

Principal's Message

What Does This Mean?

When prospects visit our school, our initial discussion typically centers on curriculum and activities. But the conversation soon turns to **school culture**. I can remember one parent's rather pointed question, "What is it about your school that makes it better than others?" Good question. After all, there are other private schools that feature moral education. Other schools (both private and public) offer strong academics, extra-curricular programs, and nice facilities. I did not bring any of these factors into my answer. Instead I responded that at St. Paul's we have a **Christ-focused culture**. What does this mean?

"What does this mean?" is a good Lutheran question. Our youth learn to answer it in catechism class when they study the commandments, the sacraments, and the confessional statements of the Lutheran church. Good Lutheran teaching methods compel me to explain what I mean when I say that St. Paul's has a Christ-focused culture. It means that ...

- **The Word of God is treasured.** Every school day begins and ends with prayer. Each classroom has a daily religion lesson. On Fridays the student body gathers to worship in a respectful, reverent manner. The Word of God is the most important part of each school day.
- **The Word is lived.** We encourage our children to live their faith through God-pleasing conduct and faithfulness.
- **Law and Gospel are properly divided and applied.** The hallmark teaching of Lutheranism, justification by faith in Christ alone, is the foundation of all instruction and guidance for students and teachers. They learn that they are redeemed from their sins by the grace of God.
- **All relationships are agape-motivated** in an encouraging environment. Our school is a happy place because Christ-like love abounds among students and teachers. We strive to make all feel valued as precious children of God and as part of a Christian family.
- **Spoken and written words are "captive to Christ."** Conversations, assignments, and school publications reflect Godliness and good taste. Whatever we do in word or deed is to the praise and glory of God.
- **Our appearance reflects thankfulness for what Christ has done.** The appearance of our campus and the ways students and teachers dress exhibit neatness, cleanliness, and modesty.
- **Instruction integrates the Word of God.** Teachers permeate their lessons with the Christian point of view.
- **We share Christ and have a mission mindset.** We focus on our mission. We embrace all students, both members and non-members, and families into our school family. We invite all to share and embrace the blessings of our Christian faith.

St. Paul's Lutheran School is not perfect. At times we fail to be everything that a Christ-centered school should be. At such times we look to the cross for forgiveness and hope. We depend on God's help; we trust his promise to bless the seeds of the Word that he gives us the privilege to plant.

Families come to our school for many reasons – family tradition, friendships, convenience, sports, and others – but the best thing we provide and the real reason for our existence is our **Christ-centered culture**. It has been an incredible blessing that St. Paul's Lutheran School has been around for over 125 years. We pray that God will bless us for many more!

Principal Greg Thiesfeldt