to each other as a team of sisters in Christ
- A \$10,000 gift could purchase fresh sets of reading textbooks which open the eyes of students to God's amazing creation

There are countless other examples! Only the Lord knows how each of these gifts will impact a child's life and bring them closer to the Lord. In the meantime, the Father calls us to sow generously today and promises a bountiful harvest in generations to come.

As we approach Christmas 2024, we thank you for your support and encourage you to keep sowing generously.

### Community Builders Day 2024

PCHS students and staff served a variety of people around the area for PC's Community Builders Day. They got dirty, did some heavy lifting, sorted, painted, landscaped, hammered, deep cleaned and had fun serving our local communities! It was a beautiful day to be the hands and feet of Jesus!



### Dates of Interest:

December 12 - Early Education Christmas Program

December 17 - High School Christmas Concert

December 19 - Spanish Immersion Christmas Program

January 24 - Homecoming

January 25 - High School All City Speech Night

February 21 - 4th Annual Partners in Education Dinner and Fundraiser

April 16 & 17 - A Grand Day

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