

**Post-Seminary
Applied Learning and Support**

2020–21 Annual Report



“I will give you
shepherds
after my own heart,
who will feed you
with knowledge and
understanding.” —JER. 3:15

The Lord of Hosts Is With Us

It's not that the brand-new pastor has never experienced difficulties or hardships before.

It's not that he hasn't experienced sin and a fallen world before. It's not that the brand-new pastor has never told anyone about Jesus before...

But now, the brand-new pastor is called and ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry. Now all the weight is on his shoulders and the buck stops with him. Now he must preach, teach and apply God's Word — that Word that pierces to the division of soul and the spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12) — to the souls entrusted to him. Now, he is held accountable to God as a steward of the Word and Sacraments for the eternal welfare of souls (1 Cor. 4:1).

In a way, the seminarian is insulated from the “heavier cross” he will bear upon entry into his first call. The seminary is a time of learning, it's safe, there are professors and friends and vicarage supervisors to walk the seminarian through issues and help him “land softly” when mistakes are made along the way — that's all a part of education.

Upon ordination and installation, however, the brand-new pastor's world all of a sudden becomes noisy. His world can suddenly look like Psalm 46 — the earth gives way, the mountains are moved into the heart of the sea, the waters roar and foam, the nations rage, the kingdoms totter. At least, this is what it may seem like — ask a veteran pastor! This can be anything from an overwhelming to-do list to spiritual warfare and the attacks of the devil.

In the deep love we have for our new pastors, their wives and families, we care for them and walk with them through the transition from seminary to first call. In our life together as Synod, we do this through PALS (Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support). PALS is our continued investment in the formation, nurture and encouragement of our pastors. We make this investment because of our biblical and sacred view of the Office of the Holy Ministry and our love and respect for those who serve us with the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ. We participate in this investment together as Synod, seminaries, districts and congregations.



In this report, you will read about how we care for our new pastors in the PALS program through our dedicated facilitators, well-designed and quality curriculum, budget dollars, collaboration of many throughout the Synod and continued education opportunities for our PALS pastors/wives. The narrative and statistics in this report strive to tell the story of how we help our new pastors and their wives navigate their Psalm 46 lives, especially in the pastor's first call.

Through PALS, we continually point our new pastors back to the cross of our Savior Jesus Christ, where the Lord of hosts came to save them from sin, death and the devil. We facilitate continued learning and we mentor these young pastors and their wives with the Good News that the Lord of hosts *is* with them, continually feeding, strengthening and guiding them with His very presence. In Christ, they can serve the Lord with gladness and they can "be still and know" that Yahweh is God... *their God!* With this, we pray the new pastor would begin his ministry on the solid Rock, that he may continue for many years to come, serving God's people with the Word of God that gives life and salvation.

Rev. Dr. James Baneck,
executive director of Pastoral Education

Preface/History

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.

PALS utilizes geographic cohorts of new pastors and wives, usually numbering six to 12 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.

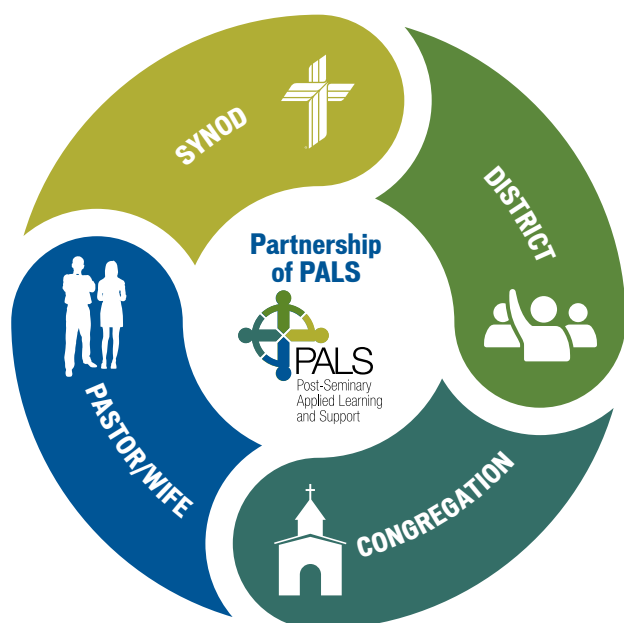
Pastors and their wives grow in knowledge, skills and understanding as they engage in study topics specifically designed to assist them, communicate openly about the joys and challenges of their vocations, and reflect upon their new experiences. While wives meet with their husbands for most portions 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 \$58,500. 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
 - Materials and supplies
 - Copy/mail center services
 - Communications department services (PR, advertising, design/editing services)
- 26 facilitating pastors:
 - Contract payment of \$250
 - Reimbursement for travel and meeting expenses (includes wife)
 - \$55 stipend/PALS participant (pastor)/meeting attended
- 26 facilitating wives:
 - \$55 honorarium/PALS participant (wife)/meeting attended
 - Babysitting expenses reimbursed
- 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 for each seminary
- Annual facilitator training event (2 virtual conferences due to inability to gather in person)
- Curriculum development



The following is a listing of the current expenses budgeted for **fiscal year 2022**.

PALS Budget FY 2022		
Administration	Office supplies, mailroom expenses, G&A expenses	\$1,640.00
PALS Delivery	Facilitator contracts, travel and meeting expenses for facilitating couples, PALS meeting expenses, DOXOLOGY tuition (4 facilitators/year)	\$92,100.00
PALS Recruitment	PALS-sponsored seminary meals, facilitator/new pastor dinners	\$8,800.00
PALS Spouses	Facilitating wife stipends, materials	\$28,000.00
PALS Training	Conference expenses, travel, housing, books and materials	\$12,700.00
TOTAL Budgeted Expenses		\$143,240.00

Summary of the 2020–21 PALS Year

Participation Rates

The 2020–2021 PALS year began on July 1, 2020, and ended on June 30, 2021. Reports submitted by facilitators indicate the following:

- 26 PALS groups formed throughout the LCMS.
- Multiple groups continued to meet via ZOOM during the COVID-19 pandemic year.
- 124 pastors and 75 wives participated in a total of 71 regular PALS gathering days and 13 virtual gatherings during the past year.

District Participation

Twenty-eight of the 35 LCMS districts participate in PALS. Non-PALS districts are listed as N/A. Districts that did not have an active PALS group meeting during the 2020–2021 PALS year due to the lack of new candidates are listed as inactive. Pastors in non-geographic districts (*English and *SELC) may be meeting with pastors in the nearest geographic district.

**During the shutdown caused by COVID-19, beginning March 2020 through the close of the PALS year in June 2021, several PALS groups were not able to gather in person. Due to the commitment and dedication of our PALS facilitators, some groups were able to meet*

virtually. Even when not able to gather virtually, our facilitators kept in contact via phone calls, emails and texts. Regular gatherings and virtual gatherings are noted as follows: regular (R), virtual (V).



District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Atlantic								N/A
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	5	6	6	5	6	6	4R	6R
Eastern	8	2	N/A	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
English*								
Florida-Georgia	2	6	6	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	6	6	6	6	N/A	3	3R	0
Iowa East	3	3	4	4	4	4	3R	3R 2V
Iowa West	N/A	3	6	6	6	5	3R	0

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	7	7	3R	3R
Michigan	9	14	11	9	13	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	6	2	6	3	6	3	0	0
Minnesota North	6	6	6	5	6	6	4R	6R
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	2R	5R
Missouri	12	12	12	10	12	10	8R 3V	8R 1V
Montana			N/A	2	1	2	1R	0
Nebraska	16	16	14	11	8	8	6R 2V	5R 1V
New England			6	6	6	6	2R	3R
New Jersey	3	5	6	4	0	2	0	0
North Dakota	6	4	6	6	6	6	0	3R
North Wisconsin	6	6	4	8	6	6	6R	6R
Northern Illinois	1		2	5	6	6	4R	4R
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	2	4	6	3	5	5	4R	4R 1V
Oklahoma	3	6	N/A	N/A	6	0	0	2R
Pacific Southwest	2	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	6	6	6	6	6	6	4R 2V	6R 1V
SELC*								
South Dakota	3	6	6	5	5	6	4R	0
South Wisconsin	6	5	5	5	1	2	1R	0
Southeastern	12	12	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern		1	3	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	inactive
Southern Illinois	1		1	N/A	4	6	4R 4V	2R 1V
Texas	15	16	10	12	14	10	7R 4V	2R 6V
Wyoming	6	4		6	4	7	2R	3R
TOTAL	145	152	145	142	151	123	75R 15V	71R 13V

Pastor Participation

The table below lists the number of pastors who participated in PALS during the last eight years by district. Pastors are welcome to begin participating at any point of the year within their first three years of ministry. **Some pastors were unable to participate due to the COVID-19 restrictions and concerns.*

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Atlantic	1		4	4	1	1	1	1
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	9	7	8	6	3	4	2	1
Eastern	5	1		4	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	5	6	5	4	5	3	1	1
Florida-Georgia	2	5	6	8	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	5	8	10	13	N/A	5	6	0
Iowa East	15	13	9	7	5	2	5	6
Iowa West	N/A	6	8	11	15	12	7	0
Kansas	3	2	1	13	15	12	5	5
Michigan	12	18	18	16	21	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	5	4	4	3	3	3	0	0
Minnesota North	6	12	10	8	6	7	9	10
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	2	3	3
Missouri	16	19	16	19	18	17	15	17
Montana				2	2	3	1	0
Nebraska	13	16	17	9	12	13	13	16
New England		1	5	3	5	3	4	7
New Jersey	2	4	3	3	0	3	0	0
North Dakota	3	6	3	5	4	4	0	4
North Wisconsin	12	10	9	12	8	7	11	11
Northern Illinois	4		1	5	5	6	6	10
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	5	4	4	5	8	6	3	4
Oklahoma	7	5	N/A	N/A	3	0	0	5
Pacific Southwest	3	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	9	8	7	5	4	4	8	8
SELC	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
South Dakota	9	11	9	13	12	10	8	0

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
South Wisconsin	10	7	8	4	1	4	4	0
Southeastern	13	12	7	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	7	8	11	3	6	0	0	0
Southern Illinois	2		2	N/A	5	7	7	3
Texas	19	18	14	14	12	14	7	9
Wyoming	5	3	N/A	3	4	3	1	2
TOTAL	208	216	202	209	200	156	128*	124*



26
PALS GROUPS

124 PASTORS **AND** **75** WIVES
13 VIRTUAL GATHERINGS

71
IN-PERSON GATHERING DAYS

Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Participation in PALS provides continuing education for pastors. CEUs are granted, one for every 10 contact hours. During the 2020–2021 PALS year, a total of 399 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.

**2019–2020 numbers do not include virtual gatherings held from March through June, when in-person gatherings were not possible.*

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Atlantic	1		17	12	3	5	2	3
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	27.5	29	32	29	16	20	8	6
Eastern	11	1	N/A	15	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	16	12	17	13	13	6	1	2
Florida-Georgia	4	21	25	32	20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	24	38	44	48	N/A	7	11	0
Iowa East	36	34	32	19	18	8	11	20
Iowa West		17	36	53	59	49	17	0
Kansas	16	6	4	41	34	27	8	10
Michigan	35	62	40	39	50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	12	6	17	6	6	7	0	0
Minnesota North	21	35	29	23	25	38	34	46
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	2	6	12
Missouri	56	78	64	77	67	65	43	50
Montana			N/A	4	2	3	1	0
Nebraska	63	64	54	39	41	40	46	57
New England		1	24	16	20	11	5	11
New Jersey	6	18	17	14	0	6	0	0
North Dakota	17	22	18	27	21	18	0	11
North Wisconsin	46	52	28	46	36	22	40	52
Northern Illinois	4		2	17	19	16	20	16
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	9	9	12	14	27	18	5	7
Oklahoma	16	22	N/A	N/A	17	0	0	10
Pacific Southwest	6	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	35	42	30	20	20	22	28	35

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
SELC	2	3	2	10	4	0	2	4
South Dakota	22	47	46	46	42	52	28	0
South Wisconsin	57	27	28	8	1	7	4	0
Southeastern	64	64	31	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	25	19	32	7	25	0	0	0
Southern Illinois	2		2	N/A	16	25	21	8
Texas	53	58.5	37	45	35	32	20	35
Wyoming	28	10	N/A	18	16	17	2	4
TOTAL	714.5	798.5	722	747	663	523	363	399

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. 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	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Atlantic*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eastern	2	2		1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
English*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Florida-Georgia	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
Iowa East	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Iowa West		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2	2	1	1
Michigan	2 (and 1 inactive)	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minnesota North	1 (and 1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minnesota South			N/A		1	1	1	1

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Missouri	2 (and 1 inactive)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Montana	(1 inactive)	(1 inactive)		1	1	1	1	1
Nebraska	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1
New England			1	1	1	1	1	1
New Jersey	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
North Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
North Wisconsin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northern Illinois	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Oklahoma	1	1	N/A	1	1	1	1	1
Pacific Southwest	1 (and 1 inactive)	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SELC*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Wisconsin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Southeastern	2	2	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	(1 inactive)	1	1	2	1	(1 inactive)	0	inactive
Southern Illinois	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Texas	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	2
Wyoming	1	1	(1 inactive)	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	38	36	32	37	36	31	28	26

Non-Participating LCMS Districts

The following districts did not participate in PALS during the 2020–2021 PALS year.

- Atlantic
- California-Nevada-Hawaii
- Eastern
- Florida-Georgia
- Michigan
- Northwest
- Pacific Southwest
- Southeastern

Facilitating Pastors and Wives

The following LCMS pastors and wives served as PALS facilitators during the 2020–2021 PALS year.

We are blessed with committed servants who have a desire to encourage and support new pastors and their families in their early years of ministry. These facilitating couples reach out to the members of their groups not only through the planning and leading of PALS gatherings, but in regular communication through email, phone and personal visits as needed.



LCMS District	Facilitators
Texas	Rev. Randy and Connie Bard Bethel Lutheran Church Bryan, Texas
South Wisconsin	Rev. John and Kathleen Berg Trinity Lutheran Church Sheboygan, Wis.
Kansas	Rev. Mark and Lynn Boxman Trinity Lutheran Church Salina, Kan.
Southern Illinois	Rev. Dr. Kirk and Lori Clayton Zion Lutheran Church Mascoutah, Ill.
New Jersey	Rev. Daniel and Jerusha Fenco Camino De Fe Lutheran Church Somerville, N.J.
Indiana	Rev. Dr. Dan and Annette Gard Fort Wayne, Ind.
Mid-South	Rev. Barry and Sylvia Hildebrandt Cross of Christ Lutheran Church Chattanooga, Tenn.
Missouri	Rev. Wayne and Crystal Huebner Salem Lutheran Church St. Louis, Mo.
South Dakota	Rev. Gregory and Renee Lehr Zion Lutheran Church Sioux Falls, S.D.
Missouri	Rev. Francis and Kay Lieb Blue Springs, Mo.
Ohio	Rev. Stephen and Heidi Lutz Trinity Lutheran Church Elmore, Ohio

LCMS District	Facilitators
Oklahoma	Rev. Timothy and Heather McCarty Emmanuel Lutheran Church Kingfisher, Okla.
Iowa West	Rev. Duncan and Alissa McLellan St. Paul Lutheran Church Ankeny, Iowa
New England	Rev. Jonathan Deac. Tiffany Manor Lutheran Church of the Savior Bedford, Mass.
Wyoming	Rev. Kenneth and Vickie Mars St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran Churches Kimball, Neb. and Burns, Wyo.
Northern Illinois	Rev. Leonard and Lori Payton St. John Lutheran Church Forest Park, Ill.
Iowa East	Rev. Daniel and Sallie Pool Saint John Lutheran Church Clinton, Iowa
North Wisconsin	Rev. Nathan and Sarah Reichle Saint Paul Lutheran Church Manawa, Wis.
Minnesota North	Rev. Guy and Emily Roberts Zion Lutheran Church Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Montana	Rev. Vernon and Dee Sandersfeld Grace Lutheran Church Hamilton, Mont.
Nebraska	Rev. Charles and Brenda Schmidt Lincoln, Neb.

LCMS District	Facilitators
Rocky Mountain	Rev. David and Ginny Vanderhyde University Hills Lutheran Church Denver, Colo.
Texas	Rev. Steve and Rita Wagner Concordia Lutheran Church San Antonio, Texas
Central Illinois	Rev. David and Kassie Weaver Trinity Lutheran Church Stewardson, Ill.

LCMS District	Facilitators
Minnesota South	Rev. Stefan Wismar and Mrs. Melissa Jones Minnesota South District, Minn.
North Dakota	Rev. Bernard and Carolyn Worral 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 PALS year. **Some wives were unable to participate due to the COVID-19 restrictions and concerns.*



District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Atlantic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	1		N/A	5	6	6	4	6
Eastern	1	1	N/A	3	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Florida-Georgia	2	6	6	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3	0
Iowa East			*	*	4	4	3	3
Iowa West		2	4	6	6	5	3	0
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	7	7	3	3
Michigan	8	15	10	9	13	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	2		5		6	3	0	0
Minnesota North	6	6	6	5	6	6	4	4
Minnesota South			N/A	N/A	2	1	2	2

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Missouri	10	12	12	10	12	10	8	6
Montana			N/A	2	1	2	1	0
Nebraska	15	16	14	11	8	8	6	6
New England			6	6	6	6	2	3
New Jersey	2	4	4	4	0	2	0	0
North Dakota		4	6	6	6	6	0	1
North Wisconsin	6	6	4	8	6	6	6	6
Northern Illinois			2	5	6	6	4	3
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	1	4	5	3	5	5	4	4
Oklahoma		6	N/A		6	0	0	2
Pacific Southwest	2	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	6	2	6	6	6	6	4	4
SELC	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Dakota	3	6	6	5	5	6	4	0
South Wisconsin	6	5	5	5	1	2	1	0
Southeastern	8	12	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern					5	0	0	N/A
Southern Illinois	1				4	6	4	1
Texas	14	15	10	12	14	10	7	4
Wyoming	6	4		6	4	7	2	1
TOTAL	100	127	118	129	151	123	75*	59*

Wife Participation

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

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Atlantic				4				
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	1			5	3	4	2	1
Eastern	2	1		3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	2	3		2	2	1	0	
Florida-Georgia	1	4	4	6	7	N/A	N/A	N/A

District	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*
Indiana						3	5	0
Iowa East				5	3	2	3	4
Iowa West		4	5	9	11	11	6	0
Kansas		1	N/A	9	11	11	5	3
Michigan	10	16	15	12	19	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	2		5		2	2	0	0
Minnesota North	4	9	7	7	4	4	6	6
Minnesota South			N/A		5	2	2	2
Missouri	13	14	12	17	12	11	7	8
Montana					2	3	1	0
Nebraska	9	13	11	7	9	8	7	11
New England		1	6	6	4	3	3	5
New Jersey	1	2	4	3	0	3	0	0
North Dakota		6	4	4	2	1	0	1
North Wisconsin	10	9	7	8	5	8	8	9
Northern Illinois			3	2	5	5	4	6
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	4	4	3	5	7	5	3	5
Oklahoma		4			2	0	0	4
Pacific Southwest	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA
Rocky Mountain	8	6	6	4	2	3	4	4
SELC				1	1	1	0	0
South Dakota	5	10	7	11	10	7	6	0
South Wisconsin	10	7	6	5	1	4	4	0
Southeastern	10	10	7	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	3	2			2	0	0	N/A
Southern Illinois	1				2	4	6	1
Texas	15	15	10	10	8	10	5	4
Wyoming	3	2		3	3	3	1	1
TOTAL	115	144	123	150	145	119	88*	75*

Curriculum

PALS DVD Study Guide Requests 2020–21

The table below lists the curricular material as well as the number of DVDs, flash drives 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	DVD/drives	Booklets
Bible Studies for New Pastors' Wives (Wollenburg)		
Biblical Foundations for Lutheran Catechesis (Pless)		
Building A Long-Term Ministry (Zieroth)		
Communication & Conflict: Opportunities for Connecting in Grace (Otte)		
Doing Law & Gospel Preaching (Fickenscher)		
Every One His Witness (Wood)		
Facing the Forces of Trouble and Conflict in Parish Ministry (Rehwaldt)	1	3
Faith to Follow: The Journey of Becoming a Pastor's Wife	1 drive	77
Finding the Balance & Setting Boundaries between Work and Home (Fleming)	2, 2 drives	42
Getting to Know Your New Congregation (Hirsch/O'Donnell)		
Holding Up the Prophet's Hands (Hartung)		15
I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife (Lorna Dobson) Discussion Guide		
Introduction to Pastoral Leadership & Parish Administration (Hardy)		
Law and Gospel in the Pastoral Office (Wollenburg)		
Leading Positive Change in Congregations (Peter)	1	4
Making Pastoral Referrals w/Confidence, Part 1 (Yahnke)	1	9
Making Pastoral Referrals w/Confidence, Part 2 (Yahnke)	1	9
Marriage by God's Design (Radkey)		
Parenting in the Pew (Castleman)		
Pastor: Apt to Teach (Blanke)	2	12
Pastor as Chief Steward (Knolhoff/Biermann)		
Pastor as Shepherd (Hartwig)		
Pastor as Shepherd (Holm)		
Pastoral Care & Ethics at Life's End (Pless)		
Pastoring the Dying & Funeral Preparation (Torkelson)		
Pastors & Elders (Mech)		
Pastor's Life of Prayer (Dr. James/Myrna Baneck)	1	2
Preaching as Pilgrimage (Schmitt)		

Title	DVD/drives	Booklets
Preaching: The Heart and the Art (Schmitt)	1	10
Premarital Pastoral Care (Marrs/Bergmann)	1	12
Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society (Amb/Reconcil)		
Stewardship of Time for Pastors (Blomenberg)		
Thinking About Stewardship (Biermann)		
Transition from Seminary to Parish—Pastors (Knippa)	2	17
Transition from Seminary to Parish—Wives (Knippa)	2	14
Transition: Seminary to Rural/Urban	1	8
Visitation: Calling on Inactive Members (Walther)		

Non-PALS Courses

PALS groups have the freedom to create and select other topics and resources for utilization in the study portions of PALS gatherings. PALS wives' facilitators can request book sets for use with their PALS wives' studies and discussions. These books are purchased using Thrivent and LWML grant funding. The table below provides a listing of non-PALS courses used as well as books purchased for use as a book study.

Non-PALS Courses/Topics	Presenter/Author
I'm More than the Pastor's Wife	Lorna Dobson
Joy: A Study on Philippians	Deb Burma
Pew Sisters	Katie Schuermann
Family Trees and Olive Branches	Christina Hergenrader
Stress and Worry in the Life of a Christian	Lutheran Hour Ministries
Reclaiming the Joy of Ministry	Darrell Zimmerman
The Care of Souls	Harold Senkbeil
Ministry to the Grieving	Rev. and Mrs. David Mueller
Making Critical Decisions as a Congregation	Making Disciples for Life (MDFL) Bible Study
Compassion Fatigue	MDFL Bible Study
Courage in Time of Crisis	MDFL Bible Study
On Training and Preaching	Johann Gerhard
Justification as the Starting Point for Doing Theology?	Dr. Scaer article in CTQ
Jonah	Dr. Reed Lessing
Boundaries	Dr. Henry Cloud and John Townsend
Canoeing the Mountains	Tod Bolsinger
Leading Without Power	Max De Pree
Sharpening the Focus of the Church	Gene Getz
Teach Like a Champion	Doug Lemov

Serving You

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 email. 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*;
4. Provide advocacy for the program to various publics.

The following individuals served on the PALS Steering Committee in 2019–2020:

PALS Facilitating Pastors (2)

- Rev. Nate Reichle
Saint Paul, Manawa, Wis.
- Rev. Alan Struckmeyer†
Gainesville, Fla.

PALS Participating Pastors (2)

- Rev. Jacob Hercamp
St. Peter, La Grange, Mo. (CTSW, 2017)
- Rev. John Genszler
Prince of Peace, Oregon, Ohio (CSL, 2017)

PALS Facilitating Spouse (1)

- Mrs. Connie Bard
Bethel, Bryan, Texas

PALS Participating Spouse (1)

- Mrs. Veronica Demski
Immanuel, Waterloo, Ill. (CSL, 2016)

District Presidents with PALS Groups in District (2)

- President Steve Turner
LCMS Iowa District West
- President Terry Forke
LCMS Montana District

Seminary Representatives (2)

- Rev. Paul Sieveking (CSL)
- Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse (CTSW)

Staff (3)

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

PALS Office

PALS is strategically placed within the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education. The executive director of pastoral education reports to the chief mission officer (CMO) of the Synod, the 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 LCMS 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 LCMS 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 a Lutheran school teacher.

Presentation at the Seminaries

The PALS office appreciates time given by the seminaries for PALS presentations to the fourth-year seminarians and wives. On Wednesday morning, March 10, Dr. Baneck made a brief presentation at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Baneck introduced the PALS program to the seminarians and provided materials to be shared with their wives, as appropriate. Due to capacity restrictions, the wives were unable to attend.

Due to campus restrictions, a similar, but virtual, event was held for the fourth-year Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, seminarians and their wives on Friday, May 14. Materials were shared electronically with these participants.

The PALS office is very grateful for the seminaries' endorsement and advocacy of the PALS program to their students.

New Courses

PALS courses are developed out of the requests and needs we hear from our PALS facilitators, pastors and wives. We continue to strive for high-quality, engaging and helpful resources for our pastors and wives. There is a cost in producing these resources. Many of our resources are funded by past Thrivent grants and current LWML grants. We are very thankful for both. When you go on the PALS website, you will notice that several courses in the PALS library were transferred to flash drives and linked to the PALS website for ease of use during a PALS meeting. These resources are free and available to anyone.

A NEW course is in production:

Life Together as Synod

An informational video series on our mutual commitment to confession, mission and good order.

This new curriculum is a 10-module pilot project on our life together in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Each module will address a specific topic of our life together with a short (approx. 3-minute) video and a one-page talk sheet. Each talk sheet will include Scripture, practical application and suggested resources for further study.

As it is a pilot project, we are asking *every* PALS group to view, discuss and evaluate each module. A specialized evaluation will be provided for constructive critique. Upon feedback and approval, additional modules may be produced, and we will encourage their being viewed throughout the Synod.

Scheduled completion dates for each module are as follows:

October 15, 2021

1. Preface (introduction to the series) presented by the Rev. Dr. Baneck (Pastoral Education)
2. History, Confession and Purpose of Synod presented by the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison (LCMS President)
3. Confessional Position of Synod, Doctrinal Resolutions, Statements, Agreement and Review presented by the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer (CTCR)

January 15, 2022

4. Objectives of Synod 1–5 presented by the Rev. Kevin Robson (LCMS CMO)
5. Objectives of Synod 6–10 presented by the Rev. Kevin Robson
6. Membership in the Synod

April 15, 2022

7. Relationship in the Missouri Synod
8. The Office of the Holy Ministry
9. Districts of the Synod
10. District Presidents

NEW course completed during the 2020–2021 PALS year:

Faith to Follow: The Journey of Becoming a Pastor's Wife by Kate

Meadows. This course focuses on the pastor's wife, helping the wife (and her husband) navigate the first years in the parish. Kate's book follows the pastor's wife from the first days at seminary through the first year in the parish. Kate provides a study guide and video for use with the final section of her book, entitled "Transition from the Call to the Church." This course identifies the greatest challenges in the parsonage, nuts and bolts to help with the physical move from the seminary, relationships and boundaries within the congregation, the wife's relationship with her husband now that he is a pastor, navigating the unwritten rules and customs of the congregation, the pastor's children in the parish, the wife's relationship to her own extended family, making friends in the congregation and community, expectations of the pastor's wife, the vocation of pastor's wife, and much, much more!

Website and Facebook

The PALS website is one of the most-hit sites on lcms.org. The PALS office and the LCMS Communications department work together to



create and update a source of resources for PALS facilitators and participants. During the 2018–2019 PALS year, all PALS courses with study guides were made available as downloadable PDFs. These are free and available to anyone! Courses are now being created with links to videos for use with the study guides. These are also posted on the PALS page at lcms.org.

The website provides congregations and districts with a clear picture of the PALS program, creating a better understanding of this resource available to them to assist their new pastor and his family in the transition from seminary to full-time parish ministry.

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



Striving for Excellence

PALS DOXOLOGY Grant

At the close of the last PALS year, the Schwan Foundation approved a \$55,000 grant to assist PALS graduates in attending DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel's program of advanced pastoral training.

The "Classic DOXOLOGY" program of interest to PALS includes three separate events: (1) The Gathering — where the pastor participates by himself with other participants; (2) Encore — where the pastor is accompanied by a member/leader of his congregation; and (3) Reunion — where the pastor is accompanied by his wife. For a comprehensive program description, visit doxology.us.

Tuition for the DOXOLOGY Classic Program is \$2,400 for all three events (10 days of training over a one-year period). The PALS grant will provide 50 PALS pastors with 50% of the tuition at \$1,200 per grant. Recipients are encouraged to work with their district and congregation to assist in covering the remaining 50% of the tuition.

Grants are available to participating PALS pastors after the completion of the PALS program. Pastors will ideally be in the fourth or fifth year of their first or second call(s). The PALS office provides and approves all grant applications. To date, six PALS grads from four districts have been awarded grants.

In addition, beginning in 2019, the PALS budget allows for up to four PALS facilitators to receive full tuition to attend a Classic DOXOLOGY program. To date, four of our PALS facilitators have made use of this opportunity.

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.

The executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education communicates with each facilitator throughout the year through phone calls, emails, letters and notes.

124
PASTORS
SERVED

75 WIVES
PARTICIPATING

26 ACTIVE
PALS GROUPS

28  **35** DISTRICTS
PARTICIPATING

Conclusion

Different Times ... Same Vision

The 2019–2023 triennial theme of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is *Making Disciples for Life*. Under this theme, the Synod together has pledged to (1) evangelize the lost, (2) retain the faithful, (3) strengthen congregations, (4) plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multi-cultural communities, and (5) engage in international mission in partnership with the Office of International Mission.

In order to engage in these great biblical charges, the church forms her pastors through spiritual development, character development, confessional development, physical and emotional development, Synodical development and intellectual development.

From the time the pastor leaves the seminary, PALS continues this path of pastoral formation in the pastor's continuing education. PALS is confident — with the cooperation and collaboration of our congregations, districts, district presidents, seminaries, PALS facilitators, PALS pastors and wives, veteran pastors and specialists in various fields — that it best positions pastors to serve their congregation and community, to *make disciples for life*.

Our vision includes:

1. Engaging the entire Council of Presidents, seminaries and congregations to assess the needs of men entering the pastorate in this generation; and producing materials and giving support that will best help our pastors throughout the Synod to proclaim the Gospel to their congregation and community.
2. Inviting Dr. Beverly Yahnke from DOXOLOGY to the 2022 PALS Annual Conference to present on pastoral mental health and pastors making referrals when parishioners are dealing with mental health issues.

**“I will give you
shepherds
after my own heart,
who will feed you
with knowledge and
understanding.”** —JER. 3:15

3. Producing and promoting resources/ curriculum that are faithful to Lutheran doctrine and practice, excellent in quality and production, and relevant to the needs and issues of this generation.
4. Fostering an understanding of the pastoral office as a vocation that is sacred and joyful, a calling from God, an office of integrity and fulfillment, grounded in Christ and baptismal salvation (2019 Convention Resolution 6-01).
5. Developing the “whole person” throughout the life-long formation of the pastor: spiritually, in character, confessionally, physically, emotionally, Synodically and intellectually (Res. 6-01).
6. Supporting, encouraging and caring for our PALS pastors for their general welfare, the proclamation and witness of the Gospel, and the sustaining of healthy advocates for the next generation of pastors (Res. 6-01).

7. Engaging The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in an aggressive and comprehensive Church Worker Recruitment Initiative that will (1) increase fruitful engagement between influencers and youth on individual journeys toward professional church work vocations, and (2) increase the number of individuals enrolled in church worker formation/educational tracks at our Concordia University System institutions and LCMS seminaries so that the Synod’s congregations and schools are adequately served in the coming decades. The five strategies are:

- a.** Establish church worker formation as a long-term, Synod-wide initiative. The Lord commands His church to engage in this formation until He returns.
- b.** Establish a three-stage emerging church worker/leader program. These three stages are children from (1) infant baptism–6th

grade, (2) 7th–8th grade, and (3) 9th–12th grade. This strategy will focus on children and influencers of these children.

- c.** Equip critical influencers (parents, pastors, youth workers, Lutheran school teachers, peers) to identify and encourage young leaders. This will include online resources developed by subject matter experts.
- d.** Develop a continuous insight loop to develop new insights and tactics. This will include ongoing research and resources.
- e.** Position all church workers as admirable champions of humility and service. We desire our children to look at our church workers and say, “I want to be one of them!”





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