



November 19, 2015

Dear St. Luke's Community,

In recent weeks, there has been considerable prayer, speculation and discussion regarding the future of St. Luke's Episcopal School with respect to our mission and our fundamental Episcopal identity. Our Board met on Tuesday to discern how our mission, the St. Luke's Way, our Portrait of a Graduate, and our Diversity and Equity Statement should shape the future of our school. After much prayer, research and thorough consideration, we have concluded that St. Luke's will reaffirm our intentional commitment to inclusivity. We recognize that the pace and required privacy of our diligent work has created frustration and angst for some in our community; for that we apologize. Many of you have shared your thoughts, concerns, support and suggestions on the complex issues we have contemplated. We appreciate your passion and commitment to our school and we have carefully considered your input. While not intended to answer every question, we hope that this letter clarifies both our process and our faithfulness to the foundation of our beloved school.

In 2011, our Board adopted this Diversity and Equity Statement that has been published in our handbooks since 2012.

*"St. Luke's welcomes diversity and respects differences in ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds; the languages we speak; our sexes, genders, and ages; the traditions we observe; the structures of our families; our financial and educational resources; and the special needs and gifts that we have. Welcoming people with diverse points of view and being sensitive to the interests and traditions of others emulates Christ-like principles of living and enhances the quality of the entire St. Luke's experience."*

This statement emerged from surveys, parent forums, and the thoughtful work of a committee as part of a comprehensive strategic planning process. Alongside our other foundational principles, this statement must be reflected in our daily community life.

In our discernment, we have benefitted from consultation with educational organizations (NAIS and ISAS), Episcopal entities (NAES, SAES and the Diocese of West Texas), peer schools, legal advisors, renowned consultants, and our parish leadership about the challenges of being an Episcopal school in 2015. In spite of the variety, nearly 1200 "Episcopal schools exist not merely to educate, but to demonstrate and proclaim the unique worth and beauty of all human beings as creations of a loving, empowering God. The intentional pluralism of most Episcopal schools is a hallmark of their missions" (NAES statement).

A deliberate and renewed commitment to diversity and equity in St. Luke's community will demand that the Board of Trustees, the administrative team, and our faculty and staff collaborate to ensure that our policies, procedures, activities, customs and practices are consistent with our intentional commitment to being a fully inclusive school. In doing so, we will draw on outside resources, provide opportunities for community education, and keep you apprised as this work progresses. In all that we do, we will strive to ensure that St. Luke's graciously welcomes and effectively serves an increasingly diverse population of students, families, faculty and staff.

As some of you may already know, we have a transgender student in our community. In light of the trustees' renewed commitment to inclusion, the administration will be working with the family on accommodations for the student over the next several weeks and we will keep you appropriately informed. Please know that in the meanwhile, nothing has changed.

As a community of faith, we are disciplined about making prayer an important facet of our work. We encourage you to join us in ongoing prayer, asking God to quiet our fears, stir our compassion, and open our hearts and minds. While we are proud of our history, we believe there are bright days ahead for St. Luke's. We hope your family enjoys a blessed Thanksgiving holiday.

With gratitude,

Peggy Pace  
Chair – Board of Trustees

Thomas McLaughlin  
Head of School