

HEAD LINES

A message from Chip Denton, Head of School



October 2022

Dear Trinity Community,

Trinity's mission is invisible, but not, for that reason, unimportant. God's own self is, mostly to us in the current version of the universe, invisible. "You are truly a God who hides yourself," says Isaiah (Is. 45:15). One reason the good news about Jesus is news is that while "no one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). Jesus put flesh on the invisible.



I'm always looking for ways to make the invisible mission visible. We could do that if I invited you all into a class at Trinity. Many of you parents got a taste of this in our recent in-person Parent Nights. There is something about being back together in person that unveils the mission and makes it visible in ways that a Zoom Parent Night, for all its attendant conveniences, cannot. Maybe the mission of Trinity, like the Gospel of our God, needs to be incarnated in real, flesh-and-blood teachers who dwell among us.

There are three other ways I want to try to make Trinity's mission clear and evident to us all this year. The first is through our parent education programs. Trinity Parent Organization leaders Emily Merryweather and Caroline Daniels, along with their leadership team, are working with the staff to put on several events across the year. **On October 27, we will host a learning experience for parents based on Andy Crouch's podcast, "Personhood in a Personalized World."** Through various media and active engagement, we will explore together how Trinity's mission speaks to the issues that Andy raises in his podcast. Also, **on November 10, we will be holding our second annual Trinity Connects event.** This night is designed especially to help parents who are newer to the Trinity community to get an introduction to and deeper understanding of the school's mission.

Second, I am enclosing with this Head Lines our simple mission chart. This visual of the mission captures on one page the salient points about each of the pillars of Trinity's mission (Christian, classical, rich, and unhurried). If you want to unpack any of these, the best place to go is to Trinity's "Expanded Mission Statement," which is available on the website. But this one-page chart will give you a quick flyover of our entire mission and a sense of how the different parts of the mission work together.

Finally, in this year's Head Lines we will take a deeper dive into the mission of the school. This is part of our strategic vision to pass the mission along to the next generation of parents, faculty, students, and Board members. A glance at the mission chart reveals that Trinity's mission, while simple, is multifaceted, and the different parts of it work together in finely tuned ways. It's this fine-tuning that I want to talk about this year.

Think of Trinity's mission like a guitar with several strings tuned together: standard tuning for Trinity is Christian, Classical, Rich, and Unhurried, with bass strings of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

The strings on a musical instrument are in tune when their tension is just right. Too much and it's sharp; too little and it's flat. The tension on a guitar string is not the sort of strain that needs to be relieved or resolved. The instrument plays as it should only when the string's tensility is balanced and true. The guitar is built to hold that tension just right.

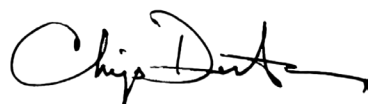
Trinity School is built to hold certain tensions, too. These are not accidental, but intentional. They go back, most of them, to the founding of the school and the codification of the mission. Because they are tensions, we feel the tug to resolve them: to move further to one end or the other to release the pressure. We've probably all felt the urge to make this move—tension can be stressful. But to do so would be to untune the harmonious mission of Trinity School.

In this year's Head Lines, I propose to do a little tuning of Trinity's mission. In each edition, we will take a careful look at one of the key tensions integral to making Trinity sound like Trinity. There are seven that I want to highlight:

- Trinity is thoroughly and distinctively Christian; Trinity welcomes students and families of other faiths and of none.
- Trinity is an orthodox Christian school; Trinity is ecumenical in its Christian faith.
- Trinity trusts the Bible as our unique and authoritative revelation; Trinity welcomes all truth as God's truth.
- Trinity is a classical school; Trinity is devoted to the pedagogy of Charlotte Mason.
- Trinity offers a rich (and broad) education; Trinity's education is unhurried (and deep).
- Trinity's liberal arts education has a Western focus; Trinity's education is multicultural.
- Trinity aims for excellence in education; Trinity is a family school that is open to many types of learners.

Holding all this together requires a certain posture as a school. Posture involves not just where we stand, but how we stand there. I believe that this posture is part of the unique calling that Trinity has, and I look forward to exploring it with you in the months ahead.

Non Nobis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chip Denton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Chip Denton
Head of School

TRINITY'S MISSION

NON NOBIS:

God first, others second, I am third.

CHRISTIAN

Trinity

One God, three Persons: unity with diversity.

Creation

And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Gen. 1:31)

Lordship

Jesus is Lord. (Phil. 2:11)

Participation

In him all things hold together. (Col. 1:17)

Incarnation

The Word became flesh. (John 1:14)

CLASSICAL

Learning

The chief end of education is to teach students how to learn for themselves.

Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

Focus on the transcendents, wherever and whenever.

Grammar

Listen and read: Dive deep into old books and conversations we did not begin.

Logic

Think slow, hard, and well.

Rhetoric

To teach is a necessity, to please a beauty, to persuade a glory.

RICH

Student Engagement

Let the students do the work.

Mind Food

Ideas are to the mind as food is to the body.

Ownership

Provide direct contact with books and things, so that students own their learning.

Teachers as Designers

The job of a teacher is to design learning experiences.

Habits

Habits are the rails of learning: attentiveness, respect, responsibility.

UNHURRIED

Work and Rest

We rest in God, and we work in him.

Rhythm and Pace

A change can be as good as a rest.

Deep Understandings

Deep understandings take time.

Balance and Moderation

Do a few things well. "Better one handful with tranquility" (Ecc. 4:6)

Constraints and Creativity

Constraints produce the conditions for creativity. "Boundary lines fallen in pleasant places" (Ps. 16:6)

TEACHING & LEARNING

Human

Each one teaches us. Every child is a born person.

Formation

Character and values are both taught and caught.

Imagination

The work of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.

Hospitality

Welcome strangers. A class is a home.

