



Church ^{of the} Redeemer PARISH DAY SCHOOL

Dear Folks,

The Parish Day School is a principal ministry of The Church of the Redeemer. Founded 70 years ago with a commitment to the social, physical, and intellectual development of preschoolers, last year the PDS Board and Redeemer Vestry committed to expanding this critical work through third grade. Former State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick helped us see that our program “completes early childhood education” by stretching to include nine-year-olds, and she caught our enthusiasm for community engagement. As School Director Mary Knott and I described the on-going parish relationship with Govans Elementary School, just blocks from the Redeemer campus, Grasmick assured us that PDS already has what many independent schools only dream about. “Many speak about public-private partnerships,” said the seasoned educator and policymaker, “but few actually realize this important and difficult work. You have something special. Build on the relationships you’ve already created through parish tutors at Govans, school to school exchanges at holidays, and BUILD (Baltimorean United In Leadership Development) organizing” with Sandi McFadden (Strong City’s Community School Coordinator). With a commitment to expand only if the school, the church, and the community benefit from the growth, excitement is clearly growing.

Several groups of people are engaged in next steps. A Visioning Committee which includes Vestry, former PDS parents, and preschool through middle school practitioners has crafted a case for growth: *We are a small, inclusive, Episcopal school which welcomes families from diverse religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. We foster a nurturing environment grounded in vibrant early learning and respectful engagement with others. We value an open-ended and mindful process of discovery, a learning process that blends the indoors with the outdoors and prioritizes both learning and play. We provide an active, noisy, messy, joyful experience based on mutual respect and faithfulness.*

Why grow?

- To capitalize on the brain’s rapid growth during early childhood.
- To provide a unique, affordable independent school option for early grades in Baltimore, with small classes and low teacher-student ratios.
- To further embody our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and need-based financial aid.
- To foster environmental literacy on our large campus, where outdoor learning is a priority.
- To deepen the relationship between the church and school and community.

A By-laws Committee, made up of two current and one former Vestry members, has accomplished the critical work of articulating the relationship between the church and the school. The document, reviewed by a parishioner from the field of independent school policy, and approved by the PDS Board and Vestry, strengthens the mission and purpose of the school.

A Building Growth Committee, chaired by former junior warden Tom Spies, is just beginning its imaginative work. How can we accommodate additional students in a way that meets their developmental needs, honors our extraordinary buildings, campus and the space needs of a dynamic parish, and does so in an affordable way? We’ve gathered leaders in building, finance, education, design, and faith to organize the process.



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The ways we are growing will have financial costs. Through the generosity of Redeemer's Covenant Fund, we've dramatically increased our financial aid budget. Last summer we remodeled the former church nursery in the basement of the parish hall, creating additional classroom and break-out space, but we need more. Adding classrooms and play space through third grade will require new construction at some point, and so I will be convening another group from the church and school to help me raise those funds.

PDS and Redeemer are clearly in a season of new life and renewal, and I look forward to conversations with you about the road ahead.

Best,

David