

School Spotlight – Ruth Sebastian, Principal at St. Paul Lutheran School in Merced

When Ruth Sebastian graduated from Concordia University Irvine with a degree in business, she never thought that she would end up as a principal at a Lutheran school. Ruth was born and raised in Minnesota, but the opportunity to play college basketball brought her to Southern California and Concordia University Irvine. She met her husband at Concordia, and after graduation they moved up to Merced, California and started attending St. Paul Lutheran Church. Although she had a degree in business, she felt the calling to be a teacher. So, after getting her California Teaching Credential, she started teaching in the Merced Public Schools. After teaching for a few years, she began working for WestEd as a presenter and trainer for teachers in several areas, but especially in bilingual education and teaching diverse learners. She also served as an instructor in the Teacher Prep Program at UC Merced. In August of last year, she was asked to consider filling the job opening of principal at St. Paul Lutheran School. She accepted the position and has taken on the challenges of leading this small Lutheran Preschool through 6th grade school. Although this is something new and challenging, Ruth feels this is where the Lord has led her. She can take the experience and expertise from 20 years in education and connect it with her love and commitment to the ministry of the Lutheran church. "Families should never feel the pull to sacrifice faith for academic excellence or academic excellence for faith. I'm thrilled to support our teachers at blending the two so seamlessly that it's impossible to see where one ends and the other begins," she said. Ruth's husband works for Thrivent Financial, and they have two children, a sixth grader and an eighth grader. We thank God for Ruth's ministry and the ministry work of St. Paul Lutheran School!