



New Principal: Tina Bergquist, Saint Olaf Catholic School

Friday, Aug. 16, 2024



Courtesy photo

Christine Bergquist

By Linda Petersen
Intermountain Catholic

BOUNTIFUL — With 32 years working in the Utah Catholic Schools, Christine “Tina” Bergquist is prepared for the task of serving as the new principal at St. Olaf Catholic School.

Bergquist grew up in West Valley City and attended public schools. When she became a mother herself, she wanted more for her own two sons, so she enrolled them in Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Salt Lake City; they both went on to graduate from Judge Memorial Catholic High School.

“I love the message that we send to students at Catholic schools about being open and accepting of all; that the Catholic Church is universal and that that is transparent in our school,” she said. “With the diversity that comes into the schools, I think that that really helps kids understand how to treat others with kindness and respect as they go through their lives, and to do stewardship to help those less fortunate than ourselves, and those values are instilled in them through Catholic schools that they can now take out into life and help them be successful.”

Bergquist holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Utah and a master’s degree in educational leadership from Creighton University. She became a kindergarten teacher at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in 2000, after her younger son completed kindergarten there. She went on to teach fifth grade and then third grade. In 2005 she became vice principal while continuing in the classroom. In 2012 she was appointed principal and was in that position until this year, when she was asked by diocesan school administrators to take the helm at St. Olaf’s.

She is looking forward to leading St. Olaf's, where the school campus recently has undergone significant renovation – earlier this year it opened a new 16,000 square-foot addition, and Bergquist has plans to streamline the process of integrating both buildings, she said. She also is aware of the need for ongoing improvements, which include security and technology upgrades and paint, both interior and exterior, for the main building.

"I am finding that we want to incorporate what I'm calling the legacy building, the old 1960 building, incorporating [it] into the new build and kind of making a whole campus feel for the entire school – just connecting so many things with that and really building a culture of academics here," she said.

The school has a student population of 115, and Bergquist hopes to increase enrollment.

"We are looking forward to growth as the word of mouth gets out of what an incredible school and an amazing faculty and staff that are here on board to help St. Olaf's grow," she said. "I know that we're going to increase those overall enrollment numbers."

More than half of the school staff this year are new; adding them to the staff who have been at St. Olaf's longer brings new energy while maintaining the legacy that has kept the school community strong, Bergquist said. "The new hires are all Catholic, and they're very excited about being on a campus that can grow. So all of them have said that they're very excited about the opportunity to grow programs and grow with the school. ... We are all incorporating and working together to bring the old and the new together and do what's best for students."

Bergquist's goals include setting a budget for the school, and to build the excellence in education that Catholic schools are known for, she said.

Father Andrzej Skrzypiec, pastor of St. Olaf Catholic Church, is very involved at the school, which shares the parish campus, Bergquist said. Through this the students "see how faith works in their lives, through every aspect of being on a campus where we can live our faith openly and work with the kids on their faith and bring that into whatever they're learning. It even involves that outside community. ..."

Having a pastor who is "very visible and wants to be on our campus" helps the students "see and understand how God can be in their lives every single day," Bergquist said.

A Bountiful resident for the past 39 years, Bergquist is looking forward to being closer to home and to being part of St. Olaf Parish, she said; while leading Our Lady of Lourdes School she attended the parish affiliated with that community. She is married to Tim, a retired Union Pacific worker, is a big ice hockey fan and is looking forward to a new Utah hockey team. She enjoys reading, hiking and spending time with her family, she said.