I Have Called You By Name

“How important is it for people to remember your name? After you’ve met someone a couple times and he soon calls you by your name, you know he is invested in you and shows he cares about you and the relationship he has with you.

Pastor Callesen catechized and confirmed me (I could never bring myself to call him by his first name even after I was ordained). He is the one who influenced me most in going into the pastoral ministry. He was very supportive through my college and seminary years and followed me throughout my ministry. I learned a lot from Pastor Callesen. Many things I learned by simply observing him.

One Sunday I was serving as a middle school acolyte. Pastor Callesen had the church pictorial directory in his hands and was watching the people walk into church from the sacristy window. I asked him what he was doing. He said, “I’m learning the names of my members.” It may seem like a small thing – learning your members’ names. I mean, it’s not like memorizing the Book of Concord or writing a doctoral thesis on justification, but it is pastoral work.

Consider these pastoral words, “The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out … the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (John 10:3-4). Jesus is speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd, however several church fathers use these words to describe the relationship between pastor and people as well.

How about you? Does God know your name? Indeed, He does! However, when things are not going well, when the isolation and depression get the best of you, when you’re feeling the full weight of the cross – sometimes you wonder and maybe even doubt if God really does know your name.

God’s words through Isaiah are also to you, dear pastor and pastor’s wife: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” Remember when He first put His name on you, “[insert your name], I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” He knows even the hairs on your head (Matt. 10:30). God does one even better than that: your name is written in the Book of Life because of the Lamb who was slain for you (Rev. 13:8).

In Christ,

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

Northern Illinois District PALS Gathering

PALS pastors and their wives enjoyed a winter retreat last month led by Pastor Leonard and Lori Payton. Thank you, President Allan Buss, for spending time with the group!

PALS Season in the South Dakota District

Pastor Greg and Renee Lehr have enjoyed a busy PALS season serving as PALS facilitators. Take a look at a few snap shots from their gatherings this year…

Spring gathering in Minnesota South!

Pastor Dan and Dianne Ritter hosted a gathering this month in Shakopee, Minnesota. Thanks, Ritters!
Seminary PALS Dinners and Presentations

Sunday, March 3 in Koburg Hall on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, PALS joined together with President Matthew Harrison and the fourth-year seminarians and their wives for an evening of fellowship, encouragement, and discussion.

Followed by the President’s welcome and reception, PALS hosted a dinner and presentation. Guests enjoyed a presentation by Dr. James Baneck and a panel of PALS participants including Pastor Merritt and Veronica Demski, and Pastor Jacob and Emily Hercamp. Veronica Demski and Pastor Hercamp also serve on the PALS Steering Committee. We are thankful for the encouragement and experience shared with the graduates heading out, making the transition from seminary to full time parish ministry. These current participants shared their experience with PALS and blessings received through this program.

Next month, Wednesday, April 10, PALS will host a luncheon and presentation in Luther Hall on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. We look forward to another wonderful opportunity to meet with the fourth-year families. We continue to share the joy, encouragement, and support received through PALS.

DOX and PALS

If you’d like to extend the quality conversation, peer learning, and mutual support you’ve been experiencing in PALS, give serious consideration to signing up for DOXOLOGY’s classic program in training for advanced soul care skills.

This year’s opportunities begin in Boise, Idaho June 10-13 and Donaldson, Indiana November 4 – 7.

Act now to reserve your seat in this acclaimed program. More than half of the expenses are already covered by grant dollars; DOXOLOGY can arrange installment payments over two fiscal years to assist your congregation in covering the enrollment fees – or even arrange for additional grant dollars. Contact Executive Director Harold Senkbeil for details.

HSenkbeil@doxology.us

Joined Together

Membership in the LCMS is not a right. (Bylaw 2.6)

What gives you ‘Individual Membership’ in the Synod?

“Ministers of the Gospel” designated by the Synod as “ministers of religion-ordained” or “ministers of religion-commissioned” are eligible for membership in the Synod.

Individuals who have been declared qualified for a first call and assigned first calls according to Synod bylaws, shall, by the rites of both ordination or commissioning and installation in accordance with Bylaw 2.10, become members of the Synod.

There is no inherent right to membership in the Synod, and the decision as to qualifications for a first call and the assignment of first calls shall be at the sole discretion of the Synod.