**Even so I am Sending You**

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."  John 20:21

Earlier this month, during Holy Week, I sat in the board room with about a half a dozen seminary students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. One of the seminarians asked me what I thought the most common pitfalls were for pastors, especially brand-new ones entering their first call. From my experience as a former district president and now overseeing the PALS program, what quickly came to mind was isolation, loneliness, and internet blogging and pornography.

“But deeper than that,” I said, “was Satan. It’s Holy Week, and I’m reminded of Jesus’ words to Peter, ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.’ That’s what Satan wants to do to you. If he can destroy the shepherd, he can scatter the sheep. I’m also reminded of I Peter 5 where Peter is talking to pastors, ‘the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’”

And yet, in the context of a world filled with sin, death, and the relentless attack of the evil one, the Risen Christ commissions His apostles to carry on His ministry of salvation. “Even so I am sending you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Despite all the intensity of tentatio (suffering under the cross of Christ), these words of Christ are spoken upon you, dear called and Sent One, “Peace be with you.” The Resurrection peace of Christ, triumphing over sin and death and the devil is yours! You are baptized and sealed with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – and your soul and body and life are now in everlasting peace.

Satan knows the call (the sending) you have from Christ, called to the highest office in the land – because you bear and carry and proclaim and distribute the peace of God in the forgiveness of sins to those you serve in Word and Sacrament. On the Last Day – when the dead shall rise – many will rise to eternal life with Christ because of the Gospel of peace Christ gave them through you.

It has been known that pastors can often feel somewhat empty and even depressed after Easter, which I suppose, is a whole new topic. But when this happens to you, at any time in your ministry, I encourage you to return to John 20:19, 21, and 26 where the Risen Christ speaks to you His grace and victory: “Peace be with you…Peace be with you…Peace be with you.”

Resurrection grace, joy, and peace is yours, dear brother in Christ!

*Jim*

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

Comments Shared by PALS Participants

PALS participants fill out an evaluation following each PALS meeting. Below are a few comments shared from meetings held this past winter. Several not listed below refer specifically to individual PALS facilitating couples-seeking to “clone” them, sharing they are “first-class and a role model,” “wonderful hosts,” etc… Thank you PALS Facilitators! God continues to work through your dedicated service.

- “I thank the Lord for this time to reflect and gain advice/perspective.”
- “Great way to share joys and struggles with fellow brothers in a setting with an experienced facilitator to help address issues.”
- “Well-placed for a difficult time in my ministry.”
- “PALS has been a massive benefit to me relationally and educationally.”
- “PALS provides a relaxing and educational weekend for renewal for pastors and wives.”
- “I really appreciate this time to talk and gather together. PALS is very helpful for us as we adjust to life in the church.”
- “Thank you for this service to our family!”
- “PALS is such a great place to network, make friends, and connect in a safe space—it is family friendly and such a great opportunity for support… and fun!”

Annual PALS Facilitator Training Event COMING SOON June 25-26!

We have an exciting event planned! Facilitators new and experienced alike come together to discuss curriculum, practices, and PALS meetings—as well as time together in worship, study, and fellowship. Facilitators share the joy of working with new pastors and their wives while offering encouragement as we contact, support, and mentor these shepherds and their families.

All facilitators are encouraged to turn in their registration forms no later than May 6 for the upcoming PALS Facilitator Training Event held in St. Louis.

DOX and PALS

DOX and PALS All the good things you’ve been experiencing in PALS can be extended through the DOXOLOGY experience: three conference retreats over the span of 12 to 18 months. Enrollment is running neck and
neck between graduates of the two LCMS seminaries, and your peer learning partners will include both recent graduates and experienced pastors; you can’t beat the mix!

To learn more about the DOXOLOGY program, view this three minute video. Then register for one of this year’s training cycles at www.doxology.us

Joined Together

The Chief Mission Officer in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is responsible to the President of the Synod. He oversees the five main units of Synod as you see here: The Office of International Missions, the Office of National Missions, Pastoral Education, Communications, and Mission Advancement. (3.4.3)

What does this have to do with PALS? The CMO, on behalf of the President, provides 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. (3.4.3.8) The Executive of Pastoral Education (Baneck), is then responsible to the CMO in carrying out the above Synod bylaw, to which we are all joined together. PALS falls under “post-seminary continuing education” – another great collaborative effort of the Church coming out of the International Center!

Connections

From Rev. Dwayne Lueck, President, North Wisconsin District

“Seminary training gives future pastors many tools to prepare them for ministry. Then reality hits as they move into parish life and are confronted with issues that members are facing. PALS allows recent graduates – along with their spouses – to find comfort and encouragement from fellow classmates and the calm of the PALS leader – a pastor with experience.

The pastors in our district are thankful for PALS and the leadership that Pastor Nate and Sarah Reichle give to our PALS group.”