

PenPALS

NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

May 2023



“From the mountaintops of joy and celebration, to the plains of day-to-day life, to the deepest valleys of challenges...”

-Rev. Jonathan Manor



News from the PALS Field

PALS International

PALS Gatherings



A PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE IN OUR CALLING

As our church work candidates complete their college and seminary studies, and as they transition with their families to the place where the Lord would have them serve, we lift them all in prayer...

“Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”
(LSB prayer 193)

-Rev. Jonathan Manor, PALS Director



CHALLENGES AND CELEBRATIONS



AND HE AROSE AND CAME TO HIS FATHER. BUT WHILE HE WAS STILL A LONG WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM AND FELT COMPASSION, AND RAN AND EMBRACED HIM AND KISSED HIM. ²¹ AND THE SON SAID TO HIM, 'FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND BEFORE YOU. I AM NO LONGER WORTHY TO BE CALLED YOUR SON.' ²² BUT THE FATHER SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, 'BRING QUICKLY THE BEST ROBE, AND PUT IT ON HIM, AND PUT A RING ON HIS HAND, AND SHOES ON HIS FEET. ²³ AND BRING THE FATTENED CALF AND KILL IT, AND LET US EAT AND CELEBRATE. ²⁴ FOR THIS MY SON WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST, AND IS FOUND.' AND THEY BEGAN TO CELEBRATE. *Luke 15:20-24*

One of the most profound examples of challenges and celebrations in all of scripture is found in one of the most familiar accounts – that of the Prodigal Son. I'm sure you know the details well. The son was all about celebrating...his ill-gotten share of the property, his travel afar, and his wild living. But celebrating soon turned into challenge, finding himself broke, starving, and alone far from home. Celebration became desperation.

The father too was all about celebrating, but he experienced the challenge first, a heartbreaking blow delivered by his own son. To ask his father for his inheritance – a shameful act in any culture, be it in first-century Israel or in our own – is tantamount to wishing his father would die, and brashly telling him so. His lust for the inheritance only to fund his departure and extravagant living added sting to the challenge he caused. But his father's challenge would give way to celebration when, full of mercy and grace and unfathomable love, he runs to meet his desperate son returning home. Bring the best robe, the ring and the shoes, and the fattened calf as well, for it was time to eat and celebrate! "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

I'm guessing you can relate to the realities of challenges and celebrations in your life – I know I can. When it comes to celebrations, my family and I have much to celebrate every day living as His children and receiving His blessings. And in this season of life for us, we are especially celebrating our youngest graduating from high

school, my wife receiving a deserved promotion, and our 30th wedding anniversary. But our life is not without its challenges as well. We go through those challenges and suffering, as I'm sure you do too, living life under the cross of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes those challenges and celebrations have an ebb and flow to them, but sometimes the challenges come totally out of the blue and the reasons to celebrate pop up totally unexpectedly. Whatever happens to be the case throughout your life, the Lord promises to never leave you or forsake you. From the mountaintops of joy and celebration, to the plains of day-to-day life, to the deepest valleys of challenges, He goes with you to care for you and to comfort you and to carry you through. He provides for you through His means of grace – He provides for you through your congregation – He provides for you through the body of Christ as we *“rejoicing with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” Romans 12:15*

As call days and placement services and graduations have all taken place for our church work candidates, the days ahead for them and their families will be filled with challenges and celebrations as they transition from college and seminary to church or school or wherever the Lord is leading them to serve. What a privilege and joy it is for our congregations, our districts, and our synod (especially here in the PALS office!) to be in our life together with them, and to walk with them through the challenges and celebrations that are coming their way.

In that life together we know that our Lord was willing to become flesh and dwell among us. He knows the challenges and celebrations that are part of our lives every day. And He was willing to go through the extreme challenges of betrayal and denial, mockings and beatings, forsakenness and death to pay the penalty for our sin. But he rose to life again, conquering sin and Satan and death, and bringing about an incredible Easter celebration that we continue to celebrate in our daily lives and in our churches as we gather to receive His gifts each Lord's Day.

As we continue to live in the grace and mercy of the Lord, we await the greatest and grandest of celebrations yet to come when He returns in glory. On that day, the challenges of this world will be gone forever, and the celebration of the marriage feast of the Lamb will continue without end. God's continued blessings be to you and our church work graduates as we live life together in the Lord.

Yours in our crucified and risen, ascended and reigning, Lord and Savior Jesus,

Jonathan

Rev. Jonathan Manor, Director of PALS and Continuing Education



NEWS FROM THE PALS FIELD

PALS INTERNATIONAL

Northern Illinois District PALS Facilitators in Italy



PALS facilitators, Pastor Leonard and Lori Payton, were blessed with the opportunity to meet with PALS pastor, Missionary Rev. Tyler McMiller.

"While in Rome, we joined missionary Rev. Tyler McMiller in his living room at the LCMS mission house church there. We worshipped with 4 other folks, including German missionaries, and 2 other seminary students. The service was also on ZOOM to several others around Italy. Incredible...he's just finishing year 2 of his call from through Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne and the Board for International Mission. Truthfully, it was an honor and blessing to be watching this ministry firsthand. I also was reminded of the many issues that new pastors and wives deal with." – Lori Payton

PALS GATHERINGS

Texas District

PALS Facilitator, **Pastor Steve Wagner**, hosted a gathering at **Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church** in **Lago Vista, Texas**. The group worked through strategies for following up with Easter worship visitors, discussed the topic "Communication that Connects," and continued working through the book Built on the Rock by Ted Kober.

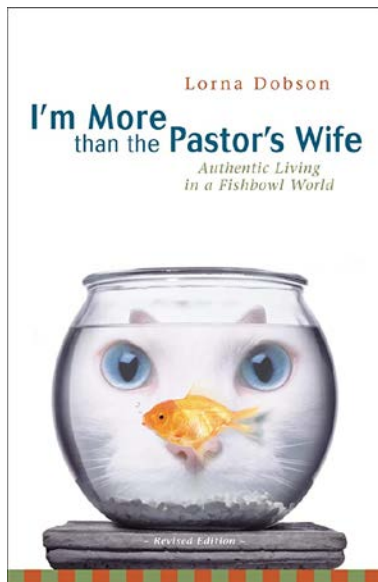
"This was an excellent meeting. Our group has connected well and is doing well." -Steve Wagner.

Minnesota North District

PALS Facilitators, **Pastor Guy and Emily Roberts** hosted a Spring Retreat in the Baxter/Brainerd area of Minnesota. PALS pastors met at the district office working through the topic of stewardship, while the wives used a meeting room at the hotel and studied Lorna Dobson's book, I'm More Than a Pastor's Wife. Childcare was provided at the hotel.

"The childcare ladies are amazing. They bring sensory activities that include toys, crafts, and snacks. They are such a God send! Nona is a retired teacher and what an incredible lady she is to our kids!" -Emily Roberts





PALS wives shared, “We have been very grateful for the community of PALS as we adjust to parish life!” “It’s a great resource for connection and a safe place to talk about life in the ministry.” “A great place to commune and make friends.”

PALS pastors shared, “PALS is excellent support and biblical encouragement and advice for new pastors, their wives, and their families.” “I’m now 2/3 of the way through PALS. The program has greatly helped me get into a rhythm of seeing ministry from a new perspective every few months. That has been immensely beneficial.”

South Wisconsin District

The SWD PALS group met for a Spring Retreat hosted by facilitators, **Pastor David and Jacklyn Groth**. The group worked through the topic of anxiety. Time for casuistry, worship, study, and fellowship together was a true blessing.

Participants shared, “A great refreshing weekend!” “This gathering has been a source of joy, refreshment, and support, one centered in our Christian identity. Highly recommend.” “PALS roots us in the promises of Christ and also unites us distinctly within the brotherhood/family of ministry.” “We have formed a bond with the pastors and my wife and children always look forward to meeting other wives and children.”

The host congregation sponsored a brat fry, and the potluck lunch was also enjoyed by all.

Ohio District

PALS Facilitators, **Pastor Stephen and Heidi Lutz** opened their PALS event with a Friday night social and time to reconnect at their home.

Saturday provided ample time for study, fellowship, and time spent in prayer together. Lunch was ordered from a local coffee shop, whose employees all have special needs.

Kansas District

PALS Facilitators, **Pastor Timothy and Marie Roth** led their final PALS meeting on May 27. These Kansas district PALS families enjoyed time in the Word together, fellowship, worship, and casuistry.

Participants shared, “Really appreciated time in Bible study, especially for the wives!” “It was a wonderful time to visit with other young families.”

Thank you Roth’s for your service as PALS facilitators!



Central Illinois District

PALS Facilitators, **Pastor David and Kassie Weaver** led a PALS retreat over the Memorial Day weekend.

The group enjoyed a study of several *Life Together as Synod* videos and talk sheets. The weekend provided ample time for worship, casuistry, and discussion. PALS wives enjoyed a much-needed time for personal sharing, discussion and fellowship.

Participants shared, “*PALS allows a safe space for us to talk ministry.*” “*It’s a wonderful opportunity to make and maintain connections with fellow pastors.*”

