



EAGLE EYE

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

December 2025



Dear Friends of Pella Christian Schools,

What does Christmas mean at Pella Christian? Is it music concerts, hallway decorations, Christmas Banquet, staff gifts? Over the years many specific traditions have come and gone. Some have changed, and others have stayed the same.

But through it all, one thing remains constant: We desire Pella Christian's Christmas activities to clearly proclaim His Kingdom and point to the One who made our kingdom citizenship a reality!

Christmas points us to Jesus, but Christmas is not Jesus. Time spent with family and friends, gift-giving, Christmas carols (my favorite part), these all point us to our Savior, but they do not replace Him.

They do not replace the one thing we need more than anything else: the knowledge that we are loved by our Father in Heaven, and that He redeemed us through His Son.

That's what Christmas means at Pella Christian. This is the most important and enduring gift we strive to give to students during this special time of year: the unwavering message of God's redemptive love.

In His Service,

Dan Zylstra
PC Head of Schools



BOARD OF TRUSTEES UPDATE

Pella Christian Schools draws on a rich history stretching back over a hundred years. As a relatively newly merged entity, we are prayerfully establishing unified policy and practices. Much of our focus in 2025 has centered on building a strong foundation for a healthy board/school culture - balancing engagement and oversight today with the vision and strategic planning required for future generations.

Day to day, the Board ensures operational excellence and stewardship of our mission. This includes campus visits, where we share the joy of seeing our teachers and staff embodying our mission. We marvel at God's handiwork as we see students engaged in praise and the study of His creation. As parents and grandparents, we attend games, concerts, and activities, and are part of the fabric of the school community. We receive reports from the administration at every board meeting. And each board member is part of a committee that actively assists in managing certain aspects of school operations.

However, the Board's most vital work is shaping the future of Pella Christian. What will the school look like in 5, 10, or 15 years? 2025-2026 is an accreditation year, our first as a unified system. We've chosen to couple this process with a five-year strategic plan to ensure immediate decisions are made with an eye toward long-term impact.

We're also in the early stages of a master planning process with an architectural firm. We envision a multi-step campus plan to ensure our facilities allow us to fully meet our mission and account for our any future expansion needs.

We're humbled by the progress that's been made and are excited about the future God has planned for Pella Christian. We know the Lord provides for all our needs—today and tomorrow. And we consider it a blessing to take part in shaping Pella Christian for the benefit of today's and tomorrow's students.

Mark Van Wyngarden, Board President
Pella Christian Schools

ON THE COVER

Pella Christian High School's Theatre Troupe opened its 76th season with *The Sound of Music*—and what an opening it was! Nearly every performance played to a sold-out crowd as audiences were swept away by the heartwarming story, stunning vocals, and dynamic performances. Under the direction of Marlo Van Peursem, the cast brought new life to the beloved Rodgers and Hammerstein classic, filling the Vermeer Auditorium with laughter, joy, and unforgettable melodies like "Do-Re-Mi" and "Climb Every Mountain."

As the curtain closes on this triumphant musical, the troupe is already preparing for what's next: a compelling one-act performance of *Rags* by the Speech Team this winter, followed by Agatha Christie's thrilling *A Murder Is Announced* in the spring. It promises to be a remarkable season of storytelling at Pella Christian High School.



IN MEMORY OF GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS

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

Marjorie Mae Vos
Betty Bruxvoort
Marv Roozeboom
Ana Mae Van Wyk
Marvin De Zwarte
Lucille Stravers
Marv and Mary De Zwarte
Brant Bruxvoort
William Nikkel

Case Vande Ree
Audrey Veldhouse
Gene Kamerick
Norm Schurring
Jim (James B.) Van Zee
Arie Boot
Tunis Van Walbeek
Dale Deur

STORIES FROM THE HALLWAYS

SHARING HOW GOD'S CHILDREN ARE JOINING IN HIS RESTORATIVE WORK

HEARTS & HANDS AT WORK

Pella Christian High School students and staff stepped out of the classroom and into the community for their annual Community Builders Day, a tradition that highlights service, teamwork, and faith in action. With sleeves rolled up and hearts ready to serve, students spent the day lending a helping hand across the Pella area—cleaning up around Lake Red Rock, sorting clothing donations, packaging Christmas boxes for children in need, digging up summer plants to prepare for tulip season, painting, cleaning, and much more.

From heavy lifting to heartfelt conversations, each project offered a chance to make meaningful connections and shine Christ's love through action. The day was filled with energy, laughter, and gratitude as students embodied what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their own community.

A day of service, smiles, and shining His light—Community Builders Day 2025 was a reminder that when we serve together, we build more than projects—we build community.



LEARNING THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

Every year, PC's fourth graders spend a day at the Amsterdam One-Room Schoolhouse, stepping into the past to experience what school was like nearly a century ago. Students dress in period costumes, pack lunches in baskets or cloth sacks, play old-fashioned games like Annie, Annie Over, and write their lessons on chalkboards and slates.

This hands-on field trip has been a beloved PC tradition since the early 1970s. In earlier years, it was the third graders who made the journey, but today's fourth graders proudly carry it on. Many parents even share memories of their own visits to the same schoolhouse—making this a truly generational experience.

The trip offers more than just fun and nostalgia; it gives students a deeper appreciation for the history and importance of education, connecting PC learners across decades of discovery.



MIDDLE SCHOOL REC DAY

The energy was high and the spirit of community was strong as PC Middle Schoolers gathered for Rec Day 2025, continuing their friendly competition for the House Cup! Students from all six houses—Sodality, Apnapan, Koinonia, Caritas, Fide, and Coligo—joined together for a day filled with teamwork, laughter, and spirited rivalry.

Throughout the day, students faced off in a variety of challenges. Each event offered an opportunity for students to earn points for their houses, but more importantly, to encourage one another and build lasting friendships.

Rec Day is part of a year-long House Cup competition where middle schoolers earn points not only through athletic and academic events, but also through acts of compassion and kindness. Each house's name—rooted in Latin and Greek words representing values like brotherhood, unity, and togetherness—reflects the core spirit of PC Middle School: striving to grow as a community that lifts one another up.



ROOTED IN FAITH, MOVING AS ONE

Our Journey to a Unified Mission

Empowering God's children to join in His restorative work

At Pella Christian, our mission is more than words on a page—it's the heartbeat of everything we do. Empowering God's children to join in His restorative work is lived out daily through our Core Values, each grounded in Scripture and demonstrated through Christ-centered behaviors.

Our three core values—Intentional Engagement, Whole Child, and Generational Community—provide the framework for how we teach, learn, and serve together. They remind us that every lesson, relationship, and activity is part of God's greater story.

Intentional Engagement

Rooted in Romans 12 and Colossians 3:17, this value reminds us to approach every task with purpose and to serve wholeheartedly as unto the Lord. We encourage meaningful participation, serving others, and kingdom proclaiming, helping students see that their actions—both big and small—matter in God's plan.

Whole Child

Guided by Mark 12:29–31 and Proverbs 22:6, we are committed to nurturing students spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. We aim to integrate faith, build skills, and truly know our students, ensuring that each child experiences growth that honors who they are as image-bearers of God.

Generational Community

Anchored in Psalm 145 and Ephesians 3:16–21, this value celebrates the beautiful, multi-generational nature of our Christian community. We seek to provide belonging, partner missionally, and actively invest in one another—students, families, teachers, and supporters—so that together, we reflect Christ's love through every generation.

Our Core Values shape the culture of Pella Christian Schools. They guide us in prayer, inspire our teaching, and strengthen our partnerships with families and supporters like you.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (ESAs)

ESAs remain in the spotlight. Texas, Tennessee, and other states created or expanded school choice programs in 2025. Iowa's ESA program is in its third year, yielding no shortage of feelings and editorial opinions.

You've heard the commentary, "Private schools have no oversight. They're unaccountable." These make great sound bites, but they're inaccurate. Accountability exists, first and foremost, through accreditation - required of all ESA-accepting schools.

Pella Christian is in the midst of an accreditation review through Christian Schools International (CSI). The process involves stakeholder surveys, curricular review, legal compliance checks, and financial disclosures ensuring the school's resources are directed toward meeting the school's faith-based mission. The process culminates in an on-site visit verifying the reality on the ground.

It's an intense 70-point inspection. It's professional, holistic, and ensures continuous improvement. It's not easy or guaranteed. Schools can lose accreditation, and with it, their ability to accept ESAs. CSI's accreditation process is approved by the state of Iowa. The method mirrors that of other entities accepting state funds:

- State preschool dollars follow the child to a qualified provider
- Iowa Tuition Grant dollars follow the college student to an accredited Iowa college
- Open enrollment public school per pupil dollars follow the student to the public school of their choice, even if it's out of district

ESAs have expanded access to Christ-centered education. We've seen the joy in students who, for the first time, see God woven into every subject they study. ESAs are opening doors for amazing Kingdom work and helping families find schools that align with their faith and values. So when you gather with friends and family over Christmas break, you can share the story of how ESAs are transforming lives and strengthening Christian education across our state, while being accountable through state-approved accreditation.



BRINGING 'FARMER GARY' TO LIFE EN ESPAÑOL

A big thank-you goes out to Vermeer Corporation for their wonderful gift to our Spanish Immersion program! The company recently translated "Farmer Gary's Birthday Adventure"—a heartwarming children's book written by former Pella Christian teacher Lois Vermeer—into Spanish and generously donated a copy to each of our Spanish Immersion students.

This story of community and creativity came full circle through the experience of Will Vanden Bosch, a PCHS Spanish Immersion student who spent his summer interning with Vermeer Corporation. Following his internship, Will had the special opportunity to share the Spanish edition of "Farmer Gary's Birthday Adventure" with younger students in the same immersion program where his own bilingual journey began.

What a beautiful reminder of how language learning connects people, stories, and generations! We're deeply grateful to Vermeer for their continued partnership and investment in bilingual education—helping our students grow in both faith and language, one story at a time.



A SUCCESSFUL FALL FEST

Fall Fest 2025 was a wild success and we are so thankful to those who made it possible!

Thank you to the PC Connections Committee, and especially to Joy Kempen, for your planning and leadership. Thank you also to Hy-Vee, Fareway, Verna Vander Molen, Jerry and Deb Bandstra, Culvers, Chick-fil-a, Top Shelf Nutrition, Steph Vander Molen and the PC Eagle Boosters and our many, many volunteers.



DATES OF INTEREST

Early Education Christmas Program -

Thursday, Dec. 11

5th-8th Christmas Concert -

Monday, December 15

High School Christmas Concert -

Tuesday, December 16

Spanish Immersion Christmas Program -

Thursday, December 18

Homecoming -

Week of January 19-23

PC Pie Auction Fundraiser -

Friday, February 27

Grand Day -

Thursday, April 30 and
Friday, May 1

Find all PC events at
www.pceagles.org/calendar



SUPPORTING PELLA CHRISTIAN FOR 2026 & BEYOND

It's been a wonderful year here at Pella Christian. There are too many blessings to count! We are thankful for the supporters He's provided. We are thankful for the important, life-changing work we get to do here, every day!

To continue, accelerate, and expand that important work, we're reminding you of ways you can support faith-based learning here at Pella Christian.

TAX-ADVANTAGED GIVING

STO (School Tuition Organization) – Pella Christian Schools partners with six other area schools through the Legacy of Grace School Tuition Organization (STO) to make Christian education accessible for qualifying families. Gifts to the STO go directly toward tuition assistance for families at Christian schools in our area. Your donation to the STO offers a 75% Iowa tax credit, directly reducing your state tax liability. For example, a \$1,000 donation provides a \$750 Iowa tax credit—meaning you've only given \$250 out of pocket. Your donation may also qualify for federal deductions.

RMD (Required Minimum Distributions) – If you have money in retirement accounts, you may be subject to Required Minimum Distributions. You can direct those dollars to Pella Christian as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), helping reduce your taxable income while supporting Christ-centered education.

INVEST IN THE MISSION OF PELLA CHRISTIAN

STO gift for area Christian Education:
www.logsto.org

Support PC today:
By check with the enclosed envelope
Online at www.pceagles.org/support/give

END-OF-YEAR GIVING

We are always looking to enhance our mission delivery, which is fueled by givers like you. Your financial gift could go to any of the following:

- **Endowment** – A gift to the Endowment lives on in perpetuity, providing stability and a lasting legacy that benefits future generations of students.
- **Eagle Fund** – The Eagle Fund pays for student life enrichment opportunities not included in the general budget. These include mission trips, unique learning experiences, classroom innovation, and staff support that enrich both teaching and learning.
- **General Fund** – Your gift to the General Fund supports the daily operations that make our Christ-centered education possible—from classroom resources to technology, staff development, and facilities upkeep.
- **Designated Giving** – Do you have a particular passion for something specific at Pella Christian? Whether it's athletics, fine arts, missions, or a particular classroom initiative, designated gifts allow you to directly support the programs that are closest to your heart.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, we invite you to continue partnering with us in this transformative work. Together, we can ensure that Pella Christian remains a place where faith and learning flourish for generations to come.

Please reach out to Dan Zylstra (zylstrad@pceagles.org) or Teresa Ulferts (ulfertst@pceagles.org) to learn more about how you can help further empower God's children to join in His restorative work.

EAGLE EYE

Read inside to see how we are
empowering God's children at
Pella Christian Schools

December 2025



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