



**2022–23** POST-SEMINARY APPLIED  
LEARNING AND SUPPORT

# Annual Report



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**“Let us  
hold fast the  
confession of  
our hope without  
wavering, for he  
who promised is  
faithful.”** —HEB. 10:23

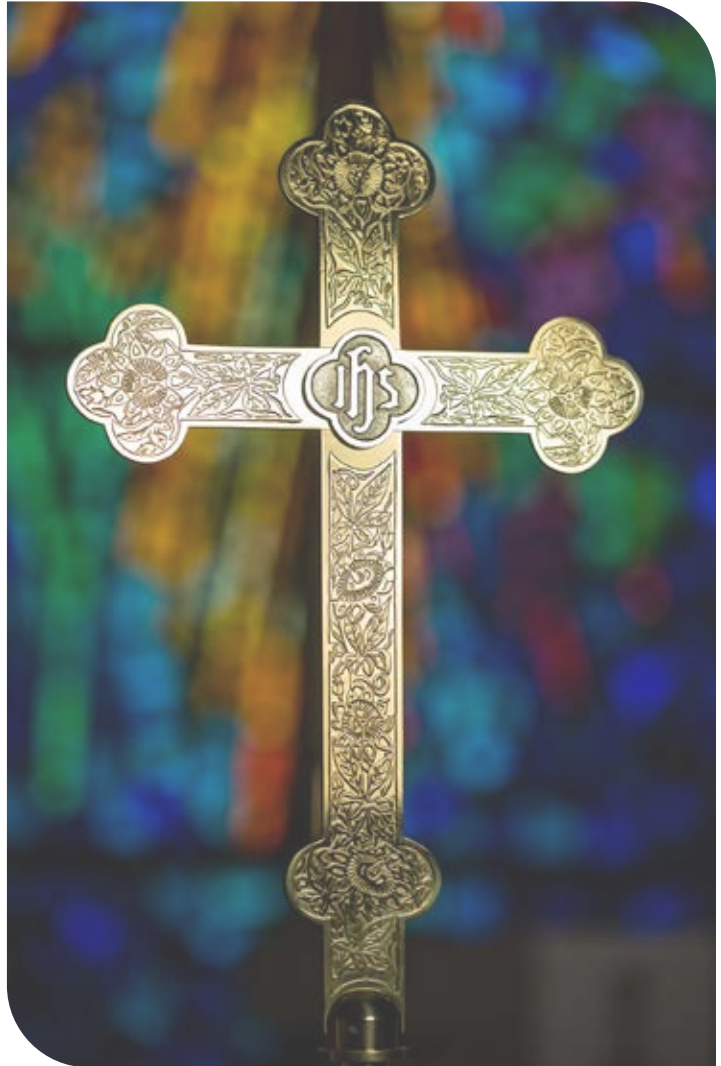
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# Life Together in PALS

**That was the theme for our annual Facilitators Conference this past June.** It's a theme that brought the 2022–2023 PALS year to a close, while at the same time launching the 2023–2024 PALS year.

It's a theme that dovetails with the “Life Together as Synod” video series that “is designed to help improve your knowledge on the subject [of the LCMS]. These short videos take a look at LCMS history; the church's structure and governing documents; its boards, entities and institutions; how a rostered worker is called; and everything in between.” It also fits together with the monthly digital news digest that began in December of 2015 called “Life Together with President Harrison,” where he “shares highlights from the LCMS to aid the whole church as we live and work together to proclaim the Gospel and bear Christ's mercy to one another in our congregations, communities and the world” ([lcms.org/publications/life-together-digest](https://lcms.org/publications/life-together-digest)).

“Life Together in PALS” acknowledges the importance of the collaborative relationships that exist to support the PALS program, as we live and work together under the cross of Jesus Christ in those relationships. The Synod, districts, congregations and their members, pastors and wives, PALS facilitators, seminaries and PALS Steering Committee all work together as PALS carries out its life together, supporting and encouraging pastors and their wives in their transition from seminary life to parish ministry.



This PALS year has brought a transition here in the PALS office. In October 2022, it was my joy and honor to accept the new position of “Director of PALS and Continuing Education” in the Office of Pastoral Education. While I was new to the position, I was certainly not new to the PALS program. In my early years of ministry in Michigan, my wife –



Deac. Dr. Tiffany Manor – and I were greatly blessed by the encouragement and support we received from our facilitators and fellow pastors and wives in our PALS group. In the LCMS New England District, where I served as pastor and Tiffany served as district executive staff, we were honored to serve as PALS facilitators for eight years, and blessed by those we had the privilege of serving.

Now in the early days of this new position, it has been my delight to serve in the collaborative relationships that continue to move the PALS program forward in service to the Lord and His church. What you will find in this 2022–2023 edition of the PALS Annual Report reflects our “Life Together in PALS.” It shows how our wonderful PALS facilitators, and our PALS pastors and their wives continue to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” It reminds us that as our pastors preach Christ crucified for the salvation of all, they do so with the assurance that “he who promised is faithful.”

**Rev. Jonathan Manor**

***Director of PALS and Continuing Education***

# Preface/History

**In the mid-1990s**, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), chiefly through its Council of Presidents (COP), sought to assist new seminary graduates and their wives in the joyful, yet at times 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 oversight of PALS was placed in the Synod's Office of Pastoral Education (as of Nov. 1, 2010).

PALS utilizes geographic cohorts of new pastors and wives, usually 6–12 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. They 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 discussion of topics more focused upon their needs and interests through general conversations, book studies and topic-facilitated dialogue. 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





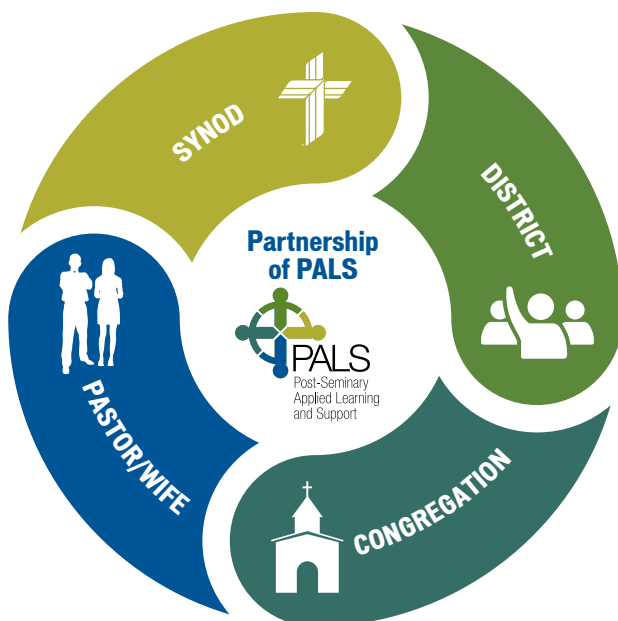
wives. In the selection of PALS facilitators, the district president is always consulted to identify experienced, respected and empathetic pastors and wives. Facilitators serve to help participants learn from one another as study, discussion and reflection leads participants to fresh insights and wise 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 contributions totaled \$62,000. That amount was more than matched by the Synod. Congregations are asked to support their pastors through encouraging participation in PALS, allowing work time for their participation 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)
- Facilitating pastors and facilitating wives (47)
  - Contract signing payment of \$250
  - Reimbursement for travel and meeting expenses
  - \$55 stipend per PALS participant (pastors/ wives) per meeting attended
  - Childcare expenses for PALS gatherings
- Recruitment
  - Facilitator reimbursement for recruitment meals with new PALS pastors and families
  - Facilitator reimbursement for travel expenses associated with attending ordinations and installations of PALS pastors
  - Fourth-year seminarian PALS presentations at each seminary
- Annual Facilitator Conference (held in St. Louis)
- Curriculum development





The following is a listing of the expenses budgeted for **fiscal year 2024** (July 2023–June 2024).

PALS Budget FY 2024		
Administration	Employee, office supplies, mailroom expenses, G&A expenses, employee travel	\$138,707.00
PALS Delivery	Facilitator contracts, travel and meeting expenses for facilitating couples, PALS meeting expenses, DOXOLOGY tuition (4 facilitators/year)	\$86,000.00
PALS Recruitment	PALS-sponsored seminary meals, facilitator/new pastor dinners	\$13,100.00
PALS Spouses	Facilitating wife stipends, materials	\$25,000.00
PALS Training	Conference expenses, travel, housing, books and materials	\$15,700.00
<b>TOTAL Budgeted Expenses</b>		<b>\$278,507.00</b>

## Summary of the 2022–23 PALS Year

# Participation Rates

The 2022–2023 PALS year began on July 1, 2022, and ended on June 30, 2023. Reports submitted by facilitators indicate the following:

- 24 PALS groups formed throughout the LCMS
- 124 pastors and 93 wives participated in a total of 94 regular PALS gathering days with a total of 449 CUEs earned

### District Participation

Of the 35 LCMS districts, 26 districts participated in PALS this year. Participating districts that did not have an active PALS group meeting during the 2022–2023 PALS year due to having limited PALS eligible pastors are listed as inactive. The individual

pastors in those districts are matched up with a seasoned pastor for support.

Pastors in non-geographic districts (English and SELC) are placed in PALS groups in the nearest geographic district. Non-PALS districts are listed as N/A.

Regular gatherings and virtual gatherings are noted as follows: regular (R), virtual (V). Virtual gatherings occurred due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions.

The following table lists the number of PALS gatherings during the past eight years by district.

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Atlantic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	6	5	6	6	4R	6R	2	6
Eastern	N/A	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English								
Florida-Georgia	6	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	6	6	N/A	3	3R	0	0	0
Iowa East	4	4	4	4	3R	3R 2V	3	4
Iowa West	6	6	6	5	3R	0	2	6
Kansas	N/A	4	7	7	3R	3R	5	2
Michigan	11	9	13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	6	3	6	3	0	0	0	0
Minnesota North	6	5	6	6	4R	6R	4	6
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	2	1	2R	5R	5	6
Missouri	12	10	12	10	8R 3V	8R 1V	3	5
Montana	N/A	2	1	2	1R	0	inactive	inactive
Nebraska	14	11	8	8	6R 2V	5R 1V	6	6
New England	6	6	6	6	2R	3R	4	1



District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
New Jersey	6	4	0	2	0	0	0	N/A
North Dakota	6	6	6	6	0	3R	4	6
North Wisconsin	4	8	6	6	6R	6R	6	6
Northern Illinois	2	5	6	6	4R	4R	6	6
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	6	3	5	5	4R	4R 1V	5	5
Oklahoma	N/A	N/A	6	0	0	2R	2	2
Pacific Southwest	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	6	6	6	6	4R 2V	6R 1V	6	6
SELC								
South Dakota	6	5	5	6	4R	0	0	0
South Wisconsin	5	5	1	2	1R	0	4	6
Southeastern	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	3	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	inactive	inactive	inactive
Southern Illinois	1	N/A	4	6	4R 4V	2R 1V	3	5
Texas	10	12	14	10	7R 4V	2R 6V	5	8
Wyoming		6	4	7	2R	3R	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>75R 15V</b>	<b>71R 13V</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>94</b>

**124**  
PASTORS  
SERVED

**93** WIVES  
PARTICIPATING

**449** CUEs  
EARNED

**26**  **35** DISTRICTS  
PARTICIPATING



## Pastor Participation

The following table 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 COVID-19 restrictions and concerns.*

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Atlantic	4	4	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	8	6	3	4	2	1	2	4
Eastern	0	4	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	5	4	5	3	1	1	2	2
Florida-Georgia	6	8	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	10	13	N/A	5	6	0	0	0
Iowa East	9	7	5	2	5	6	7	4
Iowa West	8	11	15	12	7	0	4	6
Kansas	1	13	15	12	5	5	5	4
Michigan	18	16	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	4	3	3	3	0	0	0	0
Minnesota North	10	8	6	7	9	10	9	11
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	5	2	3	3	3	6
Missouri	16	19	18	17	15	17	5	3
Montana	0	2	2	3	1	0	0	inactive
Nebraska	17	9	12	13	13	16	15	8
New England	5	3	5	3	4	7	3	3
New Jersey	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	N/A
North Dakota	3	5	4	4	0	4	3	4
North Wisconsin	9	12	8	7	11	11	7	8
Northern Illinois	1	5	5	6	6	10	15	17
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Ohio	4	5	8	6	3	4	3	5
Oklahoma	N/A	N/A	3	0	0	5	6	5
Pacific Southwest	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	7	5	4	4	8	8	5	3
SELC	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Dakota	9	13	12	10	8	0	0	0
South Wisconsin	8	4	1	4	4	0	5	11
Southeastern	7	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	11	3	6	0	0	0	0	inactive
Southern Illinois	2	N/A	5	7	7	3	4	6
Texas	14	14	12	14	7	9	11	11
Wyoming	N/A	3	4	3	1	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>128*</b>	<b>124*</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>124</b>

## Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Participation in PALS provides continuing education for pastors. CEUs are granted, one for every 10 contact hours. During the 2022–2023 PALS year, a total of 449 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	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Atlantic	17	12	3	5	2	3	N/A	N/A
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois	32	29	16	20	8	6	4	16
Eastern	N/A	15	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English	17	13	13	6	1	2	8	11
Florida-Georgia	25	32	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	44	48	N/A	7	11	0	0	0
Iowa East	32	19	18	8	11	20	14	13
Iowa West	36	53	59	49	17	0	8	26
Kansas	4	41	34	27	8	10	10	6

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Michigan	40	39	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	17	6	6	7	0	0	0	0
Minnesota North	29	23	25	38	34	46	32	56
Minnesota South	N/A	N/A	7	2	6	12	13	22
Missouri	64	77	67	65	43	50	7	14
Montana	N/A	4	2	3	1	0	0	inactive
Nebraska	54	39	41	40	46	57	68	20
New England	24	16	20	11	5	11	10	3
New Jersey	17	14	0	6	0	0	0	N/A
North Dakota	18	27	21	18	0	11	12	14
North Wisconsin	28	46	36	22	40	52	34	28
Northern Illinois	2	17	19	16	20	16	63	67
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	12	14	27	18	5	7	6	15
Oklahoma	N/A	N/A	17	0	0	10	12	10
Pacific Southwest	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	30	20	20	22	28	35	26	12
SELC	2	10	4	0	2	4	4	3
South Dakota	46	46	42	52	28	0	0	0
South Wisconsin	28	8	1	7	4	0	16	55
Southeastern	31	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	32	7	25	0	0	0	0	inactive
Southern Illinois	2	N/A	16	25	21	8	9	21
Texas	37	45	35	32	20	35	19	35
Wyoming	N/A	18	16	17	2	4	4	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>449</b>

## Facilitating Pastors and Wives

We are blessed with committed servants who have a desire to encourage and support new pastors and their families in the 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.

The following LCMS pastors and wives served as PALS facilitators during the 2022–2023 PALS year.

LCMS District	Facilitators
Southern Illinois	Rev. Dr. Kirk and Lori Clayton Zion Lutheran Church Mascoutah, Ill.
Missouri (West)	Rev. Frank Greene King of Kings Lutheran Church Kansas City, Mo.
South Wisconsin	Rev. David and Jacklyn Groth Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Watertown, Wis.
Indiana	Rev. Rich and Kristi Heinz Trinity Lutheran Church Lowell, Ind.
Mid-South	Rev. Barry and Sylvia Hildebrandt Cross of Christ Lutheran Church Chattanooga, Tenn.
Ohio	Rev. Stephen and Heidi Lutz Trinity Lutheran Church Elmore, Ohio
Oklahoma	Rev. Timothy and Heather McCarty Emmanuel Lutheran Church Kingfisher, Okla.
New England	Rev. Scott and Wendy MacDonald Saint John Lutheran Church Meriden, Conn.
Wyoming	Rev. Kenneth and Vickie Mars St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran Churches Kimball, Neb. and Burns, Wyo.
Missouri (East)	Rev. Jacob and Michelle May Christ Lutheran Church Gordonville, Mo.
Iowa West	Rev. Christopher and Heather Nltzel St. Paul Lutheran Church Hartley, Iowa

LCMS District	Facilitators
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, Wisc.
Minnesota North	Rev. Guy and Emily Roberts Zion Lutheran Church Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Kansas	Rev. Timothy and Marie Roth Faith Lutheran Church Pomona, Kan.
Nebraska	Rev. Charles and Brenda Schmidt Lincoln, Neb.
Texas	Rev. Dr. Steve and Ursula Sohns Resurrection Lutheran Church Spring, Texas
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.
Minnesota South	Rev. Stefan Wismar and Mrs. Melissa Jones Minnesota South District, Minn.
North Dakota	Rev. Bernard and Carolyn Worrall Immanuel Lutheran Church Fargo, N.D.

## PALS Wives' Participation

A strength of PALS is the focus on the pastor's wife and family. 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 table lists the number of participating wives in each participating LCMS district. Participating districts with a blank field on the table are those that did not have a wives' facilitator at that time. Participating districts with groups that did not meet due to having limited PALS eligible pastors/wives are listed as inactive. Non-participating districts are listed as N/A.

*\*Some wives were unable to participate due to the COVID-19 restrictions and concerns.*

District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Atlantic		4					N/A	N/A
California-Nevada-Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central Illinois		5	3	4	2	1	1	4
Eastern		3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English		2	2	1	0		1	2
Florida-Georgia	4	6	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana				3	5	0	0	0
Iowa East		5	3	2	3	4	3	2
Iowa West	5	9	11	11	6	0	3	5
Kansas	N/A	9	11	11	5	3	5	4
Michigan	15	12	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-South	5		2	2	0	0	0	0
Minnesota North	7	7	4	4	6	6	7	8
Minnesota South	N/A		5	2	2	2	3	6
Missouri	12	17	12	11	7	8	2	0
Montana			2	3	1	0	0	inactive
Nebraska	11	7	9	8	7	11	12	8
New England	6	6	4	3	3	5	2	1
New Jersey	4	3	0	3	0	0	0	N/A
North Dakota	4	4	2	1	0	1	3	4
North Wisconsin	7	8	5	8	8	9	6	5
Northern Illinois	3	2	5	5	4	6	10	12
Northwest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	3	5	7	5	3	5	3	4





District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Oklahoma			2	0	0	4	4	4
Pacific Southwest	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA	N/A	N/A
Rocky Mountain	6	4	2	3	4	4	4	3
SELC		1	1	1	0	0	1	1
South Dakota	7	11	10	7	6	0	0	0
South Wisconsin	6	5	1	4	4	0	5	9
Southeastern	7	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern			2	0	0	N/A	N/A	inactive
Southern Illinois			2	4	6	1	1	5
Texas	10	10	8	10	5	4	5	6
Wyoming		3	3	3	1	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>88*</b>	<b>75*</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>93</b>

# Curriculum

The following table lists the PALS produced curricular material. Materials are requested by PALS facilitating pastors for use in meetings. Materials can be downloaded from the PALS page on [lcms.org](http://lcms.org). Study guides, DVDs and flash drives can also be mailed directly to the PALS facilitators, as requested.

Title
Bible Studies for New Pastors' Wives (Wollenburg)
Biblical Foundations for Lutheran Catechesis (Pless)
Building A Long-Term Ministry (Zieroth)
Conflict Resolution vs. Reconciliation (Ambassadors of Reconciliation)
Doing Law & Gospel Preaching (Fickenscher)
Every One His Witness (Wood)
Facing the Forces of Trouble and Conflict in Parish Ministry (Rehwaldt)
Faith to Follow: The Journey of Becoming a Pastor's Wife (Meadows)
Finding Balance & Setting Boundaries between Work and Home (Fleming/Fleming)
Getting to Know Your New Congregation (Hirsch/O'Donnell)
Holding Up the Prophet's Hands (Hartung)
I'm More than the Pastor's Wife (Dobson) Discussion Guide (O'Donnell)
Introduction to Pastoral Leadership & Parish Administration (Hardy)
Law and Gospel in the Pastoral Office (Wollenburg)
Leading Positive Change in Congregations (Peter)
Life in the Parsonage (Baneck)
Making Pastoral Referrals w/Confidence, Part 1 (Yahnke)
Making Pastoral Referrals w/Confidence, Part 2 (Yahnke)
Marriage by God's Design (Radkey)
Parenting in the Pew (Castleman)
Pastor: Apt to Teach (Blanke)
Pastor as Chief Steward (Knolhoff/Biermann)
Pastoral Care & Ethics at Life's End (Pless)
Pastoring the Dying & Funeral Preparation (Torkelson)
Pastors & Elders (Mech)
Pastor's Life of Prayer (Baneck/Baneck)
Preaching as Pilgrimage (Schmitt)



Title
Preaching: The Heart and the Art (Schmitt)
Premarital Pastoral Care (Marrs/Bergmann)
Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society (Ambassadors of Reconciliation)
Stewardship of Time for Pastors (Blomenberg)
Thinking About Stewardship (Biermann)
Transition from Seminary to Parish - Pastors (Knippa)
Transition from Seminary to Parish - Wives (Knippa)
Transition: Seminary to Rural/Urban (Schave/Kollbaum)
Visitation: Calling on Inactive Members (Walther)

## Books without Accompanying PALS Curriculum

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

Books without Accompanying PALS Curriculum	Presenter/Author
Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation	Ted Kober
Joy: A Study on Philippians	Deb Burma
Pew Sisters	Katie Schuermann
Family Trees and Olive Branches	Christina Hergenrader
The Care of Souls	Harold Senkbeil
Boundaries	Henry Cloud and John Townsend
Myth of the Millennial	Ted and Chelsey Doering
Sexual Morality in a Christless World	Matthew Rueger
I Will Grieve for the Suicide	Peter Preus
Be Still and Know	Deb Burma
The Mighty and the Mysterious	Heidi Goehmann
Canoeing the Mountains	Tod Bolsinger





# Serving You

## The PALS Steering Committee

Initially formed in March 2011, the Steering Committee holds teleconferences two 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 2022–2023:

### PALS Facilitating Pastors (2)

- Rev. Nate Reichle  
St. Paul, Manawa, Wis.
- Rev. Guy Roberts,  
Zion, Detroit Lakes, Minn.

### PALS Facilitating Wife (1)

- Lori Payton,  
Forest Park, Ill.

### PALS Participating Pastors (2)

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

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

- Rev. Dr. Steve Turner  
President, LCMS Iowa District West
- Rev. Terry Forke  
President, LCMS Montana District

## Seminary Representatives (2)

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

## Staff — current/former (4)

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

## PALS Office

PALS is strategically placed within the Office of Pastoral Education. The executive director of pastoral education, Rev. Dr. James Baneck, reports to the chief mission officer of 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, 2023 LCMS Handbook, p. 123"). PALS falls under "post-seminary continuing education."

Office of Pastoral Education		
Pre-Seminary Education	Seminary Education	Continuing Education PALS

- **Rev. Jonathan Manor** began his duties as PALS director in October 2022. Previously, he served as a parish pastor in Mich., Ill., Conn. and Mass. He and his wife, Deac. Dr. Tiffany Manor, served as PALS facilitators in the New England District from 2015–2022.
- **Robyn Armbrust** serves as the administrative coordinator for the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education. As coordinator, Armbrust oversees much of the PALS operations. She came on board in May 2016. Previously, Armbrust 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 students completing their seminary studies and their wives. On Sunday, Nov. 6, 2022, Dr. Baneck and Rev. Manor hosted a dinner and PALS presentation at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Baneck led a presentation on “Support and Care for our Pastors,” while Rev. Manor introduced the PALS program and provided materials to the seminarians and their wives. This was a much-appreciated portion of the presentation.

A similar event was held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne on Wednesday, March 22, 2023.

The PALS office is very grateful for the seminaries’ endorsement and advocacy of the PALS program to their students. Several seminary professors and their wives attended these events in support of their students and the PALS program.

## Curriculum

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. 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.

Modules added to a PALS curriculum:

### Life Together as Synod

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



This curriculum presents our life together in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Each module introduces a specific topic of our life together with a short video, followed by a 1–2-page talk sheet. Each talk sheet includes Scripture, discussion and application, and suggested resources for further study. These modules are available to everyone at [resources.lcms.org/life-together-as-synod-video-series](https://resources.lcms.org/life-together-as-synod-video-series). They are great to use for Bible class, church meetings, faculty meetings and with church-work students.

### Current Modules include:

1. *Preface* (Introduction to the series) presented by Dr. James Baneck (pastoral education)
2. *History, Confession and Purpose of Synod* presented by LCMS President Matthew Harrison
3. *Confessional Position of Synod, Doctrinal Resolutions, Statements, Agreement and Review* presented by Dr. Joel Lehenbauer (executive director, Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR))
4. *Objectives of Synod 1–5* presented by Rev. Kevin Robson (LCMS chief mission officer)
5. *Objectives of Synod 6–10* presented by Rev. Kevin Robson



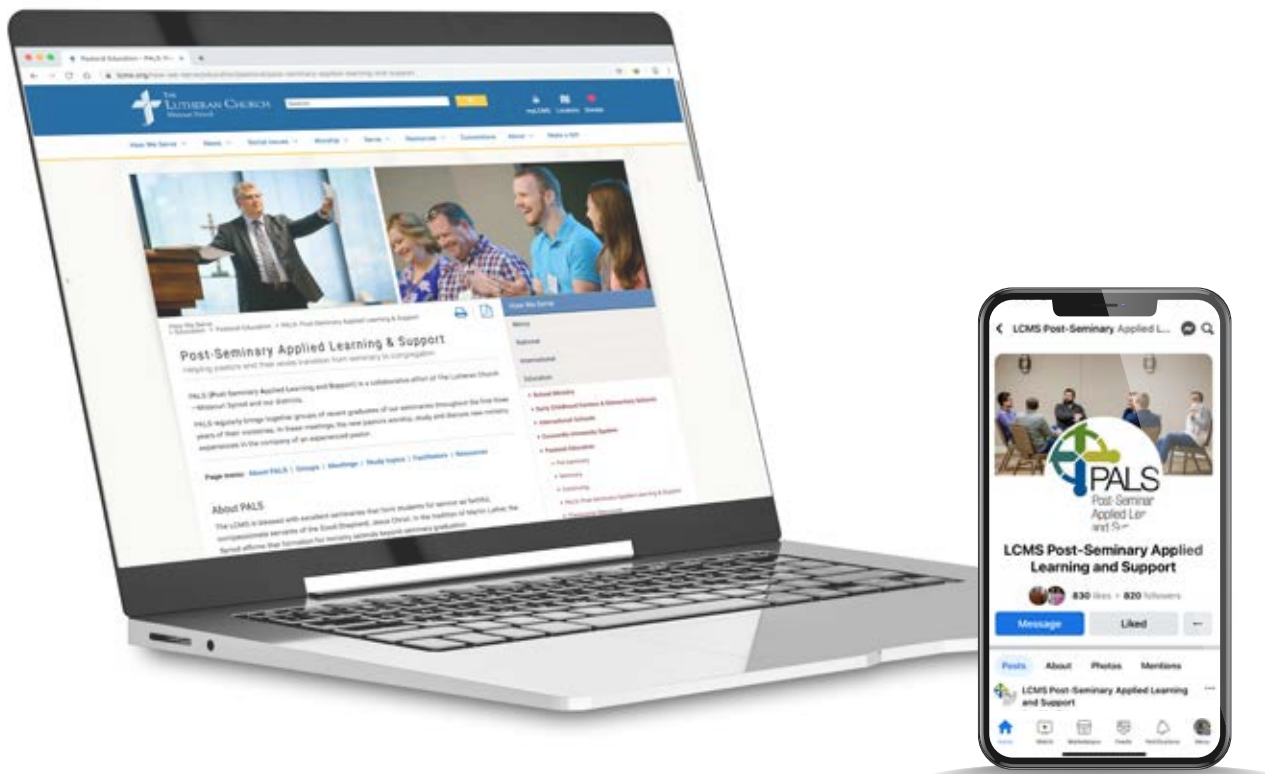
6. *Membership in the Synod* presented by Dr. Lee Hagan (president, LCMS Missouri District)
7. *Relationships in the Missouri Synod* presented by Dr. Donald Fondow (president emeritus, LCMS Minnesota North District)
8. *The Office of the Holy Ministry* presented by Dr. James Baneck
9. *Districts of the Synod* presented by Dr. Scott Murray (pastor, Memorial Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas, and LCMS third vice-president)
10. *District Presidents* presented by Rev. Justin Panzer (president, LCMS Kansas District)

## Website and Facebook

The PALS page is one of the most utilized pages on the LCMS website. The PALS office and the LCMS Communications Department work together to maintain a list of current resources available for use by PALS facilitators and participants. Beginning in the 2018–2019 PALS year, we have made all PALS courses with study guides 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/PALS](https://lcms.org/PALS).

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 posts.



# Striving for Excellence

## **PALS DOXOLOGY Grant**

The Schwan Foundation has approved a \$55,000 grant to assist PALS graduates in attending DOXOLOGY'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 see: [doxology.us/](http://doxology.us/).

Tuition for the DOXOLOGY Classic Program is \$2,500 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 \$1,250 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 ministry. The PALS office provides and reviews all grant applications, then notifies recipients of approved grants. To date, 14 PALS grads from 10 districts have been awarded a grant.

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, five of our PALS facilitators have made use of this opportunity.

## **Evaluations**

Our desire is to continually improve the PALS experience in all its aspects. One way we do that is by having each PALS facilitator and participant fill out an evaluation following each meeting. Those evaluations give feedback on the current meeting and offer input opportunities for suggested study topics and ways to improve the PALS program overall. The results of these evaluations are taken

into consideration by the PALS office and discussed with the Steering Committee.

The PALS Director communicates with the facilitators throughout the year through phone calls, emails, letters, notes, and visits when possible, with the goals of encouraging, supporting, and learning.

## **Facilitator's Training Conference**

On June 27–28, 2023, PALS facilitators gathered from around the country to be a part of the annual PALS Facilitator Conference here in St. Louis. The first day we gathered at the International Center, and the second day we met at the St. Louis Airport Hilton Hotel.

This year's conference theme was "Life Together in PALS," and our theme verse was Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." We were blessed to have 19 of our facilitators in attendance, including eight new facilitators who were just beginning to serve in PALS.

Our time together was spent in exploration, conversation, worship and fellowship. The facilitators shared their current joys and challenges of serving as facilitators, we covered the nuts and bolts of serving in the facilitator role, and we discussed ways that PALS gatherings can be improved to continue to provide the education, encouragement and support for the new pastors and wives as they transition from seminary life to parish life.

President Harrison graciously invited us to his office for a conversation and for the opportunity for him to express his appreciation to the facilitators for all they do. We had an insightful presentation from Peter Slayton, LCMS social media manager, on the topics of social media presence, AI tools and the Metaverse worldview. Leaders from the Synod staff joined us for conversation over lunch, and a few current PALS pastors and wives participated in a Zoom panel discussion, sharing their experiences in PALS with the facilitators. Of course, there were St. Louis favorites for our meals — Mellow Mushroom pizza, Hog Call BBQ and Ted Drewes Frozen Custard!

# Conclusion

**As this report reflects the PALS activity of its 25th year,** PALS remains committed to supporting our pastors and their wives and families in their first years of ministry as they transition from the seminary to the parish.

With PALS having now moved into its 26th year, that commitment continues through the collaborative relationships that serve our “Life Together in PALS.” Current relationships continue, and new relationships have developed as all non-participating districts have engaged again in conversations with the Pastoral Education / PALS team. Six of those districts are beginning or returning to participation in PALS, and the conversations continue with the others on how we can all continue to work together in support

of pastors and their wives in their early years of ministry.

We thank God for those relationships, for your continued encouragement and support of PALS, and for your prayers for our facilitators, pastors and their families, as well as the congregations they faithfully serve.

**“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”** (*Lutheran Service Book*, p. 311).

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**“Let us hold fast  
the confession of our  
hope without wavering,  
for he who promised is  
faithful.”**

**—HEB. 10:23**

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