

PenPALS

NEWSLETTER

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“...we look to the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died.”

-Rev. Jonathan Manor



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LENT - HOLY WEEK - EASTER

As we conclude the Lenten season and head towards Holy Week and Easter, we remember once again, “He [Jesus] himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” *1 Peter 2:24*

A most blessed Holy Week and Easter to all of you from us in the PALS office!

-Rev. Jonathan Manor, PALS Director



WORDS OF THE SAVIOR



SURELY HE HAS BORNE OUR GRIEFS AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS; YET WE ESTEEMED HIM STRICKEN, SMITTEN BY GOD, AND AFFLICTED. BUT HE WAS PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; HE WAS CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; UPON HIM WAS THE CHASTISEMENT THAT BROUGHT US PEACE, AND WITH HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED. ISAIAH 53:4–5

In just a few days, we will stand once again before the cross of Christ on Good Friday, contemplating all that is happening there. There, we look to the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died. We don't boast, except in this death of Christ. We see from his head and his hands and his feet, the sorrow and the love, mingled together, flowing down.

Here is the Lamb of God – going forth – uncomplaining – to bear the punishment, shame, depravation, and hell – all the things that came with our debt of sin. He does it all for love of you and me. As we stand before his cross, we ponder the words which Jesus spoke, and what they mean for you and me.

“Father, forgive them” – Luke 23:34

It's here that we are privileged to see the heart of our Savior. A heart full of love and compassion – a heart overflowing with forgiveness. He prays not for deliverance – not for justice – not for revenge...but that these be forgiven: the soldiers who nailed him to the tree – the crowds who demanded his death – you and me

who by our sins made all this necessary. “Father, forgive them.” That is his prayer for them...that is his prayer for you and me. Repent – believe in him – and your sins are forgiven.

“Today you will be with me in paradise” – Luke 23:43

A sinner – unknown, except that he too was being crucified. He says, “Jesus, remember me.” Remember me in your eternal kingdom. Do not exclude me because of my crimes. Do not turn me away because of my sins. Hearing the thief’s repentant cry, Jesus immediately absolves this man of his guilt, forgives him of his sin, and accepts him as one of his own. Jesus unlocks heaven for him, not in the future, but right now. “Today you will be with me in paradise.” So it is with us – in repentance and faith, confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior, we too are, and will be in his everlasting kingdom.

“Behold, your mother” – John 19:27

Reframing family to be our brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus now places the care of his mother Mary in the hands of his beloved disciple John. “Behold, your mother!” Even in the hour of his death he fulfilled the law – kept the commandment – Honor your father and your mother. He takes care of his mother and her needs before he leaves her.

So it is for us as well...Jesus will never forget us. Through his Word and sacraments, he is constantly guiding and directing and nurturing us. He hasn’t dumped us into the world to fend for ourselves alone. He hasn’t forgotten us. He comes to us again each day with his gifts and with his Spirit.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” – Mark 15:34

Darkness covers the earth. Why darkness? Some say nature suffered with Jesus. Others say the sun could not bear to watch the suffering. But it was more – this darkness signified judgment. God’s judgment on Jesus as our substitute. Here Jesus was made sin for us – was made a curse. The sin and curse of this world now lie on the Son. Deserted by friends, enemies, rulers...and justice. He now hangs alone...even deserted by his Father, as he turned away from the one who had become sin for us.

“I thirst” – John 19:28

Our Lord has fulfilled the scriptures. The terrible hours of suffering, darkness, pain, hell, and desertion by the Father have achieved the goal. He had accomplished it all. Nothing more was needed. Now Jesus could lie down and be prepared for death. But his mouth becomes dry...dirt and blood become paste in his throat. “I thirst,” he says, as he prepares for his last bold statement.

“It is finished” – John 19:30

At last, the cup of God’s wrath has been drained– the price has been paid. “It...Is...Finished” The spotless Lamb of God has made his full atoning sacrifice for the world. This is the God-man who paid the price in full with his holy precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. The benefits of his atonement are yours through confession, repentance, and faith in the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” – Luke 23:46

The saddest and yet the most important hours the earth has ever seen, come to their end. Darkness has covered the land – there’s an earthquake – stones split – the temple curtain is torn in two – even graves are broken open and many of the faithful are risen to life. All of this, as the Son of God takes his final earthly breathes...for now.

For us, these are glorious hours, because in them, the work of redemption is completed – we have been redeemed – bought back at the price of Jesus’ life – salvation has been won for us. The Son of God is no longer forsaken by his Father. He utters the very last words from the cross, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And he breathed his last.

The Lamb of God dies... because he was willing to. The Lord of life gave up his life – to win forgiveness and eternal life for you. He lays down his soul into the Father’s hands, knowing that everything has now been accomplished.

God bless your journey from the palm-lined streets to the upper room,
from the cross of Calvary to the empty tomb!

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

Jonathan

Rev. Jonathan Manor, Director of PALS and Continuing Education





PALS GATHERINGS

Missouri District (West)

PALS facilitator **Pastor Frank Greene** gathered his group together recently for a day of study, fellowship, and prayer. PALS pastor **Rev. James Lanning** led the group through the *Service of Prayer and Preaching*. The group worked through the topic, “Introduction to Pastoral Leadership and Parish Administration.”

Wyoming District

St. Paul Lutheran Church in Thermopolis, Wyoming was the site for a recent PALS gathering led by PALS facilitator, **Pastor Kenneth Mars**.

Rev. Samuel Needham, pastor at St. Paul’s, opened the event by leading Matins. **Rev. Jacob Benson**, **Rev. Patrick Baldwin**, and Pastor Mars each led a study and discussion from Parts III and IV from *The Book of Pastoral Rule* by St. Gregory the Great.

Iowa East District

PALS facilitators **Pastor Daniel and Sallie Pool** gathered their group together this month for a day of worship, casuistry, study, and discussion. Guest speaker, **Rev. Sam Beltz**, spoke about managing emotions, especially anger and resentment, in pastoral ministry.

Iowa West District

PALS facilitators **Pastor Chris and Heather Nitzel** led a multi-day event for their PALS families. The group worked through the PALS course, “Building a Long-Term Ministry.” PALS pastors and wives commented:

- “PALS has helped support and encourage our family as we navigate the joys and hurdles of pastoral ministry.”
- “Such a great time of fellowship and learning. It is encouraging to see women in similar stations and situations as me. I often feel like an island.”
- “PALS provides an excellent opportunity for rest and examination during the first few critical years.”
- “As a young pastor, PALS gives me and my family an excellent time of study and growth together.”
- “It has been an asset to our family and my husband.”



North Wisconsin District

“Where brothers in Christ meet to share the joys and challenges of the pastoral office.”-NW District PALS pastor.



PALS facilitators, **Pastor Nate and Sarah Reichle** led a winter PALS retreat at **Camp Luther**. Pastors and wives spent time both in study and worship together, as well as separately as pastors and wives discussed issues unique to their position as a new pastor/pastor's wife.

PALS older youth cared for the younger children throughout. Meals were provided by the camp. Camp staff assisted with music during worship. Time for recreation included broomball, tubing, and naps.