



PALS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

There are three core categories of modules: Preaching/Teaching, Pastoral Care, and Administration/Leadership. Groups are encouraged to choose at least one topic from each of these categories each year.

NEW Course Offerings!

Conflict Resolution vs. Reconciliation by Ambassadors of Reconciliation

The PALS office has purchased a leader's pack and set of books for the Ambassadors of Reconciliation course, ***Conflict Resolution vs. Reconciliation***. The leader's pack includes the flash drive of the study guide and PowerPoint presentation with embedded videos.

"The world tempts us to believe conflict resolution is all that is necessary. There are SO MANY books out there on conflict resolution. However, as Christians we are called to ***reconcile*** our relationships and not settle for simple conflict resolution. God could have resolved His conflict with sin by damning us all but by His grace, opted to reconcile us to himself through Christ. What difference does that make when we have conflicts today?

Conflict Resolution vs. Reconciliation is a Bible study and conflict coaching guide from Ambassadors of Reconciliation. Great for individual, couples and group Bible study and coaching people through conflict! Approximately 140 pages (100 pages of main teaching material with 40 pages of answers in Leaders Notes). Each lesson features Bible study content, a major case study for discussion, and application questions for personal reflection. Each bible study includes one copy of Proclaiming God's Forgiveness." -*Ambassadors of Reconciliation*

The Leader's Pack and Bible study books can be checked out by PALS facilitators. All materials (including Bible Study books) need to be returned to the PALS office for use by other PALS groups.

The Care of Souls: Cultivating A Pastor's Heart by Harold Senkbeil, Lexham Press, *Book Study*.

Drawing on a lifetime of pastoral experience, *The Care of Souls* is a beautifully written treasury of proven wisdom which pastors will find themselves turning to again and again.

Harold Senkbeil helps remind pastors of the essential calling of the ministry: preaching and living out the Word of God while orienting others in the same direction. And he offers practical and fruitful advice born out of his five decades as a pastor that will benefit both new pastors and those with years in the pulpit.

In a time when many churches have lost sight of the real purpose of the church, *The Care of Souls* invites a new generation of pastors to form the godly habits and practical wisdom needed to minister to the hearts and souls of those committed to their care.

Weary Joy: The Caregiver’s Journey by Kim Marxhausen, CPH. *Book Study.*

This book is organized by topics focusing on issues of emotional health found in the blessings of faith. Some chapters are specific for those caring for a loved one with memory challenges, and others are for caregiving in general.

Each section contains questions for family or support-group discussion and ends with a devotion tied to the chapter theme. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

Joy: A Study of Philippians by Deb Burma, CPH. *Book Study.*

Rejoice! Every day. Sure, we find joy in our triumphs, but not so much in the trials. Yet real joy, genuine joy, is always ours in the saving grace of Christ Jesus.

This close look at Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, the “letter of joy,” unpacks messages of contentment, confidence, humility, and hope—all found in Christ and infused with joy—in the mountaintop moments *and* in the mundane.

Targeted study, discussion and reflection questions, and life-application challenges guide you in your exploration of **joy**. A great resource for PALS Wives Facilitators to use in devotions or Bible study with pastor’s wives, or as a study for PALS couples. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

TRANSITION TOPICS (THESE SHOULD BE USED EARLY IN THE PALS CYCLE)

Getting to Know Your Congregation by Rev. John Hirsch (Revised by Carrie O’Donnell).

This topic, in booklet form, gives the new pastor (and wife) some tips in “getting acquainted” with their new congregation through a better understanding of their congregation’s history with the hope of finding a healthy balance between expectations and reality. This is an excellent first topic for pastors and wives new to the parish.

Transition from Seminary to Parish by Rev. William B. Knippa.

The format of this module is video lecture with workbook and group discussion. A good beginning module, this topic assists pastors (and their wives) in their transition from seminary to parish ministry by focusing on and evaluating the transitions in their lives, letting go of seminary days, relationships they will make in the new parish, expectations in the new ministry, and further spiritual and relational growth.

Transition: Seminary to Urban/Rural Ministry by Rev. Dr. Steve Schave and Rev. Todd Kollbaum.

Pastors called to a congregation in an urban or rural setting often experience a steep learning curve when they are unfamiliar with the new context. This course aims to assist the pastor and his family in making the contextual transition without feeling alienated and isolated. Included in this course are interviews and conversations with pastors currently serving in these unique settings.

PREACHING/TEACHING

Pastor: Apt to Teach by Dr. Mark Blanke.

What makes someone want to come week in and out to participate in a Bible study or class taught by his or her pastor? What makes a pastor's teaching "effective"? Though teaching is one of the main aspects of the pastor's vocation, very little intentional training is often given to developing and honing that skill. We are hopeful that this course will be of great benefit to the new pastors and congregations of our synod.

Biblical Foundations for Lutheran Catechesis by Rev. John T. Pless.

Prof. Pless uses a definition from Rev. Peter Bender to define Lutheran catechesis: "To teach the Word of God and pass on the language of our holy faith so that the baptized learn how to receive God's gifts in the Divine Service, pray, confess and live where God has called them in freedom of the forgiveness of sins, with faith in Christ and love toward the neighbor."

Rev. Pless then thoroughly examines each section of Luther's catechism and ties each to the life of the Christian in worship, prayer, confession and daily life. This topic suggests a way of catechism instruction that is thorough, thoughtful and practical to the Christian being instructed. The topic format includes a video and participant workbook.

Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation by Ted Kober, CPH. *Book Study.*

In *Built on the Rock*, Ted Kober, an expert in Christ-centered reconciliation, offers church leaders and members an effective prescription for building and sustaining healthy congregations. After first defining what "healthy" means, Kober explores fundamental concepts that help churches identify the root cause of their condition and regain church health.

Rather than basing his concepts on the alluring wisdom of psychological theories or business management theory, Kober prescribes a return to the foundations of the Christian life: looking to Jesus, dwelling in God's Word, and living as reconciled children of God in mutual confession and forgiveness.

We encourage you to use this as a possible PALS book study or suggested topic for a PALS meeting. The book includes many case studies, discussion questions at the close of each chapter, and room for notes on each page. This work-book style book serves as a terrific resource for pastors and lay leaders alike. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

Pastor as Preacher/Teacher: "Law and Gospel" by Rev. George F. Wollenburg.

A video lecture with workbook and group discussion, this module seeks to help the new pastor distinguish between Law and Gospel and then how to apply Law and Gospel in his personal life, his life as husband and father, in the pastoral care of individuals, and finally in preaching.

Pastor as Preacher/Teacher: "Doing Law and Gospel Preaching" by Dr. Carl Fickenscher.

This study guide/video presentation looks at the way in which Walther's theses on Law and Gospel actually play out in a sermon. What does a good Law-Gospel sermon look like? The learning module offers seven descriptions of how to take Walther's "thou shalt not's" and ultimately describe what "thou shalt" when working with a sermon text.

Preaching as Pilgrimage by Rev. Dr. David Schmitt.

This video, with workbook for group discussion, helps pastors consider two types of experiences in the sermon: moments of meditation and moments of movement. By identifying these two basic experiences, pastors will strengthen their ability to communicate ideas using different modalities of learning and to organize the sermon using different sermon structures.

Preaching: The Heart and the Art by Rev. Dr. David Schmitt.

This video, with workbook for group discussion, helps pastors reaffirm the law/gospel heart of their preaching while also encouraging them to explore the art. By considering four different styles of preaching, pastors will reflect on their experiences as preachers and the nature of preaching within their congregational context.

PASTORAL CARE

Communication and Conflict: Opportunities for Connecting in Grace by Rev. James E. Otte.

Through lively video lecture, Power Point, workbook, and discussion, this course challenges pastors and their wives to view conflict as an opportunity to achieve greater relationship connection. It introduces a theologically grounded and easily applied set of steps for working through the “ITs,” from which hurt and resentment, division and disconnection can flow.

Crisis Counseling and Referral (Part I) by Dr. Bev Yahnke.

Dr. Yahnke helps pastors identify the circumstances that merit referral or mandatory reporting to outside professional authorities. Through video, written materials, and group discussion, participants will craft the essential language needed to set the scene for a referral, discuss the dissonance that exists between mandatory reporting and the confidentiality of the confessional, determine when a referral is warranted, and examine the wide array of matters that invite a referral response.

Crisis Counseling and Referral (Part II) by Dr. Bev Yahnke.

Dr. Yahnke leads pastors in the critical matters of how to make a referral without alienating parishioners or hurting their feelings. Participants are led through the process of identifying, evaluating, and developing a collaborative relationship with appropriate specialists. The various types of referrals that may be required are also examined.

Every One His Witness Rev. Mark Wood (discussion guide by Rev. Dr. James Baneck).

Introducing and fostering practical and effective evangelistic outreach by developing an outreach strategy, evaluating outreach approaches, and assessing new and existing outreach activities.

The PALS office will purchase several kits from CPH. The PALS office will make the kits available free of charge to PALS groups with the provision that the DVD and kit purchased by the PALS office is for exclusive use in PALS meetings. The PALS office has assured CPH that there will be no duplication of the DVDs and that they will not be used in congregations, clear violations of CPH’s copyright. We feel confident that having been introduced to the material, pastors will encourage their congregations to purchase the kit.

Facilitators using this resource will be required to return it immediately following their PALS meeting. Contact the PALS office to reserve this resource or with any questions you may have.

Facing the Forces of Trouble and Conflict in the Pastoral Ministry by Rev. Dr. Timothy J. Rehwaldt.

In this course Rev. Dr. T.J. Rehwaldt will discuss the spiritual forces which cause trouble and conflict in the congregation and how to recognize when these forces are attacking your pastoral ministry. He will present strategies to boldly confront these forces both biblically and confessionally. By becoming increasingly aware of the strategies that the devil uses, it is the goal of this course to diminish the devastating effects such forces have upon the mission and ministry of Word and Sacrament. You will have opportunity to grow in your ability to identify the forces which cause trouble through the use of case studies, and then strategize together on how to deal with the conflicts which will occur due to the devil's attacks.

Family Trees & Olive Branches: Creating a Culture of Grace in Your Family by Christina Hergenrader, CPH, *Book Study*.

Family Trees and Olive Branches points readers to the authority and comfort of Scripture as they seek to repair and improve their family relationships. Inspired by Matthew 18:22, *Family Trees and Olive Branches* is a conversation about grace, the oil that unsticks fighting families.

In this book, readers will look at the different types of olive branches in the Bible with the purpose of opening their hearts and minds to spiritual transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. Each chapter offers lessons of forgiveness, tips on reflecting God's grace in our toughest relationships, journal and prayer prompts, and discussion starters.

We encourage you to use this as a possible PALS book study or suggested topic for a PALS meeting. This work-book style book serves as a terrific resource for pastors and lay leaders alike. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

Finding Balance and Setting Boundaries between Work and Home by Rev. David C. Fleming and Mrs. Jo Marie Fleming.

In this course, Rev. David Fleming and his wife, Mrs. Jo Marie Fleming, discuss the challenges to balancing life between church and home for pastors. The course examines a few missteps in maintaining boundaries, considers some options, and offers a few boundaries that have helped some in intentionally choosing where to be and when, what to do and not do, when and how to say "No", preserving time for family and rest, and being liberated from constant guilt. The goal is to initiate an ongoing conversation about the constant challenges of time pressures.

He Restores My Soul, Writings on Cross and Comfort edited by Katie Schuermann, Emmanuel Press, *Book Study*.

This book serves as a wonderful resource for women who may either struggle with particular crosses themselves or serve others who do. Areas discussed include: living with a chronic disease, caring for loved ones with dementia, loss of a child, children leaving the faith, depression, infertility, and more. At the end of the book, there is a set of discussion questions to accompany each chapter. The chapters are short and can be read aloud-and discussed using the questions.

We encourage you to use this as a possible PALS book study or suggested topic for a PALS meeting. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

Holding up the Prophet's Hand (Discussion Guide) by Rev. Rob Foote.

Because of their passion and dedication, church workers are especially vulnerable to stress, burnout, and the assaults of the devil, who tries to destroy the relationship between the Church and her workers and among the workers themselves. This book, written by Rev. Dr. Bruce Hartung, covers the topics: why worker health matters, the resources Christ gives, what congregations can do, and what to do when things “go south”.

Marriage by God's Design (DVD Kit) by Tim and LeeAnn Radkey.

Today, there are a lot of conflicting ideas about what marriage is and isn't. Love. Adoption. Engagement. Children. Divorce. Wedding. Civil union. Single living. Widowhood. Separation. Chastity. Until death do us part. What does it all mean? Are there any concrete answers, or is it all just opinion?

Thankfully, God has given us the reliable guide to help us navigate through the confusion: His Holy Word. *Marriage by God's Design* is a unique resource that mines the riches of Bible texts speaking to God's holy institution of marriage. Through thought-provoking questions and explanations of Greek and Hebrew terms, participants will explore, learn and grow in their appreciation of Christian marriage. Video vignettes of real couples and singles will foster meaningful and fruitful discussions about the challenges and joys of married – and single – living.

CPH has agreed to allow the PALS office to make the DVD in the kit available free of charge to PALS groups with the provision that the DVD purchased by the PALS office is for exclusive use in PALS meetings. The PALS office has assured CPH that there will be no duplication of the DVDs and that they will not be used in congregations, clear violations of CPH's copyright. Facilitators using this resource will be required to return it immediately following their PALS meeting. Contact the PALS office to reserve this resource or with any questions you may have.

Myth of the Millennial: Connecting Generations in the Church by Ted and Chelsey Doering, *Book Study*.

“Myth of the Millennial is an honest and satisfying conversation put to print. It's filled with wisdom borne of firsthand experience and solid research...Ted and Chelsey's words are so effective at cutting through the stereotypes and offering practical application and pastoral encouragement to all generations...go-to resource for ministry to Millennials for years to come.”
Rev. Matt Peeples, Our Savior New York, Rego Park, New York.

Facilitators are encouraged to use this as a book study during a PALS meeting. A set of discussion questions and suggestions for application are included at the close of each chapter. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

Parenting in the Pew (Discussion Guide) by Carrie O'Donnell.

Parenting in the pew is more than just helping your children learn what and when to say something and when in the service we sit, stand, or kneel. Parenting in the pew is about helping your children

learn how to receive God's gifts. While this discussion guide is written specifically for pastors' wives, the issues contained within are applicable to pastors as well as they lead their flock in worship – whether they are married or have any children of their own. The skills discussed in the book, *Parenting in the Pew* by Robbie Castleman, can not only be utilized by parents – whether you are a single parent in the pew or both parents are present – but by aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, and other members of the church family.

Pastor as Shepherd by Rev. Raymond L. Hartwig.

Through video lecture, workbook and discussion this module draws from the author's experience during 17 years in rural and large community parishes and 10 years as a district president. It hopes to center attention on two chambers of the pastoral heart by focusing on two sections of scripture, two pieces of art, and two quotes from church history. Hartwig uses the imagery of the Biblical shepherd and sheep to lend insight into the pastoral ministry.

Pastoral Care and Ethics at Life's End by Prof. John T. Pless.

In this course, Prof. John Pless addresses many of the ethical challenges pastors and laity face when making decisions about treatment and care when life appears to be ending. He examines and helps to prepare you for two aspects of pastoral work: 1. The way you prepare your members in advance so that when the time comes, they can think about these issues of life and death and make decisions that are in accordance with God's Word and which exercise responsibility toward loved ones; and 2. To equip you to work in high pressure situations, such as when a member or loved one is in hospice or ICU, when tough decisions have to be made while nerves are raw and emotions are high and susceptible. This course hopes to help you bring God's Word of comfort and consolation so your members can make responsible decisions not simply based on pragmatic considerations but decisions that seek to honor God's will for life and seek to care even when there can be no cure.

Pastoring the Dying and Funeral Preparation by Rev. Daniel T. Torkelson.

In this course, Rev. Dan Torkelson discusses the various "aspects" (not stages) of the dying and their family members. For each of the aspects (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Submission), he helps us to: recognize symptoms, understand the theological implications, and identify appropriate scripture and pastoral care. He also leads us through discussion of providing care for the dying and their family members in the funeral planning process while avoiding those things which can distract from the Gospel.

Premarital Pastoral Care by Rev. Dr. Rick Marrs and Rev. Dr. Kevin Bergmann.

This video course addresses many of the issues pastors face in providing premarital pastoral care and includes a special emphasis upon dealing with premarital co-habitation.

Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society by Ambassadors of Reconciliation.

This comprehensive six-lesson Bible study explores what the Bible teaches about the dangers of sexual temptation from computer, television, cell phones, and more. It provides healing through the power of the Gospel and Christian accountability. Because we live in a sensuous society, this study is for all teens and adults, not just for those who currently struggle with these temptations.

"Announcing God's Grace" pamphlet is included with each Bible study guide.

To view a trailer regarding this study, insert this link in your browser: <http://www.hisaor.org/web-content/ViewVideo.html>

The **Responding** Leader's Pack includes a Bible study and flash drive with videos, PowerPoint material and more. We have purchased 2 sets of the Leader's Packs and multiple copies of the Bible study books. The Leader's Pack and Bible study books can be checked out by PALS facilitators. All materials (including Bible Study books) need to be returned to the PALS office for use by other PALS groups.

Sexual Morality in a Christless World by Matthew Rueger, *Book Study*.

This book openly embraces this hot topic, giving you a framework for defending your beliefs by first exploring the relationship between sexual sin in ancient history and twenty-first century tangles of the same flavor. Topics such as temptation, promiscuity, marriage, homosexuality, natural law, and the church's role in it all swirl together to reveal our unifying need for a Savior. Rueger writes compassionately with a father's heart and adamantly with a fierce determination to outline the truth about sexual morality from a reasoned Christian perspective.

Facilitators are encouraged to use this as a book study during a PALS meeting. A complimentary copy is provided to each facilitating couple.

The Pastor's Life of Prayer by Rev. Dr. Jim and Myrna Baneck.

This PALS course will address the pastor's personal, family, and corporate life of prayer. In this course, participants will engage in four sessions of discussion: (1) The power of the Holy Spirit to create and sustain faith through the Word – *even* in the life of the pastor and his family, (2) *Oratio, meditatio, and tentatio* in the life of the new pastor and his family, (3) The vocation of husband and father in teaching the faith to his family, and (4) A discussion on the discipline, resources, time, and space for the ongoing life of prayer for the pastor and his family.

Visitation: Getting to Know Your Flock/Calling on Inactive Members by Rev. Michael Walther
Every year, for different reasons, baptized and confirmed members, people who once had a hunger for God's word, lose their appetite for it. In this video, we'll look at some of the (1) causes of this problem, (2) what the Bible says we can do, and (3) some of the practical things we can do address this problem.

ADMINISTRATION/LEADERSHIP

Building a Long-Term Ministry by Rev. Dr. Gary Zieroth.

In this course, Dr. Zieroth identifies the 6 main advantages of what is called a "long-termed" pastorate. The research verifies the possibility of healthy, growing long-tenured pastorates for both clergy and congregation. The bottom line in this course is that the one advantage that outweighs all the other disadvantages - is that, long-term pastorates tend to lead to healthier congregations. In the following study you are invited to examine these advantages of a long-tenured pastorate. You will review the doctrine of the call, look at the elements to "survive" the critical first years, building trust, developing support systems, and creating a congregational climate for the long haul.

Introduction to Pastoral Leadership and Parish Administration by Rev. Dr. Jamison J. Hardy.

In this course, Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy will guide participants through: 1. Defining the mission of your individual congregation including the formation and use of a mission statement; 2. The importance of strategic planning and how to do a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

analysis; 3. The two natures of church leadership: congregation and corporation, including parish finance and administration; 4. Why developing an administrative business plan is not only an important part of providing pastoral leadership, but grounded in scripture as well; and 5. Resources for further study.

There are four basic reasons why pastors should study leadership: 1. It's good practice to have good business administration principles as a pastor; 2. In providing good leadership, you are teaching stewardship of time, talent, and treasures; 3. You will be seen as an effective pastor, an efficient pastor, one who knows what the totality of ministry is about; and finally, 4. Pastoral leadership is biblical and Christological.

Leading Positive Change in Congregations by Rev. Dr. David Peter.

In this course Dr. David Peter guides pastors through a proven process for leading positive change in congregations. He will utilize the insights of the social sciences, especially of researcher John Kotter, and integrate these into the theological and ecclesial context of Lutheran congregations. Participants will reflect upon one specific area needing change in the congregations they lead as they are guided through the process. With collegial counsel from others, participants will identify a strategy to facilitate change in that area of need so that this workshop will have a specific practical application in their context of ministry.

Pastors and Elders by Rev. Timothy Mech and published by CPH.

Pastor Mech explores the positions of pastor and elder, and "defines the roles and responsibilities of each position, outlines where authority should lie, and provides recommendations of how to build trust and accountability within the congregation." This topic is one of paramount importance, but especially so for those with new pastors. Before new pastors utilize this resource in their congregations, the PALS setting offers the opportunity to preview the resource and discuss the important relationship between pastors and elders within a supportive and collegial learning environment.

CPH has agreed to allow the PALS office to make the DVD in the kit available free of charge to PALS groups with the provision that the DVD purchased by the PALS office is for exclusive use in PALS meetings. The PALS office has assured CPH that there will be no duplication of the DVDs and that they will not be used in congregations, clear violations of CPH's copyright. Facilitators using this resource will be required to return it immediately following their PALS meeting. Contact the PALS office to reserve this resource or with any questions you may have.

Pastor as Chief Steward by Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff.

This video course looks at the issue of stewardship in three sessions. 1) Pastor as Chief Steward: Before the pastor can lead in the important area of stewardship he must see himself as steward and examine his own life of stewardship. The first session helps the pastor do this by examining the biblical metaphor of the pastor as steward as Paul lays it out in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 and Titus 1:7. 2) The Chief Steward as Leader: Steward Leaders will lead in four relationships – the stewardship of one's relationship to God; the stewardship of one's relationship to self; the stewardship of one's relationship to others; and the stewardship of one's relationship to God's creation, especially focusing on possessions. 3) The Chief Steward as Teacher: This deals with preaching and teaching about what it means to be a godly steward. This session also gets into the practical aspects of what

the pastor teaches including the key elements of an intentional stewardship education process in the congregation.

Pastor as Shepherd by Rev. Roy K. Holm.

The video is done in lecture style with a workbook and group discussion. This module reviews the call documents and proceeds to a Bible study highlighting the relationship of the pastor to the Good Shepherd, the congregation, and finally focuses on the pastor himself and his personal life.

Stewardship of Time for Pastors by Rev. Ralph Blomenberg.

Through the use of video presentation and discussion questions, this course examines the management of our time through four main themes: 1) stewardship, which helps us see time as God's gift of opportunities; 2) boundaries, which help us work toward a fair division of time between work, family, and personal life; 3) priorities, which help us to set aside our best time for our most important opportunities; and 4) discipline, the ability to know time-wasters and keep them at bay so we can make the most of the time we're given.

Thinking About Stewardship by Rev. Dr. Joel D. Biermann.

This course contains three sessions: 1) My Money, My Responsibility; 2) The Stewardship of Evangelism; and 3) All of Life as a Disciple. Each session begins with a video introduction by Dr. Biermann that presents some of the core ideas or thoughts that will undergird the subsequent study. In each session, at least one section of Scripture will be presented for more careful study in conjunction with the material contained within the video. Guiding questions for discussion relating to the video and the Scripture will be offered for each session.