

Position Statement for
Head of School
Start date July 1, 2023



St. Luke's School

New York City



"Home is a feeling that glows in your heart, that you feel deep down in your bones. I felt it powerfully the first morning I woke to the cacophony of New York. And I sensed it completely the first time we took our children by the hand and led them down the narrow path between the trees to the double doors of **St. Luke's School**.

Why so?

We are neither big nor showy, shiny-new nor venerable grey stone. But from the moment you leave the chaos of the street for the peace of the enclosure where children ebb and flow like wavelets, this is a place that embraces. In the country's largest city, we have created a small town in which we all – parents, teachers, staff, especially kids – know and cherish one another. Even the squirrels have names.

'I never even knew this was here,' some people marvel when they come through the gates for the first time. But we are not a mirage. St. Luke's School is a little miracle, cobbled together year after year with great care, a collection of strangers turned over time into a cohesive and caring community, devoted to excellence, ethics, education, and love."

– Anna Quindlen, Columnist, Novelist, St. Luke's Alumni Parent





From its two-acre campus on a landmark block in the West Village of Manhattan, St. Luke's School provides a dynamic and well-rounded education for 342 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. Since 1945, the co-educational school has combined academic excellence with a true sense of community to serve a diverse population of religious, spiritual, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Here, an emphasis on connection, empathy, and belonging supports the school's educational rigor. Its Episcopal identity is central to St. Luke's distinctiveness and provides the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of "the St. Luke's Way."

St. Luke's adheres to five Community Standards that characterize its commitment to the development of the whole child: **Dignity, Compassion, Respect, Excellence, and Honesty**. Its motto – "Learning with Joy, Leading with Heart" – captures the school's commitment to fostering an exceptional learning environment driven by values.

St. Luke's seeks an outstanding Head of School to lead with warmth, innovation and a commitment to academic excellence. The next leader will follow a well-loved and respected Head of School, who will retire in June 2023 after 16 years of dedicated and successful service. We invite you to learn more about this special school - and the strengths that make it stable, high-performing, and beloved.

HISTORY

St. Luke's School is an independent school with a history of excellence spanning 75 years, over the course of which it has evolved from an outreach of Trinity Church, to a parish school, to the independent Episcopal school it is today.

As World War II ended and young families moved into the West Village, the Church responded to the need for a school. With the help of Trinity Church, St. Luke's School opened its doors on September 24, 1945, with 19 children and two teachers in classrooms in the Parish House. Trinity Church, which then sponsored St. Luke's Chapel as an outreach ministry, built the first two floors of the current school in 1955 as part of a larger renovation of the block.

In 1976, The Church of St. Luke in the Fields became independent of Trinity Church and began operating St. Luke's School as a parish school. In 2012, St. Luke's School negotiated legal and fiscal independence from the Church, and with its cooperation and support, became a cherished tenant, with a generational lease of the building.

A 20,000-square-foot expansion added a third and fourth floor to the current school. This coincided with the school's expansion from tiny (fewer than 200 students) to small (approximately 340 students). The expansion was completed in 2017, with an outdoor space renovation in 2019. In 2020, St. Luke's School reached full enrollment after a decade of growth, with two classes per grade level in Kindergarten through Grade 8 and one Junior Kindergarten (JK) class.

Episcopal schools are part of a long tradition of Anglican education that is marked by a balance between faith and reason, or "head and heart." They work to build communities that are welcoming, diverse, and inclusive, where all are honored, supported, and valued. Common prayer is practiced, and schools draw upon the traditions of the Church while also welcoming contributions from other faith traditions. Strong commitments to the practice of service and the work of justice are essential. These principles and ideals are woven into the fabric of the school experience at St. Luke's; they continue to set apart and distinguish Episcopal schools such as St. Luke's from other communities of teaching and learning.



CAMPUS

Often described as "a secret garden" in the heart of the West Village, St. Luke's is set upon two acres of gardens with pathways that connect external classroom doors to outdoor spaces.

The Lower and Upper Schools occupy 43,800 square feet of indoor space across four floors, including a gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, science labs, art and dance studios, and the Grace Sawyer Library. Outdoor spaces include a ground-level playground and an open-air amphitheater. The school's new rooftop Field, opening in Fall 2022, will provide a multi-purpose sports field and outdoor learning center.

St. Luke's unusual and expansive urban campus gives rise to unique learning opportunities and community traditions from the annual art show to the Christmas Fair (when the playground becomes a maze of inflatable bouncy houses). Just two blocks from the Hudson River and its green spaces, the school forges a strong connection to nature amidst the historic townhouses of the West Village.



PROGRAM

The school comprises two divisions: Lower School (JK - Grade 4) and Upper School (Grades 5 - 8). Class sizes range from 18 to 20 students per class. In Kindergarten through Grade 8, there are two classes per grade level. JK maintains a single class of preschoolers. From early childhood development activities to the challenging, yet balanced elementary and middle school curriculums, St. Luke's School offers an excellent and innovative academic program and learning environment.

The core curriculum in reading, writing, and mathematics is complemented by science, world language (Spanish and French), an integrated arts program, physical education, and multimedia technology. Service Learning, Social Emotional Learning, and Learning Support Services are woven into the life of the school and its many curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. In this way, every student has the support they need to develop into a thoughtful, engaged citizen with a foundation in leadership skills and the tools to succeed in academics and beyond.

Through St. Luke's Partners Program, students forge friendships across grade levels, increasing the sense of community that characterizes the school. Lunch, recess, class musicals and presentations, sports teams, Chapel, convocation, and assemblies allow children of all ages to interact, encouraging citizenship and leadership. The After School Program offers opportunities ranging from woodworking to chess and coding.

Students leave St. Luke's with a clear sense of self and the confidence to embrace the opportunities and challenges of high school. Responsibility for self and others, an expectation that they will lead others by example, meaningful engagement with community and world issues, and an intentional and successful transition to high school are given specific attention.

St. Luke's graduates matriculate at the finest of independent, public, and church-related secondary schools and enter college well prepared for the challenges and opportunities life offers. Alumni return and visit their "home school," with a sense of warmth and familiarity for their days at St. Luke's, as well as tremendous respect and appreciation for the professional staff.



ATHLETICS

At St Luke's, everybody plays: there are no tryouts for teams, which from Grade 3 onward encompass Club, Junior Varsity, and Varsity-level groups. Basketball, softball, soccer, volleyball, and ultimate frisbee are played against local schools. St. Luke's Running Club takes advantage of the school's location along the Hudson River pathway.

ARTS

St. Luke's fine arts program is grounded in experience and exposure. Students are encouraged to develop artistic literacy in multiple forms, through the school's music, art, dance, and theater programs. The after school music lesson program is renowned, with private lessons offered in instruments from the cello, French Horn and viola to world percussion.

CHAPEL

Chapel is a special time in the school week where all members of the community gather for prayer, song, reflection, and celebration. Chapel services follow Episcopal liturgy and are adapted to changing needs and traditions of the interdenominational student body. Students participate in a quiet and respectful way; some find Chapel a time to renew or develop their own spiritual life, while others use it as a time for quiet contemplation. Each class in Grades 5-8 has the opportunity to plan and lead a Wednesday Chapel service, and students have the opportunity to share their joys and concerns during prayer time at Thursday Eucharist.



Grade 5 Musical



COMMUNITY

St. Luke's embraces students from across New York City. While many of the school's 342 students live in nearby West Village, Tribeca, and Chelsea, others come from Queens, Brooklyn, and New Jersey. Approximately 30% of the student body identifies as people of color. Multiple religious denominations and spiritual practices are welcomed and represented at St. Luke's. In the 2022-23 school year, need-based financial assistance totaled \$2.9 million. Over 17% of the school's students currently receive financial aid.

St. Luke's students are engaged, joyful, and motivated. There is an informality that permeates the campus. One Upper School student describes their school as "full of integrity, kindness, generosity, openness. St. Luke's is future-focused." An eighth grader reports that, at St. Luke's, "there is a focus on community, a focus on family, a focus on the individual student, a focus on diversity, and a focus on student happiness." St. Luke's students are passionate, purposeful, mature, and engaging.

St. Luke's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a way of life and an ethical stance supported by the school's community standards and its identity as an Episcopal independent school that values perspectives and practices rooted in religion, spirituality, and moral traditions. It is the "St. Luke's Way."



PARENT BODY

St. Luke's takes a "whole family" approach to school. The school extends a heartfelt invitation to families, and not just students, to join and become part of its community. A robust and active parent body is devoted to the school and supports the program at St. Luke's. Central to the effectiveness of the school is the parent community, whose support for and connection with administration and professional staff are essential. This sense of deep connection and trust enriches each student, family, and professional staff member. Parents and families are appreciative of the rich and deep relationships central to the success of the entire St. Luke's School community.

The Parent Association is an integral and dynamic volunteer support group. The Association serves the parent body and represents the interests of diverse voices in the school community. The Association encourages participation in a broad range of activities and events throughout the school year, and these programs are vital to student life. As part of the Parent Association, the Humble Ox Committee deepens the traditions of service learning and outreach in the greater community. School-wide activities include toy and diaper drives, book drives, and a service week.

Some St. Luke's Annual Traditions

Origin Stories: *Grade 3 celebrates the stories of the Native people of the Northeast Coast*

Halloween Dance: *Parents, children, and teachers all wear costumes*

Lessons & Carols: *Music and readings in multiple languages by the whole school on the day before winter break*

Mentions & Convocation: *During weekly Friday student assemblies, students practice public speaking and share what is happening in their classrooms*

Family Picnic: *On the first Saturday at the start of the school year, families come together for lunch on the playground*

Jog-a-Thon: *Students and parents raise funds for a chosen charity by running on the Hudson River piers*

Humble Ox Diaper Drive: *Families gather supplies for a beloved local nonprofit, El Nido*

Penguin Dance: *Students from JK perform a song and dance they learned*

Moving Up Ceremony: *Grade 4 students transition to the Upper School*



PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Presently, there are 52 faculty members, 85% of whom have advanced degrees. The average teaching experience is 15 years. A low student-teacher ratio, 7:1, ensures that each student receives close attention.

The professional staff are highly skilled and dedicated to each child's growth and development and have a critical understanding and dedication to educating the whole child. One teacher put it this way: "St. Luke's is a nurturing environment that promotes student self-advocacy and promotes self-directed learning."

St. Luke's high-quality teachers are committed to their craft and display both a critical rigor and a kind disposition that makes students and families alike feel comfortable, safe, and willing to take risks in their respective teaching and learning journeys. One faculty member described the ethos of the school as "**creative boldness!**" Another teacher summarized the St. Luke's experience as "Living in Love—a commitment to academic excellence while focusing on the whole child approach." It is evident that St. Luke's professional staff are specialists in early childhood, elementary, and middle school education. Each focuses their energies and skill on a particular developmental level and curricular area to provide a rich and challenging learning environment.

Professional staff and administration are committed to individual, interpersonal, and institutional growth that supports and affirms all students and their families.

ADMINISTRATION

The administrative team includes the Head of School, Head of the Lower School, the Head of the Upper School, the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources, the Chief DEI Officer, the Director of Enrollment, and the Director of Development. Each of these senior administrators reports directly to the Head of School. The senior leadership team is collaborative and competent, and each member is dedicated to the mission and core values of the institution.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The school's 26 Trustees represent a dedicated and committed group of parents, former parents, community members, educational leaders, and alumni who support the implementation of the school's mission.

Well-prepared to govern the school, the Board is committed to implementing best practices in governance and to working in partnership with school leadership. Each Trustee clearly understands the appropriate scope of the work of independent school trusteeship and is committed to the role, as evidenced by their generosity of time, talent, and resources. The Board's work is organized under subject matter committees which include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Finance; Buildings and Grounds; Education; Enrollment and Retention; and an Executive Committee.

FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

St. Luke's School is in excellent financial condition. The school conducts annual audits and maintains strong internal controls. Like other independent schools, St. Luke's primary revenue source is tuition, while its primary expense is professional staff salaries.

The school has an annual budget of over \$15.5 million and an endowment of almost \$8 million. Tuition for 2022-2023 will be \$54,909 for Grades JK-8. There is a substantial commitment to need-based financial assistance for students. Approximately 17% of enrolled students receive assistance for tuition.

Generosity characterizes the St. Luke's community. Currently, the Annual Fund raises about \$1 million each year. The school recently completed a successful Capital Campaign to support new construction and revitalization of outdoor spaces.



Rooftop Field, opening Fall 2022

STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

St. Luke's School in 2022 is a school with many enduring strengths that draw on its extraordinary seven-decade history—among them, a clear and compelling mission; an enviable growth trajectory; a reputation for successful graduate placement; and, in recent years, the renovation and build-out of its optimal infrastructure, as well as the expansive use of instructional spaces.

- Although St. Luke's School is independently incorporated, both St. Luke's School and The Church of St. Luke in the Fields benefit greatly from a close and collaborative relationship. It will be important for the next Head of School to cultivate, preserve, and foster this important partnership to the mutual benefit of both institutions.
- St. Luke's faces many of the challenges common to high-performing JK-8 independent schools today: leaning into its commitment to being an equitable and diverse community; driving and sustaining strong educational programming; maintaining effective structures to support an active and engaged student body and a very capable professional staff; and building on a strong financial base to support an ambitious future for the school.
- Often hailed as a "best-kept secret," St. Luke's hopes to strengthen its visibility. Always keeping humility as a core value, the school would benefit from improved marketing and increased community awareness of its unique strengths. From a focus on compassion to a welcoming outdoor space, many of our unique strengths would be considered valuable assets that are particularly sought after during this time.
- After a decade of expansion and the recent pandemic, there is need at St. Luke's to revitalize connections between members of the faculty and professional staff, renew curricular continuity between the Lower and Upper Schools, and refresh resources and skills needed to serve all students.



The next Head of School at St. Luke's should be a skilled educator and experienced leader who will:

Thrive in a vibrant, child-centered, and dynamic JK-8 school environment in Lower Manhattan;

Be informed and highly versed in today's best practices in JK-8 education with a vision to support professional growth, horizontal and vertical curricular/skill alignment, and technology;

Retain a strong and effective Diversity, Equity and Inclusion commitment with proven experiences that inform and transcend effective work in and out of the classroom, on the playing field, and in the lives of students, their families, and the professional staff;

Maintain a strong moral compass, be a proponent for spiritual education, and though the candidate need not identify as Christian or Episcopalian, be a strong voice for the school's identity and ethos, which is rooted in the Episcopalian tradition;

Demonstrate a proven record of hiring, supporting, evaluating, and retaining outstanding and diverse professional staff;

Sustain St. Luke's high academic standards and rigor, providing strong academic support for all students;

Maintain a visible, accessible, and approachable presence;

Demonstrate intuition, intellect, gravitas, wisdom, and a willingness to learn, lead, and embrace change;

Balance a warm, approachable presence with being a clear, thoughtful, and decisive educational leader who can also manage difficult conversations and work through differences of opinion;

Possess excellent communication skills with a strong grasp for active listening and a propensity for authentic engagement and trusting conversations;

Maintain effective organizational skills and prioritize multiple responsibilities and tasks concurrently;

Recognize the challenges and opportunities of a fast-paced school environment with an empathetic understanding for traditions, transitions and planning, affiliations and structures, and a comprehensive JK-8 school culture; and

Have a sense of humor, optimism, and the energy necessary to find joy in the leadership of an outstanding school community.

This is an exciting opportunity for a distinguished and experienced educational professional with the talents, energy, and competencies to serve a thriving JK-8 school community in a culturally diverse and welcoming environment. St. Luke's School offers a competitive salary and benefits.



ST. LUKE'S SCHOOL

St. Luke's School has retained **Resource Group 175 (RG175)** to assist with the search for a new Head of School who will begin in July 2023. To apply, please submit a cover letter, a resume, and a personal statement by June 30, 2022. All inquiries will be treated confidentially.

Applications should be submitted at:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

All inquiries should be directed to one of the following RG175 consultants:

Tony Featherston
tfeatherston@rg175.com

Jerry Katz
jkatz@rg175.com

Doreen Oleson
doreenoleson@gmail.com



St. Luke's School welcomes and encourages applications from diverse candidates. St. Luke's does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national or ethnic origin, or other legally protected status in admission of otherwise qualified students or in providing access to the rights, privileges, programs or activities generally available to all students and their families, including educational policies, scholarship and other financial aid programs, or athletic, extra-curricular, and other school-administered programs and activities.

St. Luke's is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and is a member in good standing with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education (CSEE), and the Downtown Independent Schools Consortium (DISC).