



Announcement from Board President Paul Morris

November 30, 2021

Dear GSL Community,

I am pleased to announce that the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Andy Surber to be our next Head of School, starting July 1, 2022.

Dr. Surber will succeed current Head of School Mr. Thor Kvande, who will continue in his role through the end of June 2022. Mr. Kvande and our entire leadership team will work closely with Dr. Surber in the months ahead to ensure a seamless transition of leadership.

Dr. Surber will be coming to us from Laguna Blanca School in Montecito, Calif., where he currently serves as the Assistant Head of School and Head of Lower School. Prior to his move to Laguna Blanca in 2013, he was the Head of Lower School here at GSL. Dr. Surber earned his Ed.D. in Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of Southern California. He also holds a B.S. in Child Development from Rockford University and an M.Ed. in Organizational Leadership from Northern Arizona University.

During his time at Laguna Blanca School, Dr. Surber gained experience leading a stand-alone campus of Early Kindergarten through Fourth Grade and served in many areas of the school, including admissions, fundraising, and overall school development and direction. Dr. Surber has proven experience implementing successful academic programs, attracting and retaining talented teachers, increasing admission demand, and raising funds for important school projects. Since his arrival at Laguna Blanca, through community building and program development, both lower school demand and enrollment have grown exponentially, with waiting lists in each grade level.

Over the last several weeks, the Board spent a great deal of time reviewing our final three candidates. We carefully parsed background information, engaged in thoughtful conversations with references, and interviewed the candidates in a variety of settings. We read every single survey response from each member of our community who had the chance to meet the candidates. We listened to administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students.

In the end, the Board determined that we had more than one candidate who met our criteria and who received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community. This was a good problem to have. The fact that GSL attracted such qualified candidates is a testament to the strength and appeal of our school and community.

After much discerning and deliberating, the Board determined that Dr. Surber was the best choice for GSL. His enthusiasm and expertise set him apart. He knows what academic excellence looks like, and he knows how to bring a community together around a common purpose. We have the benefit of his previous knowledge of GSL, combined with the significant career growth he has experienced in the nine years since he worked on our campus. He is a relationship builder and has the tools needed to advance our school.

When I called Dr. Surber to extend the offer, he was thrilled. It was inspiring to hear his enthusiasm and optimism for the future of our school, and I am certain that he is ready to do whatever it takes, working with our community, to ensure the success and long-term sustainability of Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal

School.

Our very thorough search process required a tremendous amount of work from a lot of people. No one worked more than Former Board President and Search Committee Chair Liz Keough. Thank you to Liz and the rest of the Search Committee: Father Ollie Rencher, Margaret McLean, Linda Khumalo, and Scott Crosby. While the Search Committee administered the process, the entire Board was deeply involved and understood that selecting the next Head of School was our most important responsibility. We were guided by the expertise of our consultants, Marci McLean and Jay Philpott from The Education Group, and we thank them for their help. They will continue to support the Board and GSL throughout the transition of leadership.

A heartfelt thank you to each board member, administrator, staff member, teacher, parent, and student who participated in the process and provided input along the way. Your feedback was critical throughout the search process. And our collective support of Dr. Surber will be essential to his success. A letter to our community from Dr. Surber follows below.

More information regarding the leadership transition will be shared in the new year. In the meantime, Mr. Kvande and our entire team remain focused on continuing our success for the remainder of this school year. On behalf of the Board, I thank Thor and the entire GSL administration, faculty, and staff for all they have done, and continue to do, to make this a great year for our children and our school. Mr. Kvande is dedicated to finishing this school year strong, and there will be opportunities toward the end of the school year for us to properly thank him for his excellent service to GSL and his decade as our Head of School.

As always, please reach out to me with any questions or thoughts.

Sincerely,

Paul Morris
Board President
Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal School
paul@morrisglass.com
901.219.2336

Letter from Andy Surber

November 30, 2021

Dear Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal School Community,

I am thrilled and humbled to be called to serve as the next Head of School at Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal School. GSL is a special community, and it is a dream come true to lead a school that I care for so deeply. From my previous tenure at GSL to my more recent visit to campus, the attributes that make this school extraordinary were highlighted and confirmed. GSL is a school recognized for strong academics and meaningful relationships where each child is known and valued. The school has talented faculty and staff, a passionate alumni base, and a strong sense of community. These are all important pieces in the lives of children as they progress through the GSL program.

Throughout the interview process, I was continually impressed with the people at GSL and the work being accomplished. There is clear intentionality in knowing each student and ensuring the lessons offered from age 2 through eighth grade lead children to learn and grow into the best version of themselves. I value that these lessons take place in all areas of the school – in classrooms, on playgrounds, in the church, on the stage, in the gym, and on the playing fields. I consider the preschool to eighth grade years to be the most important, and GSL graduates are known to be community-centered, knowledgeable, spiritual, and well-rounded, with a solid base for success in high school and beyond.

I look forward to our upcoming time together and am eager to meet and build relationships with everyone in the community. Relationships have played a critical role in the success of the schools where I've served. These positive connections help advance curriculum development, deepen learning for students, and build community support as the school develops and evolves. It is these connections that make school fun for all and our collective experiences meaningful. It's part of what my wife, Mary, and I loved about GSL the first time we were here, and it's why the school was such a positive experience for

our sons, Keenan and Logan.

Special thanks to everyone who gave their time and attention to the Head of School search process, including families, students, faculty, staff, and administration. Your participation helped me better understand the GSL community. I also want to publicly acknowledge Liz Keough, Paul Morris, and the entire Board for the immense amount of time given to this effort. Additionally, I particularly look forward to collaborating with Father Ollie Rencher in his role as the Rector (lead pastor) of both Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church and School, and other members of the church's clergy-staff team. It is easy to see that GSL is a community of individuals who care a great deal about each other and about the future of the school.

I am especially thankful to Mr. Kvande, and the entire team surrounding him, for building such a strong foundation for GSL's continued success. Between now and July 1, I look forward to working with him to ensure a smooth transition. There will be more details to come, but until then, I wish each member of the Grace-St. Luke's community a joyous holiday season and successful completion of the school year.

Warmest regards, and GO, SAINTS!

Andy Surber, Ed.D.

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