



January 27, 2016

Dear OLM School Community, St. George and St. Margaret Parishioners, Alumni, and Friends of Our Lady of Mercy School,

Often things are more than the sum of their parts. This is definitely true of OLM. Our school is more than an academic education program, sports teams and arts program. Our school is more than mock trials, the 8th grade play, robotics program, and book club. Our school is more than the annual auction, the Christmas pageant, and the Friday morning prayer services. Our school is more than parents and teachers and children. It is more than a community. And for certain, it is more than just a building. Our Lady of Mercy School is a family; a family into which we are welcomed, and to which we then belong. Our school is a place where our children can receive a faith based education, where they can excel and be recognized, but more importantly, where they can find their own voice.

This has been true since 1954 when the Sisters of Mercy founded Our Lady of Mercy Country Day School. It remained true when, in 2005, Our Lady of Mercy became an Archdiocesan school jointly administered and supported by the parishes of St. Margaret and St. George. It remains true today.

Currently, the building is leased from the Sisters of Mercy, and the Sisters have informed us that the lease will not be extended beyond the 2017-2018 school year. Our OLM family will need to move house.

Several meetings of the school board, administrators, pastors, superintendent, and parish representatives have already taken place. The pastors have already met with the Archbishop and the Office of Catholic Schools. Work has begun. But ultimately, the direction of our school is the responsibility of our parishes and our families.

The school board and all concerned parties are committed to a path forward that will result in OLM students being able to continue their Catholic education beyond 2018. That path is now ours to shape.

Having had some time to reflect on this news, we now see an opportunity. This is an opportunity not only to build upon the past of OLM, but also to build a better future for our school. This is an

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opportunity to chart the course of our school, one that best serves our OLM family now and in the years to come.

To assist in the process, a Steering Committee is being formed with representation from the School Board, Parents Association, Faculty, Parish Trustees, Parish Finance Councils, and Parish Councils to assist the Pastors and Administration in identifying and exploring the feasibility of all options available.

This will require not only the commitment of long hours and hard work for the school board and steering committee, but also a commitment of continuing support from our OLM families. To that end, the re-enrollment period has been established, the new enrollment period has been set, open houses have been scheduled, and recruiting efforts will proceed. The decision to freeze tuition for the 2016-2017 school year at current levels has been made. The re-enrollment period for current families will begin in February and we hope for a strong commitment to our school, both from our existing families as well as from families new to OLM.

Progress updates will be provided on a regular basis moving forward and we welcome your input. Members of the school board and members of the administration are available to answer questions and provide clarity to the situation before us.

Yes, often things are more than a sum of their parts. We know that to be true for our school. We also know that when life thrusts change upon us, opportunity for growth and betterment exists. With your prayers and with your support, OLM will continue its mission to provide a faith based education to children along the shoreline for many years to come.

Fr. Daniel McLearn, Pastor, St. Margaret, Madison
Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Pastor, St. George, Guilford
Sr. Carol Sansone, ASCJ, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy School
School Board of Our Lady of Mercy School