

Post-Seminary  
Applied Learning and Support

---

# 2017-18 Annual Report



September 2018  
Pastoral Education  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122  
*lcms.org/pals*

**Greetings from the Office of Pastoral Education,**

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11). This was the theme at our annual PALS Facilitator Training Conference July 31–August 1, 2018. Encouraging one another, however, is more than a conference theme; it is part and parcel of who we are as Christians.

Kansas District President, Rev. Peter Lange, presented on the above text at our conference. He wonderfully articulated how the Greek word for “encouragement” can only be understood in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christians (and yes, Missouri Synod Lutherans!) encourage one another in light of who we are as the baptized, redeemed children of God, united in the blood, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I would like to take this opportunity to all our readers to encourage you in the faith! I “call out” to you, “shore you up,” and wish to inspire, embolden and urge you on in the faith and in your daily vocations. Especially, I pray the following receive my heartfelt, Christ-centered encouragement in their involvement in PALS. Thank you, PALS family and friends, for all you do for the good of the Kingdom and for the sake of the Gospel.

PALS Pastors and Wives  
PALS Congregations  
Facilitators — Husbands and Wives  
District Presidents  
Both Seminaries  
PALS Steering Committee  
Robyn Armbrust and Judi Winker  
PALS Curriculum Authors  
Synod Communications Department  
Synod and Synod Conventions supporting PALS

**Rev. Dr. James Baneck, *Executive Director of Pastoral Education***



**“I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who  
will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”**

–Jer. 3:15

## Introduction

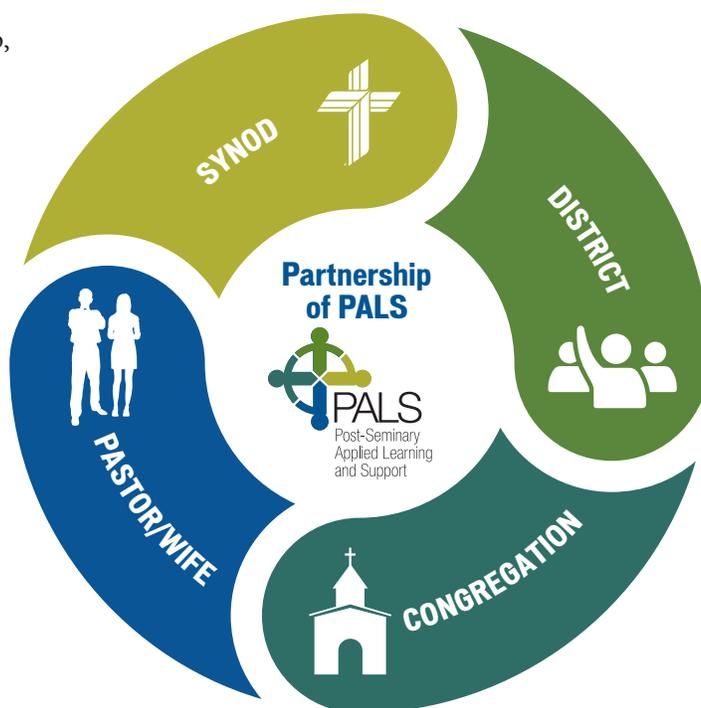
In the mid-1990s, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), chiefly through its Council of Presidents (COP-District Presidents), sought to assist new seminary graduates and their wives in the joyful, yet difficult, transition from seminary to congregational life. This desire resulted in the creation of a cooperative initiative between the COP and the Synod's Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support (CMGS) called Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS). Since its inception in 1998, PALS has assisted hundreds of new seminary graduates and their wives during their first three years of congregational life. PALS has become a part of the fabric of the LCMS and has proven positive for our new pastors and the congregations they serve. After the elimination of the CMGS in late 2010, the Synod's Office of Pastoral Education has been overseeing PALS since November 1, 2010.

PALS utilizes geographic cohorts of new pastors and wives, usually numbering six to twelve pastors, that gather six days each year for worship, study, discussion, support and fellowship. While some cohorts gather on six separate days during the year, others gather for multiple days at a time. The cohorts function as supportive, collegial learning groups where members assist and encourage one another as they share many common experiences and dynamics in their lives.

Pastors and their wives grow in knowledge, skills and understanding as they engage in study topics specifically designed to assist them, communicate openly about joys and challenges concerning their vocations and reflect upon their new experiences. While wives meet with their husbands for most portions of each gathering, they often have

separate time for study and discussion of topics more focused upon their needs and interests. Continuing education units (CEUs) are provided to pastors as an acknowledgment of their participation in PALS gatherings.

Each PALS cohort of pastors is led by a facilitating pastor. The facilitating pastor's wife leads the separate portions of each gathering for the wives. In the selection of PALS facilitators, the district president is always consulted to identify experienced, respected and empathetic pastors and wives. Facilitators serve to help participants learn from one another as study, discussion and reflection leads participants to fresh insights and wise perspectives concerning their new experiences in congregational life. Facilitating pastors and their wives serve with excellence and are commended for their faithful, loving service to the Church. These are truly gifted people! Facilitators receive remuneration for their services and are reimbursed for travel, meal and lodging expenses associated with each gathering.



PALS is made strong through our wonderful partnership of Synod, district, congregation and pastor. Each district submits annually \$500 for each participating pastor. This year PALS district dues totaled \$99,000.00. This amount is matched by the Synod. Congregations are asked to support their pastors through encouraging participation in PALS, allowing for the time off and reimbursing PALS meeting travel expenses. Each participating pastor pays \$25 per year as an investment in their ministry.

The funds received from the district offices and PALS participants are applied to the PALS expenses.

### Expenses include:

- Administration
  - Employee salary and benefits
  - Staff travel and meeting expenses
  - G & A expenses
    - Copy/Mail Center Services
- 35 Facilitating Pastors:
  - Contract payment of \$250
  - Reimbursement for Travel and Meeting expenses (includes wife)
  - \$50 Stipend/PALS participant (pastor)/meeting attended
- 35 Facilitating Wives:
  - \$50 Honorarium/PALS participant (wife)/meeting attended
- Recruitment:
  - Facilitator reimbursement for recruitment meals with new PALS pastors and families
  - Facilitator reimbursement for travel expenses associated with attending ordinations of PALS pastors
  - 4th year Seminarian Spring PALS Presentations/Luncheons at each seminary
- Annual Facilitator Training Event
- Curriculum
- Communications Department Services (PR-Advertising, design/editing services)

The following is a listing of the current expenses budgeted for **fiscal year 2019**.

PALS Budget FY 2019		
Administration	Part-time employee, office supplies, mailroom expenses, G&A expenses	\$52,015.00
PALS Delivery	Facilitator contracts, travel and meeting expenses for facilitating couples, PALS meeting expenses	\$92,500.00
PALS Recruitment	PALS-sponsored seminary meals, facilitator/new pastor dinners	\$8,500.00
PALS Spouses	Facilitating wife stipends, materials	\$22,500.00
PALS Training	Conference expenses, travel, housing, books and materials	\$19,000.00
<b>TOTAL Budgeted Expenses</b>		<b>\$194,515.00</b>

## Summary of the 2017–18 PALS Year Participation Rates

The 2017–2018 PALS year began on July 1, 2017 and ended on June 30, 2018. Reports submitted by facilitators indicate the following:

- Thirty-six PALS groups formed throughout the LCMS.
- 30 PALS groups held at least three meetings throughout the year. 15 of our PALS groups met for 6 PALS meeting days! There were 151

PALS meetings. This reflects a 6.5% increase in PALS meeting activity.

- There were 151 wives' gatherings held this year. This is an all-time high and an increase of 17% from the previous year.
- Rev. Phill Andreasen facilitated 2 groups, MNS and IW, during the 2017–2018 PALS year.
- The Indiana District was without a facilitator for part of the year and was unable to meet during the transition period.

It is encouraging to note that 200 pastors and 145 wives participated in a total of 151 PALS gathering days during the past year.

### District Participation

Thirty-one of the thirty-five LCMS districts participate in PALS. Those districts that did not have an active PALS group meeting during the 2017–2018 PALS year are listed as N/A. Pastors in non-geographic districts (\*English and \*SELC)

may be meeting with pastors in the nearest geographic district. \*The Atlantic District PALS pastors are included in the nearest geographic PALS districts (NJ and NE).

The table below lists the number of PALS gatherings during the 2017-2018 year by district.

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic*						
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		5	6	6	5	6
Eastern	6	8	2	N/A	3	1
English*						
Florida-Georgia	3	2	6	6	6	6
Indiana	6	6	6	6	6	N/A
Iowa East	3	3	3	4	4	4
Iowa West	N/A	N/A	3	6	6	6
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	7
Michigan	6	9	14	11	9	13
Mid-South	4	6	2	6	3	6
Minnesota North	4	6	6	6	5	6
Minnesota South	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Missouri	12	12	12	12	10	12

Montana				N/A	2	1
Nebraska	3	16	16	14	11	8
New England				6	6	6
New Jersey		3	5	6	4	0
North Dakota	6	6	4	6	6	6
North Wisconsin	6	6	6	4	8	6
Northern Illinois	5	1		2	5	6
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio		2	4	6	3	5
Oklahoma	5	3	6	N/A	N/A	6
Pacific Southwest		2	1	1	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	5	6	6	6	6	6
SELC*						
South Dakota	4	3	6	6	5	5
South Wisconsin	6	6	5	5	5	1
Southeastern	12	12	12	6	2	N/A
Southern	2		1	3	N/A	4
Southern Illinois	4	1		1	N/A	4
Texas	14	15	16	10	12	14
Wyoming	6	6	4		6	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>151</b>

## Participating Pastors by District

The table below lists the number of pastors who participated in PALS during the last 6 years by district.

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic		1		4	4	1
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		9	7	8	6	3
Eastern	10	5	1		4	3
English	1	5	6	5	4	5
Florida-Georgia	1	2	5	6	8	8
Indiana	7	5	8	10	13	N/A
Iowa East	17	15	13	9	7	5
Iowa West		N/A	6	8	11	15

Kansas	3	3	2	1	13	15
Michigan	14	12	18	18	16	21
Mid-South	6	5	4	4	3	3
Minnesota North	6	6	12	10	8	6
Minnesota South	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Missouri	14	16	19	16	19	18
Montana					2	2
Nebraska	6	13	16	17	9	12
New England			1	5	3	5
New Jersey		2	4	3	3	0
North Dakota	5	3	6	3	5	4
North Wisconsin	15	12	10	9	12	8
Northern Illinois	10	4		1	5	5
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	2	5	4	4	5	8
Oklahoma	10	7	5	N/A	N/A	3
Pacific Southwest		3	1	2	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	5	9	8	7	5	4
SELC		1	1	1	2	1
South Dakota	12	9	11	9	13	12
South Wisconsin	11	10	7	8	4	1
Southeastern	13	13	12	7	5	N/A
Southern	7	7	8	11	3	6
Southern Illinois	7	2		2	N/A	5
Texas	20	19	18	14	14	12
Wyoming	5	5	3	N/A	3	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>200</b>

## Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Participation in PALS provides continuing education for pastors. CEUs are granted, one for every 10 contact hours. During the 2017–2018 PALS year, a total of 663 CEUs were awarded to

participating pastors. This number provides yet another indicator of overall PALS activity and is being tracked so that trends may be observed.

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic		1		17	12	3
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		27.5	29	32	29	16
Eastern	22	11	1	N/A	15	3
English	2	16	12	17	13	13
Florida-Georgia	3	4	21	25	32	20
Indiana	32	24	38	44	48	N/A
Iowa East	44	36	34	32	19	18
Iowa West			17	36	53	59
Kansas	16	16	6	4	41	34
Michigan	22	35	62	40	39	50
Mid-South	15	12	6	17	6	6
Minnesota North	12	21	35	29	23	25
Minnesota South	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Missouri	61	56	78	64	77	67
Montana				N/A	4	2
Nebraska	10	63	64	54	39	41
New England			1	24	16	20
New Jersey		6	18	17	14	0
North Dakota	28	17	22	18	27	21
North Wisconsin	56	46	52	28	46	36
Northern Illinois	21	4		2	17	19
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	7	9	9	12	14	27
Oklahoma	26	16	22	N/A	N/A	17
Pacific Southwest		6	1	2	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	20	35	42	30	20	20
SELC		2	3	2	10	4

South Dakota	38	22	47	46	46	42
South Wisconsin	58	57	27	28	8	1
Southeastern	56	64	64	31	9	N/A
Southern	18	25	19	32	7	25
Southern Illinois	18	2		2	N/A	16
Texas	66	53	58.5	37	45	35
Wyoming	28	28	10	N/A	18	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>714.5</b>	<b>798.5</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>663</b>

## PALS Groups by District

The table below identifies the number of PALS groups operating in each participating LCMS district. It should be noted that there is some crossover of participants into neighboring districts when a PALS group in another district is closer than the PALS group in their own district. \*The Atlantic District PALS pastors are included

in the nearest geographic PALS districts (NJ and NE). Furthermore, pastors in non-geographic districts (\*English and \*SELC) meet with pastors in the nearest geographic district. Participating districts with a blank field are those without a facilitator (vacant). Groups that did not meet are listed as inactive.

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic*						
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eastern	2	2	2		1	1
English*	(1 inactive)					
Florida-Georgia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Indiana	1	1	1	1	1	
Iowa East	1	1	1	1	1	1
Iowa West			1	1	1	1
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2
Michigan	2 (and 1 inactive)	2 (and 1 inactive)	3	3	3	3
Mid-South	1 (and 1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1
Minnesota North	1 (and 1 inactive)	1 (and 1 inactive)	1	1	1	1
Minnesota South	1 (and 1 inactive)			N/A		1

Missouri	2 (and 1 inactive)	2 (and 1 inactive)	2	2	2	2
Montana		(1 inactive)	(1 inactive)		1	1
Nebraska	1 (and 2 inactive)	3	3	3	3	3
New England				1	1	1
New Jersey	(1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1
North Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1
North Wisconsin	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northern Illinois	1	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	1
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	(1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1
Oklahoma	1	1	1	N/A	1	1
Pacific Southwest	(1 inactive)	1 (and 1 inactive)	1	1	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	1	1	1	1	1	1
SELC*						
South Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Wisconsin	1	1	1	1	1	1
Southeastern	2	2	2	1	1	N/A
Southern	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	2	1
Southern Illinois	1	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	1
Texas	3	3	3	3	4	4
Wyoming	1	1	1	(1 inactive)	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>

## Non-Participating LCMS Districts

The following four districts did not participate in PALS during the 2017–2018 PALS year.

- California/Nevada/Hawaii
- Pacific Southwest
- Northwest
- Southeastern

## Facilitating Pastors

The following LCMS pastors served as PALS facilitating pastors during the 2016–2017 PALS year:

LCMS District	Facilitating Pastor
Michigan	Rev. Douglas Adams Trinity Lutheran Church Berrien Springs, Mich.
Iowa West and Minnesota South	Rev. Phill Andreasen New Ulm, Minn.
Texas	Rev. Randy Bard Bethel Lutheran Church Bryan, Texas
Missouri	Rev. Andrew Becker St. John's Lutheran Church Arnold, Mo.
Kansas	Rev. Jim Bender Facilitating Pastor from July 2017 to April 2018 Faith Lutheran Church Topeka, Kan. Current Congregation: Trinity Lutheran Church Hudson, Wis.
South Wisconsin	Rev. John Berg Trinity Lutheran Church Sheboygan, Wis.
Kansas	Rev. Mark Boxman Trinity Lutheran Church Salina, Kan.
Nebraska	Rev. Cory Burma Peace Lutheran Church Columbus, Neb.
Southern Illinois	Rev. Kirk Clayton Zion Lutheran Church Mascoutah, Ill.
New Jersey	Rev. Andrew Dinger Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Somerset, N.J.
Michigan	Rev. William Hessler Saginaw, Mich.
Mid-South	Rev. Barry Hildebrandt Cross of Christ Lutheran Church Chattanooga, Tenn.

LCMS District	Facilitating Pastor
Texas	Rev. Eric Hiner Hope Lutheran Church Lubbock, Texas
Iowa East	Rev. Mark Leckband St. Mark & Zion Lutheran Churches Shellsburg, Iowa and Garrison, Iowa
South Dakota	Rev. Gregory Lehr Zion Lutheran Church Sioux Falls, S.D.
Missouri	Rev. Francis Lieb Blue Springs, Mo.
Michigan	Rev. Michael Lutz Shelby Township, Mich.
Ohio	Rev. Stephen Lutz Trinity Lutheran Church Elmore, Ohio
Eastern	Rev. Thomas Lutz Saint Paul Lutheran Church Eden, N.Y.
New England	Rev. Jonathan Manor St. Paul's Lutheran Church New Hartford, Conn.
Wyoming	Rev. Kenneth Mars St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran Churches Kimball, Neb. and Burns, Wyo.
Oklahoma	Rev. Jonathan Meyer Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Edmond, Okla.
Nebraska	Rev. Mark Middendorf Zion Lutheran Church Scotia, Neb.
Northern Illinois	Rev. Leonard Payton St. John Lutheran Church Forest Park, Ill.
North Wisconsin	Rev. Nathan Reichle Saint Paul Lutheran Church Manawa, Wis.

LCMS District	Facilitating Pastor
Southern	Rev. Dr. John Reynolds Trinity Lutheran Church Gadsden, Ala.
Texas	Rev. Martin Richardson Crown of Life Lutheran Church Colleyville, Texas
Minnesota North	Rev. Guy Roberts Zion Lutheran Church Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Montana	Rev. Vernon Sandersfeld Grace Lutheran Church Hamilton, Mont.
Nebraska	Rev. Charles Schmidt Lincoln, Neb.

LCMS District	Facilitating Pastor
Florida-Georgia	Rev. Alan Struckmeyer Gainesville, Fla.
Rocky Mountain	Rev. David Vanderhyde University Hills Lutheran Church Denver, Colo.
Texas	Rev. Steve Wagner Concordia Lutheran Church San Antonio, Texas
Central Illinois	Rev. David Weaver Trinity Lutheran Church Stewardson, Ill.
North Dakota	Rev. Bernard Worrall Immanuel Lutheran Church Fargo, N.D.

## Number of Wives' Gatherings

A strength of PALS is the inclusion of wives in gatherings. It has often been observed that the transition from seminary to congregation may prove more challenging for the pastor's wife than for the pastor. The following list shows the

participating LCMS districts per the number of wives' gatherings that were held during the 2017–2018 PALS year. Note the 17% increase in wives' gatherings this year!

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic						
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		1		N/A	5	6
Eastern	2	1	1	N/A	3	0
English						
Florida-Georgia	1	2	6	6	6	6
Indiana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iowa East				*	*	4
Iowa West			2	4	6	6
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	7
Michigan	4	8	15	10	9	13
Mid-South	2	2		5		6
Minnesota North	2	6	6	6	5	6
Minnesota South	2			N/A	N/A	2
Missouri	11	10	12	12	10	12

Montana				N/A	2	1
Nebraska	1	15	16	14	11	8
New England				6	6	6
New Jersey		2	4	4	4	0
North Dakota	3		4	6	6	6
North Wisconsin	6	6	6	4	8	6
Northern Illinois	4			2	5	6
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio		1	4	5	3	5
Oklahoma	2		6	N/A		6
Pacific Southwest		2	1	1	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	2	6	2	6	6	6
SELC						
South Dakota	4	3	6	6	5	5
South Wisconsin	6	6	5	5	5	1
Southeastern	12	8	12	6	2	N/A
Southern						5
Southern Illinois		1				4
Texas	12	14	15	10	12	14
Wyoming	4	6	4		6	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>151</b>

## Number of Participating Wives

The following table lists the number of participating wives in each participating LCMS district.

District	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Atlantic					4	0
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		1			5	3
Eastern	2	2	1		3	1
English	1	2	3		2	2
Florida-Georgia	1	1	4	4	6	7
Indiana						
Iowa East					5	3
Iowa West			4	5	9	11

Kansas			1	N/A	9	11
Michigan	10	10	16	15	12	19
Mid-South	5	2		5		2
Minnesota North	3	4	9	7	7	4
Minnesota South	2			N/A		5
Missouri	11	13	14	12	17	12
Montana						2
Nebraska	1	9	13	11	7	9
New England			1	6	6	4
New Jersey		1	2	4	3	0
North Dakota	3		6	4	4	2
North Wisconsin	14	10	9	7	8	5
Northern Illinois	4			3	2	5
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio		4	4	3	5	7
Oklahoma	5		4			2
Pacific Southwest		1	1	1	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	4	8	6	6	4	2
SELC					1	1
South Dakota	8	5	10	7	11	10
South Wisconsin	10	10	7	6	5	1
Southeastern	8	10	10	7	2	N/A
Southern		3	2			2
Southern Illinois		1				2
Texas	13	15	15	10	10	8
Wyoming	4	3	2		3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>145</b>

# Curriculum

## PALS Training Materials Requests 2017–2018

The table below lists the curricular material as well as the number of DVDs and study guides that were requested for each topic. Material is requested by PALS facilitating pastors for use in meetings. The tracking of these data points provides an indication of which topics are most popular with PALS groups.

Title	DVDs	Booklets
Bible Studies for New Pastors' Wives		42
Biblical Foundations for Lutheran Catechesis		
Building A Long-Term Ministry	2	20
Communication & Conflict: Connections in Grace	2	23
Doing Law and Gospel Preaching	1	8
Every One His Witness	5 sets	
Facing the Forces of Trouble and Conflict in Parish Ministry	2	23
Finding the Balance and Setting Boundaries between Work and Home	6	80
Getting to Know Your Congregation		13
Healthy Pastor/Healthy Church: Biblical Family Counseling	1	4
Holding Up the Prophet's Hands		8
I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife — Discussion Guide		28
Introduction to Pastoral Leadership & Parish Admin	1	34
Law and the Gospel in the Pastoral Office		
Leading Positive Change in Congregations	4	47
Making Pastoral Referrals w/Confidence	3	16
Marriage by God's Design	3 sets	
Ministry to the Developmentally Disabled	1	6
Parenting in the Pew		45
Pastor: Apt to Teach	7	61
Pastor as Chief Steward		
Pastor as Shepherd (Hartwig)	1	8
Pastor as Shepherd (Holm)		
Pastoral Care & Ethics at Life's End	1	6
Pastoring the Dying & Funeral Preparation	1	7
Pastors & Elders	2	
Paths to Growth	1	8
Preaching as Pilgrimage		
Preaching: The Heart and the Art	2	23

Premarital Pastoral Care	2	16
Stewardship of Time for Pastors	2	13
Thinking About Stewardship	3	29
Transition from Seminary to Parish — Pastors	2	23
Transition from Seminary to Parish — Wives		18
Visitation: Calling on Inactive Members	4	27

PALS groups have the freedom to select other topics and resources for utilization in the study portions of PALS gatherings. The table below provides a listing of non-PALS courses used.

Non-PALS Courses/Topics	Presenter/Author
Preach the Word Modules	Multiple authors
"Wellness, Balance and Goal Setting"	Steve Gruenwald
"Millennials & Youth Ministry"	Rev. Mark Kiessling
"Finding the Joy in Ministry"	Rev. Dan Galchutt
Counseling	Jon Schweigant
Biotechnology	Rev. Darrell DeBowey
"Word Alive"	Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer
<i>Ancient Future Worship</i>	Robert Webber
<i>A Little Book on Joy</i>	Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison
<i>A Unique Calling</i>	Amy Gordan
<i>Congregational Leadership During Anxious Times</i>	Dr. Peter Steinke
<i>Friendship Advice for Ministry Wives</i>	Nancy Nelson
<i>Homeward Bound</i>	Emily Matchar
Lay Bible Institute	Rev. Dr. Jeff Gibbs
<i>Pew Sisters</i>	Katie Schuermann
<i>Quiet: The Power of Introverts</i>	Susan Cain
<i>Sip, Savor and Drink Deeply</i>	Deb Burma
<i>The Necessary Distinction: A Continuing Conversation on Law and Gospel</i>	CPH
<i>The Peace Maker</i>	Ken Sande
When Death is Near	Journey Care Hospice
<i>Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?</i>	Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard

## The PALS Steering Committee

Initially formed in March 2011, the Steering Committee holds teleconferences three times each year and conducts the remainder of its business via e-mail. The main functions of the committee are to:

1. Monitor the overall status and well-being of the program;
2. Suggest and provide reactions to possible changes to the program;
3. Suggest and provide reactions to possible changes to the *PALS Policy Manual*; and
4. Provide advocacy for the program to various publics.

The following individuals served on the PALS Steering Committee in 2017–2018:

### **PALS Facilitating Pastors (2)**

- Pastor William Hessler, Saginaw, Mich.
- Pastor Alan Struckmeyer, Gainesville, Fla.

### **PALS Participating Pastors (2)**

- Pastor Adam Koontz, Mt. Calvary, Lititz, Pa. (FW, 2014)
- Pastor Sean Willman, Good Shepherd, Pleasant Prairie, Wis. (FW, 2013)

### **PALS Facilitating Spouse (1)**

- Mrs. Connie Bard, Bryan, Texas

### **PALS Participating Spouse (1)**

- Mrs. Molly Kohn, Macon, Mo. (STL, 2013)

### **District Presidents with PALS Groups in District (2)**

- President Terry Cripe, Ohio District
- President Terry Forke, Montana District

### **Seminary Representatives (2)**

- Rev. Paul Sieveking (CSL)
- Prof. Jeff Pulse (CTSFW)

### **Staff (4)**

- Rev. Dr. James Baneck, Executive Director, Pastoral Education
- Rev. Herbert Mueller, First Vice President
- Mrs. Robyn Armbrust, PALS Coordinator
- Mrs. Carrie O'Donnell, PALS Consultant

## Serving You

### PALS Office

PALS is strategically placed within the Office of Pastoral Education. The executive director of pastoral education reports to the Chief Mission Officer of the Synod (CMO), Rev. Kevin Robson. The executive director of pastoral education is “to assist the Synod’s CMO in executing the responsibilities related to seminary education which are assigned to him in the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: “The Chief Mission Officer shall, on behalf of the President, provide leadership, coordination, and oversight for pre-seminary education programs, seminary education, and post seminary continuing education, and by providing advocacy for pastoral education and health within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.4.3.8, 2016 LCMS Handbook, p. 117). PALS falls under “post-seminary continuing education.”

#### Office of Pastoral Education

Pre-Seminary Education	Seminary Education	Continuing Education PALS
------------------------	--------------------	------------------------------

**Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck** began his duties as executive director of pastoral education on January 1, 2017. Previously, he served as parish pastor in Kimball, Minn. (1987–1993) and Mandan, N.D. (1993–2009). Most recently, he served as North Dakota District President (2009–2017).

**Robyn Armbrust** serves as the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of Pastoral Education. As Coordinator, Robyn oversees much of the PALS operations. Robyn came on board in May 2016. Previously, Robyn served as both a Director of Christian Education and Lutheran school teacher.

**Judi Winker** works part-time in the PALS office and has been a part of the PALS team since March 2015. Judi oversees facilitator’s expense vouchers and distributes PALS curriculum. Judi is a pastor’s

wife who has served at our synod headquarters off and on since 1965!

### Presentation at the Seminaries

The PALS office appreciates time given by the seminaries for PALS presentations to the fourth-year seminarians and wives. On April 17, a presentation was given at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The seminarians and wives were introduced to PALS through a PowerPoint presentation. PALS brochures, along with the encouragement to participate in PALS upon ordination, were shared with the participants.

A PALS presentation was also presented at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne. On April 4, Baneck provided a presentation during a luncheon that was provided for the concluding ordination track students and faculty. This presentation also included a recent seminary graduate who participates in PALS. He provided his perspectives on the challenges faced in the transition and the benefits of PALS participation.

### New Courses

The PALS office continues to make responsible use of grant money previously received from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. PALS is also exploring ways to use excellent materials already produced, which can either be directly used or modified for PALS. Courses in production include:

- “The Pastor’s Life of Prayer” — by James and Myrna Baneck. This course will address the pastor’s personal, family and corporate life of prayer. In this course, participants will engage in four sessions of discussion: (1) The power of the Holy Spirit to create and sustain faith through the Word — even in the life of the pastor and his family, (2) *Oratio, meditatio, and tentatio* in the life of the new pastor and his family, (3) The vocation of husband and father in teaching the faith to his family, and (4) A discussion on the discipline, resources, time and space for the ongoing life of prayer for the pastor and his family. This course is scheduled to be available fall 2018.

- “Transition: Seminary to Urban/Rural Ministry” — by Rev. Todd Kollbaum and Rev. Dr. Steve Schave. In this course, participants will engage in the Introduction, an Interview with both Kollbaum and Schave together, and then either the Transition from Seminary to Urban and Inner-City Mission or the Transition from Seminary to Rural and Small-Town Mission (depending on the context of ministry). This course is scheduled to be available winter 2019.

## Website and Facebook

The PALS website is one of the most-hit sites on *lcms.org*. The PALS office and the LCMS Communications Department is currently reviewing, and in the process of making, positive changes to the pastoral education and PALS pages on the website. We are working on giving it a new fresh look and striving to make it more user-friendly.

PALS is also on Facebook. We encourage you to like us on Facebook and share our postings.

---

**200**  
PASTORS  
SERVED

**145** WIVES  
PARTICIPATING

---

**36** ACTIVE  
PALS GROUPS

---

**31**  **35** DISTRICTS  
PARTICIPATING

---

# Striving for Excellence

## Statistics

We give thanks to the Lord of the Church, as He continues to guide and direct the PALS program now and into the future. We have much to be thankful for during the 2017–2018 year.

- A total of 345 pastors and wives (200 pastors and 145 wives) participated in the PALS gatherings this past year with a total of 151 meeting days held. We experienced a record number of wives' meetings held. Records indicate a 17% increase from the previous year.
- A total of 36 groups were active in the 31 out of 35 districts that participated. 30 of our 36 PALS groups were able to meet at least 3 times throughout the year. 15 PALS groups held 6 meetings! This reflects a 6.5% increase in PALS meeting activity.
- The Indiana District was without a facilitator for part of the year and was unable to meet during the transition period.
- Currently, every participating district has at least one facilitator. Every PALS group within the participating district is served by a facilitator, with no vacancies to report. Special thanks to the district presidents for their tremendous work in securing PALS facilitators in their district.

We give thanks to our Lord who continues to bless those who are beginning their ministries.

## Evaluations

Our desire is to continually improve the PALS experience in all its aspects. Each PALS facilitator and participant is asked to fill out an evaluation following each meeting. Suggestions for curriculum and ways to improve the program are taken into consideration by the PALS office and Steering Committee.

An annual self-evaluation form is completed by each PALS facilitator at the close of the PALS year. Suggestions are recorded, discussed and worked into the program to continue to grow and improve PALS offerings. The executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education communicates with each facilitator throughout the year through phone calls, emails, letters and notes.

## Facilitator's Training Conference

Our annual facilitator's training conference was held July 31–August 1, 2018 in St. Louis. Our theme was "Encourage One Another." We welcomed all 6 of our new facilitating couples into the PALS facilitator team. We also celebrated our three longest-serving facilitators: Fran and Kay Lieb (10 years), Bill and Janis Hessler (8 years) and Stephen and Heidi Lutz (6 years). Rev. Peter Lange (District President, Kansas) presented the topic, "Encouragement." Kevin Armbrust and Peter Slayton (LCMS Communications) gave a presentation on media usage, CPH author Pete Jurchen presented the new CPH Confirmation curriculum, and Lutherans for Life executive director, Michael Salemink, engaged in discussion regarding shared curriculum. We also discussed Best Practices in PALS, engaged in a Bible study concerning the "Pastor's Home," had several round-table discussions and enjoyed much fellowship and care for one another.

We continue to build on the PALS program being the seminal entry point for a future habit and participation among our pastors for continuing education and life-long learning. For this reason, we are committed to strive for excellence in the PALS office.

## Conclusion

Certainly, we share our challenges in PALS: scheduling, distance and fewer pastors, to name a few. One challenge we are striving to address is district participation in the PALS program. The PALS office is committed to meet with non-participating districts to discuss opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

As a synod, we are facing smaller seminary graduating classes. It is encouraging to note that even with the smaller group of PALS eligible pastors, the rate of participation by eligible pastors remains stable and PALS meeting activity has increased.

Our PALS groups have been incredibly active this past year. All glory to God working through our gifted, dedicated facilitators and new pastors seeking to grow and be in fellowship with fellow pastors through the study of His Word and encouragement through the saints gathered together. We are hopeful that the Lord of the Harvest will continue to provide faithful shepherds. We continue to pray for our young men to hear and answer His call, and for our seminaries who so faithfully prepare and support them.

The opportunities and joys in PALS abound. We celebrate district support and involvement throughout the Synod. We are thankful for faithful and caring facilitators who have a heart and joy for young pastors and their spouses. We look forward to producing excellent curriculum that addresses the needs and context of our pastors throughout the Synod. We are so thankful for numerous Synod conventions, where God's people throughout the Synod — from coast to coast — overwhelmingly support, encourage and promote PALS for all our pastors transitioning from seminary to their first call. We are humbled by congregations and pastors who share story after story of how PALS has helped their ministry, their congregations, their marriages and much more.

PALS wants to hear from you. What are we doing well? How can we improve? What do you need from PALS? How can we better serve our new pastors, their wives, our districts and our beloved Synod?

Once again, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11).

To God alone be the glory!



® THE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
Missouri Synod

888-THE LCMS (843-5267)  
*infocenter@lcms.org*  
*lcms.org*