

A Specialist in the Impossible

When VLHS embarked on the largest and longest building campaign in school history 5 years ago, the task seemed daunting. I had no shortage of questions or doubts.

But school and campaign leadership remained dedicated and focused. And most importantly of all, they remembered that Christ is the foundation of this school and from Him comes every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).

Today, the GROWING Campaign has officially concluded. And we can celebrate a wonderfully successful campaign that will benefit and support our students today and for years to come. And we give thanks to God for the many blessings and for the fact that we have met or exceeded all of the goals.

I guess I shouldn't be surprised. I've "seen" it before:

Daniel and the Lion's Den (Daniel 6)
The Walls of Jericho (Joshua 6)
David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (Daniel 3)
Parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)
Jonathan and his Armor Bearer (1 Sam. 13)
Feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21)

..and the list goes on.

At one time or another, we've all faced situations that seemed impossible – where there seemed to be no possible way. However, no problem – no matter how daunting or impossible it may seem – can overcome us unless we let it. The

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VL Welcomes New Executive Director

On August 1, 2020, Julian Petzold assumed his new role as Executive Director of Valley Lutheran High School. We welcome Mr. Petzold back to Valley as a proud VL alumni and pray God's richest blessings on his new leadership among us.

Take us on a brief journey from the time you graduated from Valley Lutheran in 1989 to being named the new Executive Director in 2020. How has God prepared you in the last 31 years for this new Calling?

God has been doing some things that I never anticipated. I went to Concordia, Chicago after Valley and graduated in 1993 with a degree in Early Childhood Education. Here in Michigan, that degree translates to an Elementary Teaching Degree with an Early Childhood endorsement. A year later, I began my master's degree at Oakland University, and I intended to get it in Early Childhood Education. However, that didn't happen because I would have had to take 6 classes that I just took in Illinois, over again in Michigan. I wouldn't do that, and I was left with the option of a master's in Educational Leadership. God knew I'd become an Early Childhood Center director and then start a K-8 school at Living Word Lutheran Church a few years later. I had no idea He was preparing me for the work He had planned for me. I enjoyed being in a leadership role once I was doing it, but I never aspired to do that.

I've been privileged to serve on committees and boards at the Michigan district level as well. Especially my role on the Church Extension Fund (CEF) Board of Trustees has helped prepare me for this role. Being involved in the financial oversight of a strong entity like CEF has been a real blessing.

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Impossible

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reason we lose hope in those seemingly impossible situations is because we focus more on the problem than we do on the One who can solve it.

I don't know what kind of "impossible situation" you may be facing, but I am learning one thing: our God is a specialist at handling impossible situations. Our question should never be, "If You can," but rather "If You will!" It's not a question of whether He has the power or the strength to help us. Our question should be whether we're asking Him to help us achieve something that is in keeping with His will. When we look at life's obstacles this way, nothing is really "impossible." Thanks be to God!

~Kyle DeWees
Director of Development

New Executive Director

Currently, my doctoral program has helped prepare me as well. I've learned a great deal about school leadership, and I hope to finish my dissertation this fall and graduate from Concordia University, Chicago with a Ph. D. in Educational Leadership in December 2020.

The 2020-21 school year is going to look and feel significantly different in many ways. How is the theme for the year "Press On" appropriate for the experiences and challenges ahead?

I think the theme is so appropriate because Paul is talking about being pressed on every side as Christians. We live in a culture that is pressing on Christian values, beliefs, structures, morals, etc. The theme speaks directly to the everyday lives of Christians. But the theme also holds the promise that we are not crushed when the world presses in on us as believers. God sustains and strengthens us to live for Him and share the gospel message with others He places in our path.

I plan to also help the students see the value of "Press in" as well. We need to press into God's word, the only source of truth, in order to live for Him in our world that will continue to "Press on" us as Christians. I also love the final part of the verse where Paul writes about the death of Christ and life of Christ being a part of our bodies. This reminds me of baptism,

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and I hope to do some celebrating of baptism birthdays this school year. I think that would be a great way to support one another as we remember all that God has done for us in and through our baptism.

What words of wisdom from Dr. Brandt and examples of his leadership will you embrace as you step into this position as Executive Director?

Dr. Brandt has been very encouraging as I've begun my ministry here. He's reminded me of the importance of sharing Jesus with students at every opportunity because, like him, I may never know the impact of a word, conversation, or sharing of my faith with a student. He's also reminded me at this time of starting a school year with a global pandemic with odd, but still wise, advice: It's not like anyone has ever done it better before! LOL!

Like Dr. Brandt, I plan to work diligently so that teachers can be great at their craft and Jesus can be evident in everything that happens here at Valley Lutheran. I know he has been blessed to work with so many great parents, students, and faculty and staff. I plan to enjoy that same blessing as the new Executive Director.

For more about Mr. Petzold's family, what he learned at Faculty Retreat, and his Valley memories, check out www.vlhs.com/MrPetzoldInterview.

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