Quiet Servants

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel…” Philippians 1:3-5

On Friday, June 7, I was invited to the home of our Missouri District (East) PALS Facilitators, Wayne and Crystal Huebner. They prepared a wonderful summer buffet for the PALS pastors, wives, and children. They served hamburgers and brats, salad, chips, chocolate cake, beverages, and really delicious chocolate chip cookies (Maybe Crystal could submit the recipe for the July PenPALS 😊)! During Wayne’s devotion and explaining what they would be studying together the next day, the many young children were playing, petting the Huebner dog, and running around making children noises – and yet Wayne was unphased and the adults listened in.

After our meal and devotion, Wayne began asking how everyone was doing in the parish and at home. One of the mothers suggested we go to the backyard, so the kids could run around while the adults talked. Wayne refreshed all our beverages, while everyone found their spot on the grass or in a chair or standing and watching the children.

So there, in the Huebner backyard, Wayne and Crystal facilitated a caring and fruitful conversation for these young pastors and their wives. They talked about how their (first) Lent and Holy Week went. They talked about hosting out-of-town family during this busiest time of the year. They talked about PALS being a wonderful break and time well spent with other pastors and wives. They talked about continuing education aspirations. And while all this was going on, moms and dads were following their children around the yard, listening to each other share, and Wayne was keeping everyone fully engaged. It was a wonderful evening and a wonderful PALS experience!

What impresses me about our PALS facilitators is what was exemplified by Wayne and Crystal. Their loving service is not plastered on Facebook to show how great they are. Their hospitality will not be acknowledged in a “thank-you” omnibus resolution at convention. Their sacrifice of time and resources will not be posted on the popular LCMS blogs. And yet, their quiet service to these pastors and their wives and children is so extremely beneficial for the sake of the whole Church. Their Christ-like humility and caring for our pastors and their families has great impact on our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod while most don’t even know it’s going on.

And so, to all our PALS Facilitators – for your quiet service, your compassion, your wisdom, and your time – THANK YOU for mentoring and caring for our Church’s newest pastors and their wives and children. Your service to us all is priceless!

Jim
Rev. Dr. James Baneck, Executive Director of Pastoral Education
Exciting News from the PALS Field

WELCOME TO PALS!

Not only is this the time of year for ordinations and installations – it’s also the time when PALS facilitators are reaching out to our Synod’s new pastors and their wives, helping them get connected to their PALS group and helping them transition to their first call. These are great times!

Spring PALS Gatherings

One of our Kansas District PALS groups enjoyed a May PALS outing!

“We all met at the Salina zoo for a family outing...walked the zoo marveling at God's creation and sense of humor.

We used the picnic pavilion for devotions, giving thanks to our 3rd year PALS pastors for being so faithful in attendance.”

-Facilitators, Pastor Mark and Lynn Boxman

North Wisconsin District PALS Hosts Special Guests, Pastor: Apt to Teach author Dr. Mark Blanke and his wife, Chris, for a weekend retreat.

“I had the privilege of working with Nate and Sarah on a recent PALS retreat near Wausau. The participants were a wonderful group of new(er) pastors who really conveyed a strong sense of dedication and passion for their respective ministries – it was a joy to be able to spend some time with them. In particular, I was very impressed with how Nate had structured the event. He was intentional in providing a location that encouraged the inclusion of family members at the event. He provided a program that had a wonderful mix of fellowship, study, worship and care. He was pastoral and also provided excellent organization and follow-through. It was a pleasure to see him take the steps that he took in order to help these shepherds to have a holistic experience that was aimed at helping them to serve more effectively.”

-Mark Blanke, EdD, Concordia University, Nebraska
DOX and PALS
Sometimes the summer months bring a change in pace to parish ministry. Invest any
time slots newly available to you by selecting one or more of the excellent video
resources for ministry available as streaming videos from the website of DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual
Care and Counsel. Check out especially the conversation between the Fellows of the DOXOLOGY Collegium and the Rev.
Eugene Peterson, renowned teacher and author of multiple books on pastoral care who died last November. You will find
inspiration and encouragement for your own ministry. You can quickly access short excerpts of that 2015 conversation from
one of the six links on that page, then create a username and password to view the full segment.

Joined Together
Within the Missouri Synod we tend to make fun of ourselves and how we do things – like our Synod
conventions. However, the intention of our forefathers was that our Synod conventions be a good and
salutary event for our church body. As sanctified Lutheran Christians, here is the intent for our Synod
conventions:

“The national convention of the Synod shall afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, and
the communication of vital information. It is the principle legislative assembly, which amends the
Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate
appeals. It establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and
evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on
behalf of its members” (Bylaw 3.1.1)

Please keep our upcoming July 20-25 National Convention in Tampa, FL in your prayers as we are “joined together to form
the Synod and relate to one another through it.” (Bylaw 1.3.1)

Connections
From Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President, Mid-South District

“The Mid-South District is blessed to have an active PALS program operating for our
young pastors. When these dedicated men come out of seminary, the fundamentals of
becoming a leader for a congregation creates a stark reality. The design of PALS has
helped by providing experienced leaders to assist the new pastors in their new role and provides a continuing dialog of
discussion with others who experience new and challenging realities that are no longer classroom activities.

Many thanks to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for its vision to provide this necessary resource and to Dr.
Baneck for his continuous efforts to keep abreast of our ever-changing church environments.”