Be Strengthened

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus…Share in the suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus…Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my Gospel, for which I am suffering…If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure with Him, we will also reign with Him. (II Tim. 2:1-12)

I just returned from Ethiopia and Tanzania. I was traveling with the LCMS Chief Mission Officer, Rev. Kevin Robson; the Executive Director of International Missions, Rev. Dan McMiller; Seminary Professor, Dr. Detlev Schulz; East Africa Regional Director, Rev. Shauen Trump; and missionary in Ethiopia, Rev. Mark Rabe. I traveled in my Synod role in pastoral education and as the chairman of the Global Seminary Initiative (GSI) steering committee. I gained a greater knowledge, understanding, and empathy for the need to support excellent international seminary education.

During my interaction with leaders, seminarians, pastors, and laity in these Lutheran Churches in Ethiopia and Tanzania, I felt both sadness and joy. I felt sadness because of their desperate need for faithful pastors. I observed these men giving their lives to study for the office of the ministry, living in small dorm rooms with a concrete floor, tin roof, a bed, and a small table. Their classrooms were constructed the same, with a wooden table, a hard wooden chair, and an instructor’s old-fashioned chalk board. These men were studying for ordination and installation to serve God full-time. However, once a pastor, they would have to farm, grow a garden, and raise livestock to literally survive. Their church buildings could very easily be a tar paper shack with a homemade cross and a tire rim for a church bell.

And yet, dressed in their black clericals, robed with the seasonal colors, and a cross around their necks – these seminarians were joyfully preparing to preach the Gospel. Those who were already pastors preached with joy to tell the poor, the sick, the young, and the old about the salvation of Jesus Christ through His death and glorious resurrection. They suffered, and yet they were joyful. They suffered, and yet they were encouraged. They suffered, and yet they knew their heavenly home in Jesus Christ!

What’s this got to do with PALS? Whether a Lutheran pastor in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or in the United States – there is sadness and joy in the office! The sadness comes because of a sinful world, enemies of the Church, a corrupt and vile culture, apathy in the congregation, and the constant wicked onslaught of the evil one. There is no earthly glory, no earthly wealth, and no earthly fame in being a Lutheran pastor. This is the “sharing in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”
And yet… the joy is overwhelming, beyond comprehension, and transcends this earthly life. The life of the pastor handles and proclaims, distributes and shares, possesses and delivers the God of gods and the Lord of lords, who is the eternal salvation of all! This is the joy of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, “who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). While you serve as a called and ordained servant of the Word, a warrior of the cross, following in the train of the valiant and martyred apostles – yet, the joy that is yours now, but not yet, is this: “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:12).

And so, dear pastor, in all your work, and in all that you do – “be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, risen from the dead!”

Jim
Rev. Dr. James Baneck, Executive Director of Pastoral Education

**PALS Applauds Facilitator Service**

We thank the following facilitating couples for their service to the PALS program, pastors, and congregations:

- **Pastor Bill and Janis Hessler (2010-2018)**
- **Pastor Michael and Liz Lutz (2014-2018)**
- **Pastor Tom and Cyndi Lutz (2016-2018)**

Their years of service touched *many* new pastors and their families with the love of Christ, and with the strength found only in Him and in His salvation for us. We are confident that God will continue His work in and through them in faithful service to His people.

**Exciting News from the PALS Field**

**PALS meetings are a joy for the entire pastor’s family!**

The North Wisconsin District PALS group led by Pastor Nate and Sarah Reichle recently enjoyed a fall retreat. The children who attended enjoyed their own time of fellowship.

PALS is blessed to serve not only new pastors but new pastor’s kids as well. Thank you, Pastor and Sarah, for caring for the pastor and his entire family!
PALS Facilitator Meeting Evaluation: JotForm Improvement

We have recently updated the online facilitator meeting evaluations to include a link for use in uploading photos taken at your PALS meetings and retreats. In addition, there is a link for use in uploading your meeting agenda. Both are optional uploads, but are a helpful addition suggested by our tech savvy facilitators!

Emmanuel Press’s He Restores My Soul, edited by Katie Schuermann, has been given to each PALS Wives facilitator for use during the PALS wives gatherings. We thank Thrivent Financial for their generous grant for use in purchasing PALS curricular material. Pastor Todd Pepperkorn writes in a review:

“What I like the most about these essays is that they hit the challenges head on. They don’t sugar coat. They don’t turn the Gospel into the over sweet saccharine of the false hope of our age. Real sin demands a real Savior, who really died, and really rose again from the dead….”

Joined Together

Do you know the name of your District President? Have you met him yet? What does the District President do and what’s he got to do with your Word and Sacrament ministry?

For a full description of the District President, please see the 2016 Synod Handbook, p. 180-182. However, as it relates to PALS, please note a couple important things:

1. As the LCMS districts are “synod in this place,” your district president “shall represent the Synod in his district.” (4.4.2)
2. Your district president “shall cause the resolutions of the Synod to be implemented in the district.” An example of this is “To Support and Encourage Participation in Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) Initiative” (2013 Resolution 5-02A) and “To Enhance Clergy Continuing Education” (2016 Resolution 17-01), which also encourages support of the PALS program.
3. Your district president is your and your congregation’s ecclesiastical supervisor (Bylaw 4.4.4). In relation to PALS, the district president appoints the PALS facilitator and works with the Synod PALS office in helping the pastors in his care transition from the seminary throughout the first three years of his first call.
4. The district president enjoys his partnership with PALS, as PALS is under his supervision. While the district president may meet with and present to his PALS groups, the district president best serves his pastors through his constitutional duties of visitation, especially as he supervises “the doctrine, the life, and the official administration on the part of the ordained ministers” (4.4.5).
5. The district president also cares for his pastors, young and old, through his attendance and participation at district conferences where he can “advise, give counsel, and respond to requests and inquiries” (4.4.5).
Connections

From Rev. Barrie Henke, President, Oklahoma District

“PALS helps in this great transition [from the seminary] because it gives an opportunity for the first-call pastors to discuss their concerns but also to receive mentoring by those who have had previous experience in dealing with any congregational assumptions. This mentoring is done in a relaxed, conversational and non-threatening setting.”

Please see the September 2018 PALS Reporter Insert to see how President Barrie Henke enjoys “porch talks” with his PALS pastors. It’s a great idea for district president-PALS pastors interaction!