Making Disciples for Life

Therefore, go and make disciples of all Gentiles/nations, by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, by teaching them to guard all things which I commanded you to [to guard]. Matt. 28:19-20 (Translation by Dr. Jeffrey A. Gibbs, Concordia Commentary: Matthew 21:1-28:20)

My office window looks out over the north parking lot of the International Center. I have the privilege of watching some very special people coming to work each day. There’s Dan McMiller, who oversees the Synod’s international missionaries. He enters the building with the weight of over 42% of the Synod’s $69 million budget. There’s Christian Boehlke, McMiller’s righthand man, associate executive director of The Lutheran Church—Missouri (LCMS) Office of International Mission, who’s daily engaged in video conference calls to regional directors, caring for missionary daily needs, leading with missionary orientation, and more. Then, in walks Robert Zagore, executive director of the LCMS Office of National Mission, responsible for all LCMS national missions. Walking in behind Zagore are those directors who report to him: Mark Wood who writes and presents Everyone His Witness and Re-vitalization, Dorothy Kranz who oversees all Recognized Services Organizations in the Synod, Steve Schave who oversees and provides resources for urban ministry across the Synod, Mark Kiessling who oversees youth ministry, Rebecca Schmidt who oversees our vast Lutheran school system, and fifteen others who serve you in Black Ministry, Deaconess Ministry, Disaster Response, Rural and Small Town Ministry, Stewardship, Worship, and more.

Every day, I watch Mark Hofman enter the building for another day of mission advancement, leading his team to raise funds for the Global Seminary Initiative, the Joint Seminary Fund, disaster relief, writing LWML grants (who supports the Synod generously), and more. I see David Strand enter the building who is responsible for all the communications of the LCMS: the Synod website, every video you see on the website, the Reporter, Lutheran Witness, Engage, president’s monthly videos, Preach the Word, PALS, and more!

Then, of course, I see President Harrison enter, Secretary John Sias, Chief Mission Officer Kevin Robson, and CTCR’s Larry Vogel and Joel Lehenbauer. These people with great responsibility, serving you, write for, serve, teach, administrate, and guide the LCMS according the mandate of the Synod in convention as they manage the most biblical, Christ-centered, confessional, and influential church bodies in the world.

Why do I tell you this? To all our pastors, and especially our PALS pastors in the first years of their ministry in the LCMS, yours is the highest office in the land – to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer the blessed Sacraments for life and salvation, and provide pastoral care using these gifts of God to God’s people. Dear Pastor, as you carry out your divine vocation, together we have placed the above people, vocations, and gifts “to work in support of and on behalf of congregations to assist them in carrying out their ministries as they seek to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, the members of His body, and the world which stands in need of the Word and the impact of His redeeming love” (Bylaw 1.1.1).

As you seek support, assistance, ideas, resources, or encouragement, please contact us! A great way to discover the wealth of resources of your Synod is to check out your website at www.lcms.org.

In Christ,

Jim

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

New Jersey District Welcomes New PALS Facilitators

We welcome Pastor Rick and Christina Serina to our PALS facilitating family. Pastor Serina serves at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Ringwood, New Jersey.

The Serenas will serve a PALS group formerly in the care of Pastor Andrew and Caitlin Dinger, who are now serving in the St. Louis, having taken a call to Timothy Lutheran Church.

Oklahoma District PALS Group Gives Thanks and Offers a Welcome!

We give thanks to Pastor Jonathan and Emma Meyer for their years of service as PALS facilitators for the Oklahoma District! We appreciate the gifts, time, and love in Christ shared with the members of their PALS groups. We know God will continue to use them to serve His Church, and we value their time with us in PALS.

We are blessed to welcome Pastor Timothy and Heather McCarty to our PALS facilitating family as the new Oklahoma District PALS facilitators. Pastor McCarty serves at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Kingfisher, Oklahoma.

Rocky Mountain District PALS Summer Retreat

PALS Facilitators Pastor David and Ginny Vanderhyde led a summer retreat in Grand Junction, Colorado. Messiah Lutheran Church graciously hosted the event.

What are PALS participants saying?

Take a look at these comments pulled from the participant evaluation forms this past Spring:

"My facilitator is a personal mentor and friend. He has been vital to my early years of being a pastor."

"PALS helps to integrate what I learned at the seminary with practical application."

"PALS will benefit your life, family, and ministry. I almost blew it off. Don’t make that mistake."

"PALS was one of the best resources I had for the first few years of ministry."

"I love getting to connect with other new pastors’ wives."

"I love having a safe place to discuss issues and recharge with Christ-centered people in a similar situation to us."

"This meeting was ridiculously helpful and applicable to my ministry."

"I love it! I wish it lasted more than 3 years (5-6?)"

"You might not think you need the fellowship offered in PALS, but someone else just might need the fellowship you have to offer."
PALS Curricular Resource

Our PALS facilitators recently received a pack of 20 CPH booklets titled “In the Image of God: Gender and Sexual Identity” from the “A Simple Explanation Series.”

Our facilitators will share the booklets with their PALS pastors for use during a PALS meeting, and as a take-home resource to use within their congregation.

This little book, geared toward youth, assists in providing answers needed to approach difficult questions regarding gender and sexuality from a godly, biblical, loving perspective.

Please Share This with Your Congregation

The Synod in convention has adopted Making Disciples for Life as the 2019-2022 mission and ministry emphasis for all districts, congregations, and schools in the LCMS (Resolution 4-03).

This focus of this emphasis is to:

- Evangelize the lost
- Retain the faithful
- Strengthen congregations
- Plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multicultural communities
- Engage in international mission in partnership with the Office of International Mission

How can you make Making Disciples for Life a part of your mission and ministry plan?

Connections

From Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, President, Minnesota South District

“PALS is a wonderful way to support new Sem grads in their life-long learning, while also facilitating the transition of new pastors (and their wives) from seminary life to parish ministry, with all of its ups and downs. It’s a great place for the mutual conversation and consolation of fellow Christians who are together transitioning to a new phase of life.”