We’re Behind You All the Way!

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1Thess. 5:11)

It’s nice to hear some encouragement now and then, isn’t it? In the day and life of a pastor, you may sometimes hear, “Your sermon was too long.” “Why do you make the kids memorize so much?” “How come our church isn’t growing?” “You dress funny.” Wouldn’t it just be nice to hear some encouragement… once in a while?

Well, here’s some encouragement – Your Synod is behind you, cares about you, and invests in your continuing education through the Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) Program! There’s a special emphasis in Synod that works at encouraging you (pastor and spouse) by helping you transition from seminary to first call. We realize that this transition, while exciting, is not always easy.

The whole Synod is behind you all the way! The Council of Presidents (District Presidents) initiated the PALS program in 1998, and it’s been supporting and encouraging pastors and their wives ever since. And look at this! In the 2013 Synod Convention (and affirmed in 2015), over 1,000 delegates resolved the following (994 votes to 49):

- PALS staff continue to enhance the curriculum and facilitator training (and we are!)
- Both seminaries and colloquy committee encourage students to participate in PALS (and they do!)
- Districts provide significant encouragement to new seminary graduates and their wives to participate in PALS (30 of the 35 districts do!)
- Participating districts make every effort to inform congregations receiving seminary graduates of the importance of PALS participation (and they do!)
- Districts not participating in PALS be encouraged to do so (and they are!)
- Congregations receiving new seminary graduates encourage and provide support for their pastors and wives to participate in PALS (and they are!)
- The Synod in convention express its continued support and encouragement for the PALS initiative (and they did and do by over 95%!!)

Dear PALS Pastor, Wife, Facilitator, Congregation, and District – All of us at PALS and the entire Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are behind you all the way! Our prayer is that you, and all LCMS pastors, are encouraged and built up in your every “day in the life” as a pastor!

But even more so – and here’s the greatest news – your greatest encouragement is the continual presence of your Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who promises you, “And behold, I am with you always; to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Jim

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

• The Wyoming District PALS group, led by Pastor Ken and Vickie Mars led a PALS retreat in Cody, Wyoming this month. They welcomed District President John Hill, who joined them for the retreat. Pastor Mars remarks, “Pastor Shawn & Barbie Kumm hosted our group. LCEF provided the meat for grilling (they help provide a couple of meals and snacks, shout out to LCEF!). It's been a very good retreat.”

• PALS participants have already given feedback regarding their first PALS meetings of the year:

  “I love how our group meets. It’s a comfortable time to set back and enjoy each other’s fellowship, see the children interact, remember the needs of other wives we know to pray for…love this PALS group!”

  “Very beneficial. I have told others about the support/benefits of being in a PALS group. It’s not ‘just another thing we gotta do’ on our calendar. It’s something we look forward to very much.”

  “PALS has been a great place to have the casuistry I long for. PALS has been a blessing, as Luther writes in the Smalcald Articles, from “the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren.”

PALS Facilitator Training Conference July 31-August 1

Conference Theme: Encourage One Another

“Thank you for putting this together. It was one of the most encouraging, informative training/conferences that I have attended as a pastor. I really feel encouraged and equipped to be a facilitator.”

“We love the PALS program and being a part of it. Just wish it was out there when we were first starting out in our first congregation.”

Many of our PALS facilitators met Tuesday, July 31 through Wednesday, August 1 for the Annual PALS Facilitator Training Conference held at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, Missouri.
The event included presentations by LCMS Kansas District President Rev. Peter Lange, Executive Director of Pastoral Education and PALS Director-Rev. Dr. Jim Baneck, LCMS Communications, CPH author Pete Jurchen, a visit by executive director of Lutherans for Life-Rev. Michael Salemink, and panels of veteran PALS facilitators and Southern Illinois and Missouri District PALS participants.

We were blessed by Christian fellowship, encouragement, Bible study, PALS curriculum review, and the sharing of wisdom, experience and best practices between both new and experienced PALS facilitators.

Our PALS year is off to a great start. The energy, passion and excitement of both new and returning facilitators is contagious!

**2019 PALS Facilitator Annual Training Conference**

Save the date! Our next training conference for all PALS facilitators will be held once again at the International Center in St. Louis, Missouri. The conference will begin Tuesday morning, June 25 and close Wednesday afternoon, June 26.

**Connections**

*From Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, President, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne*

"The first three to five years in a new pastor's service are critical to establishing a firm foundation in ministry. With the ever-increasing pace of change in our society and a culture that is growing ever more hostile to the faith, PALS offers support when it is most needed. The collegial learning groups facilitated by experienced pastors are there to help new pastors and their families navigate the sometimes choppy waters of parish life. I strongly encourage all new pastors and their wives to take full advantage of this opportunity and participate in their district's PALS groups."

- President Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.