

# PenPALS

NEWSLETTER

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October/November 2024

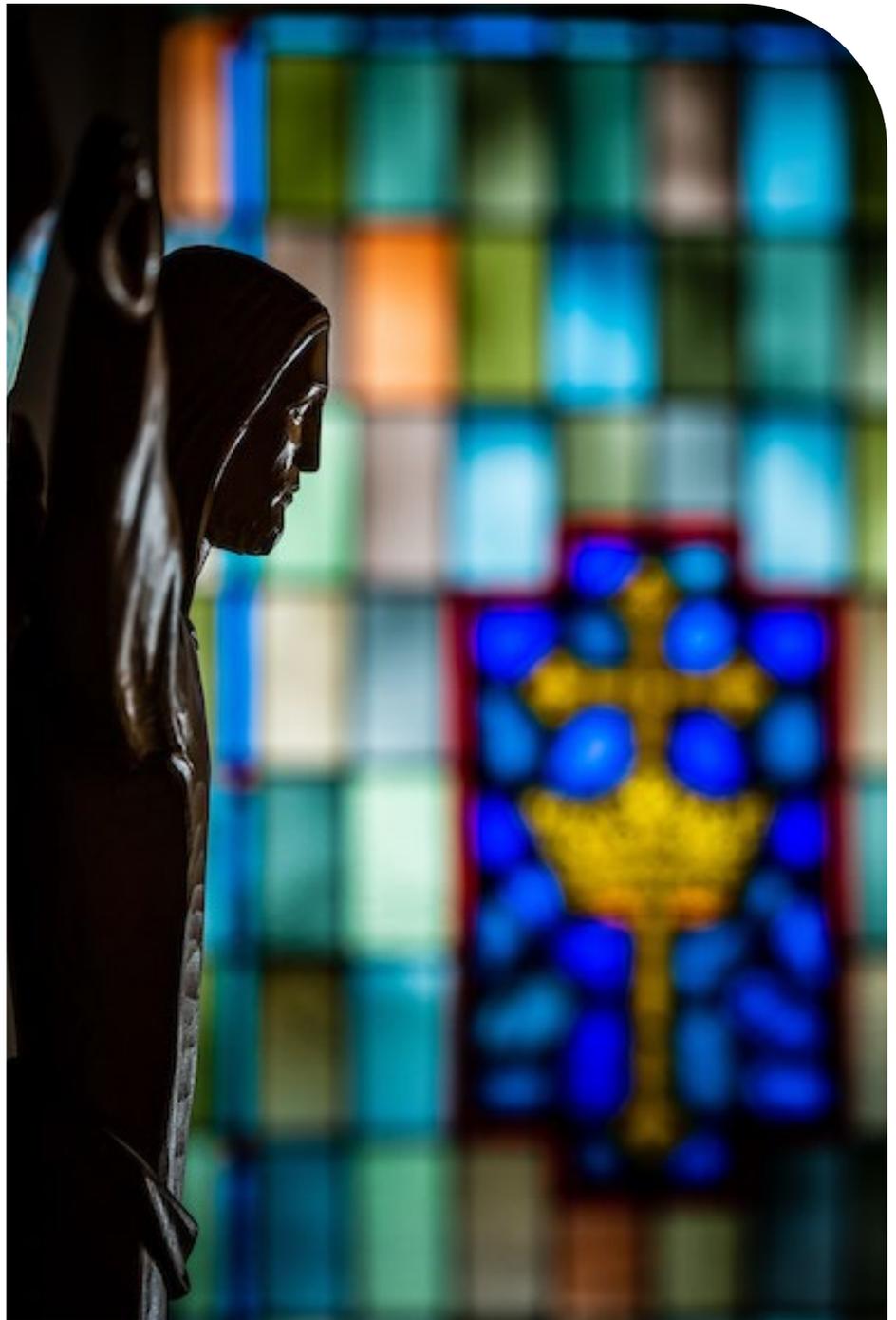
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### SONGS OF THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE

Heavenly Father, God of all grace, we lift our voices together in songs of thankfulness and praise, especially at this time of year when we receive the fruits of the earth, our very daily bread, and reflect on Your bountiful goodness to us all. Strengthen our hearts and lives to continue to sing these songs of thankfulness and praise throughout the year and throughout our lives until, with all Your saints, we sing these songs eternally in Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen



# SINGING SONGS OF PRAISE



*LET US COME INTO HIS PRESENCE WITH THANKSGIVING; LET US MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO HIM WITH SONGS OF PRAISE! PSALM 95:2*

Throughout the history of God's people, the Scriptures tell of them entering into His presence with thanksgiving and singing songs of praise. Even in the midst of hardships and challenges in our world and in our lives today, the Church continues to sing those songs of praise. Songs of praise to the creator and sustainer of all things – songs of praise to the one who has redeemed us with his holy, precious blood – songs of praise to the one who sanctifies and keeps His people in the true faith.

Especially this time of year, these songs of praise are filled with thanksgiving to God for His multitude of blessings in our lives. We thank Him for the fruit of the earth on our table, the fruit of the Spirit in our lives of faith, and the forgiveness and salvation that is ours in Christ.

As I am blessed to continue to serve in my role as Director of PALS, I am certainly singing songs of praise filled with thanksgiving to God for the PALS program and its many benefits.

- Thanksgiving for our PALS facilitators for all they do in caring for the new pastors and their families, giving generously of their time, and lovingly supporting their PALS group as they transition from the seminary to parish ministry.
- Thanksgiving for the PALS pastors, their wives and families, and for their sacrifice to serve the Lord and His people in their vocations that are joyous in Christ.
- Thanksgiving for the many PALS stakeholders who work together, and in conjunction with the PALS office, to promote, encourage, and support this program and its participants through their prayers, their backing, and their finances, especially our seminaries, districts and district presidents, and our synod.

- Thanksgiving for our PALS congregations as they support and care for their pastor and his family by encouraging their participation in PALS, valuing continuing education for their pastor, and understanding how participation can lead to a healthier worker, family, and ministry together as God’s people sharing the love of Christ in their congregation, their community, and around the world.
- Thanksgiving for Dr. Baneck and Robyn Armbrust as we continue to serve together on the Pastoral Education team and for their help and support of all things PALS.
- Thanksgiving for the encouragement and collaboration that is leading to the expansion of the PALS program to serve our commissioned workers as well, beginning with PALS for Deaconesses very soon.
- Thanksgiving for my family who encourages me and supports me with their love and care as we continue this journey together.

Indeed, I am singing songs of praise filled with thanksgiving to God! This time of year especially, I pray that the Lord would fill your hearts and lives with songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. He strengthens you as you go through the trials and tribulations of this life, and He showers you with blessings out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy. For this we indeed thank and praise Him, singing together,

*“Sing to the Lord of harvest, Sing songs of love and praise;*

*With joyful hearts and voices, Your alleluias raise.*

*By Him the rolling seasons, In fruitful order move;*

*Sing to the Lord of harvest, A joyous song of love.”*

*Lutheran Service Book, 893 v.1*

Thanksgiving blessings in Christ,



Rev. Jonathan Manor, Director of PALS and Continuing Education



## WELCOME NEW PALS FACILITATORS

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Pastor David and Becky Juhl have joined the PALS facilitating family as our new PALS facilitators for the **South Wisconsin District**. Pastor serves at **St. Peters Lutheran Church** in **Arlington, Wisconsin**.

We also welcome **Pastor Mark and Sue Matzke** who have agreed to serve as PALS facilitators for the **Ohio District**. Pastor Matzke serves at **St. Mark Lutheran Church** in **Chesterland, Ohio**.

The Juhls and Matzkes are excited to serve, and we are blessed to have them!

## WHAT ARE PALS PARTICIPANTS SAYING?

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*“PALS is a great space to debrief church life with people who understand ministry but are outside of your personal context.”*

*“PALS provides a safe place for pastors and their families to gather, grow, and build each other up.”*

*“PALS is a great opportunity for professional growth, but especially I find the informal fellowship time with my brother pastors helpful.”*

*“PALS provides opportunities for necessary fellowship and growth in the midst of the challenges of life!”*

*“I appreciate the thoughtful and faithful experience of the facilitators.”*

*“PALS really helped me feel more comfortable and confident in our new vocation. I love our little community.”*



## PALS GATHERINGS

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### *Iowa East District*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Daniel Krueger**, gathered new pastors and wives and their families together for their first meeting of the PALS year at **Zion Lutheran Church** in **Hiawatha, Iowa**. Pastors worked through materials related to Church Leadership Development and Church Planning. Wives enjoyed time in Bible study together. The group closed the day in fellowship around a meal at the Olive Garden.

One pastor's wife shared, *“It was nice to have time to talk with the other wives. I also appreciate the childcare being provided.”*



### *Nebraska District*



PALS facilitators, **Pastor Rick and Cheryl Kanoy**, gathered new pastors and wives over a September weekend. The group met at **The Rock Lutheran Church** in **Seward, Nebraska** on Friday, and at the **Nebraska District Office** on Saturday, as part of the new worker orientation.

Participants enjoyed the opportunity for networking and casuistry. One participant shared, “This was encouraging and welcoming.”

### *Minnesota North District*



PALS facilitators, **Pastor Scott and Tammy Brown**, gathered new pastors and wives together in **Baxter, Minnesota**. Participants met and stayed at the **Baymont Inn**. The group worked through PALS course, “*Transition from Seminary to Parish.*”

Lunch was enjoyed at the **Minnesota North District Office**. One participant shared, “A joyous time, as always.”

### *Wyoming District*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Kenneth Mars**, gathered new pastors together during the Fall Wyoming District Pastors Conference in **Casper, Wyoming**.

The group enjoyed meeting at the district office for time in study and casuistry. Dinner out at J’s Pub and Grill offered another time for fellowship and discussion.

### *Rocky Mountain District*



PALS facilitators, **Pastor David and Ginny Vanderhyde**, gathered new pastors and wives in **Breckenridge, Colorado** for a 2-day retreat. Participants enjoyed working through PALS course, “*Finding Balance and Setting Boundaries.*” Families shared meals, played games, and enjoyed time in devotion together. PALS pastors, **Rev. Aidan Moon, Rev. Paul Aarsvold, and Rev. Steve Zandstra** took turns leading devotions.

Wives “continued our book study of *Family Trees & Olive Branches*, from our June retreat and shared about our families and churches.”- Ginny Vanderhyde.



### *Texas District*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Steve Wagner**, led his group through a discussion of Chapters 6–9 of Ordering Your Private World at **Concordia Lutheran Church** in **San Antonio**. PALS pastor, **Pastor David Woelmer**, led opening devotions.

The group appreciated ample time for discussion, study, and enjoyed a walk together during a break in the day.

### *Southern Illinois District*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Peter III**, gathered his group together for a second time this PALS year. **Christ Lutheran Church** in **Jacob, Illinois**, hosted the event.

The topic for the meeting was “Church Structure and Polity.” Pastor III shared, “*Having a topic that governed all fields of theology (practical, exegetical, historical, and confessional) was well received.*” Pastors worked through select articles from the *Concordia Journal* and *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, as well as spending time in a confessional study of several selections from the Book of Concord. They closed with a “What do we do with all this?” discussion.

### *Kansas District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Mark and Lynn Boxman**, led a fall PALS gathering at **Redeemer Lutheran Church** in **Herington, Kansas**. Pastors discussed multiple topics, including a “Heart for Ministry,” open sins, and Christian education. Wives enjoyed time discussing praying the Psalms, using Luther’s book, Reading the Psalms.

One participant shared, “*It is wonderful to be able to connect with this group of people!*” Another shared “*It is so great to meet with fellow new pastors’ wives and discuss our experiences...*”

### *North Wisconsin District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Nate and Sarah Reichle**, led a Fall PALS Retreat at **Camp Luther** in **Three Lakes, Wisconsin**. The topic for study was time management, using PALS course, *Finding Balance and Setting Boundaries*.

Participants appreciated the childcare available, as well as the relevant topic discussed. One participant shared, “*Very helpful time of rest and growth.*”





### *Iowa West District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Chris and Heather Nitzel**, gathered their group together for a November Retreat at Camp Okoboji. The gathering always provides ample time for study, fellowship, and casuistry. Participants enjoy the camp setting.

### *Minnesota South District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Dennis and Sheila Heiden**, hosted a Fall PALS event at **Camp Omega in Waterville, Minnesota**. The group discussed PALS course, *Finding Balance and Setting Boundaries*. The participants also enjoyed discussions together as the pastors and wives met separately for portions of the gathering.

One participant shared, *“(PALS) has provided helpful discussion about issues relevant to my everyday life.”* Participants enjoyed the meals (thank you Sheila!), fellowship, and location. *“As a pastor’s wife who misses the community of the sem, this is the next best thing.”*

### *Southeastern District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Bill and Sue Beyer**, led a Fall PALS Retreat at the **Wintergreen Resort in Wintergreen, Virginia**. The group enjoyed 2 days getting to know each other through devotions, discussion activities, meals, and time in fellowship together.

Pastors and wives enjoyed time together, as well as in separate groups for sharing joys and challenges in their respective roles as pastors and pastors’ wives.

Thank you, LCMS Southeastern District, for providing the meals!

### *New England District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Scott and Wendy MacDonald** gathered their group together this Fall for a PALS Retreat at **Camp Pineshore**.

Participants shared, *“Glad to see the new pastors and fellow PALS in our district.”* And another shared, *“I really enjoyed the mutual encouragement and discussion.”* And another, *“This is valuable for me as one extremely isolated in his call.”*



### *Northern Illinois District*

PALS facilitators, **Pastor Leonard and Lori Payton** gathered their group together this Fall for a PALS Retreat at **Holy Cross Lutheran Church** in **Cary, Illinois**. Participants stayed at the **Country Inn & Suites Radisson**, in **Crystal Lake**. The group worked through PALS course, *Pastor's Life of Prayer*.

Participants enjoyed Compline worship throughout the weekend, as well as ample time for meals, fellowship, and discussion.

### *Missouri District West*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Bernard Ross** met with his group at **Heit's Point Lutheran Camp** in **Lincoln, Missouri**.

Pastors discussed PALS course, *Leading Positive Change*, while wives worked through Lorna Dobson's book *I'm More Than a Pastor's Wife*. Pastors also worked through portions of Rev. Peter Preus's book, *I Will Grieve for the Suicide*.

One pastor shared, *"It was very timely-needed the fellowship, mutual conversation/consolation between the brethren."* One pastor's wife shared, *"Building a community of other pastors' wives to call upon during difficult seasons of life is what PALS is all about. We walk alongside each other."*

## **SET APART TO SERVE**

We have learned that the most important period to encourage young people in considering a church work vocation is sixth through eighth grade. An excellent Bible study to introduce this age group to consider a church vocation is "Seeing Yourself in a Church Work vocation" (<https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/sas-bible-study-2-leader>). This study will introduce the youth to the 8 LCMS church work vocations: pastor, Lutheran school teacher, director of Christian education, deaconess, director of parish music, director of family life ministry, director of Christian outreach, and director of church ministries. Please consider using this study with your youth.

