

# PenPALS

NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

August 2022

### “Dear Pastor”

*“...the one thing needful to quench  
God’s people in the dog days of  
summer...”*

-Dr. Jim Baneck

### News from the PALS Field

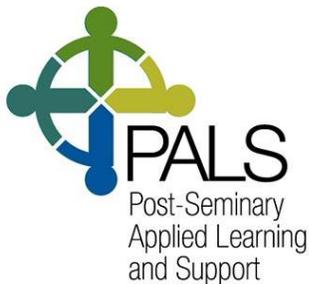
PALS Facilitator Training

PALS Facilitator Appreciation for Service

PALS Gatherings

### Resources

Life Together as Synod



### WELCOME BACK

In 1988, Kellogg’s ran a new advertisement. People were handed a bowl of cereal. They said, “No fruits, no nuts, no marshmallows!” When they tasted it, they said, “You’ve got a hit on your hands!” Then the narrator said, “Cornflakes – taste them again for the first time.”

Have you missed a couple PALS gatherings lately? **PALS – try it again for the first time!**

# The Dog Days of Summer



Dear Pastor,

People often refer to the hottest days of summer as the “Dog Days of Summer.” Some have concluded that the hot, humid summer days are “not fit for a dog.” Others have suggested the extreme heat drives dogs mad. Actually, the “Dog Days” refer to the time when the sun occupies the same region of the sky as Sirius, the brightest star visible from Earth. Sirius is a part of the constellation, *Canus Major*, or The Dog. The ancient Romans believed the constellation added to the sun’s heat, thus making for long, hot summer days. They referred to this time of summer as “dog days.”

Lazarus experienced a different kind of *dog days*. Lazarus was the poor man, covered with sores, who laid outside of the *rich* man’s house in Luke 16. Lazarus desired to be fed with the rich man’s food scraps. And while he laid hungry and suffering, the *dogs* came and licked his sores.

Lazarus’ *dog days* came to an end. He died and was carried by the angels to heaven, which means he was a believer in Jesus Christ. The rich man died and went to hell. He did not believe in Jesus Christ. The rich man asked for someone to go to his brothers on earth and warn them about the place of torment. Abraham responded, “*if they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead*” Luke 16:31.

Moses and the Prophets – the very Word of God – is the one thing needful to quench our thirsting souls for life and salvation. Pastors don’t need to wow their congregation with their outgoing personality or supreme

knowledge. They don't need to impress their people with their long beard or large pecs. Pastors have the one thing needful to quench God's people in the dog days of summer, which describes their entire life on this earth. Pastors have the Word made flesh who came to dwell among us to save us.

God's people are suffering sin and guilt. They are suffering the onslaught of the evil one and his wicked angels. They are suffering broken relationships and being swayed by this world of wokism and gender dysphoria. They are suffering confusion about God's Word and the purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection. Licking their wounded and dead souls with the "cures" of this world will leave them for dead. Pouring the balm of Christ over them and in them with the preaching of the Word, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper will refresh their lives and souls.

"God's people" includes *you*: PALS pastor, pastors, PALS facilitators, congregation... all of us. How the devil wants our souls to be parched and starving. How our own sinful nature looks for excuses and substitutes for the Word of God, the one thing needful for our life. Licking dogs and the scraps of the world will never feed us or satisfy us. Let's fraternally encourage one another to rise daily according to the New Man and be immersed in the Word of God for our own life, saving faith, and salvation.

Even though the *dog days of summer* are winding down for another year, our lives are continually refreshed with Jesus Christ, our bright and Morning Star, the Light of the world. This is the Gospel we preach, and this is the Gospel *for you*.

In the name of Jesus,



Rev. Dr. James Baneck, Executive  
Director of Pastoral Education





### FROM FACILITATOR TRAINING CONFERENCE...TO THE LOCAL PALS GATHERINGS

On August 2-3, the PALS Facilitators met in St. Louis for an annual training conference. We gathered around St. Paul's words, "Therefore

*encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing*" (1 Thess. 5:11). The source and foundation of our encouragement is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our goal was to equip and encourage the facilitators that they may be encouragers to our PALS pastors and their wives and families.

Our entire agenda was about how we can best serve our pastors, pastors' wives, and their children transition from seminary to first call through the three years of PALS. Our time together included:

- a study on 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.
- two presentations by Dr. Beverly Yahnke (Executive Director for Christian Counsel, DOXOLOGY) on "Mental Health and the Church" and "How to Detect Individuals Who Require Assistance and How to Help."
- a sharing of best practices in facilitating a PALS gathering.
- a tutorial on facilitator paperwork, expense reports, etc.
- a discussion on how to make PALS even better, and feedback regarding the hiring of a PALS Director under Executive Director, James Baneck.
- a thorough discussion and evaluation of current and future PALS curriculum.
- a discussion with current participating PALS pastors and wives to learn from their PALS experience, including suggestions and improvements.
- break-out sessions of men and women facilitators to discuss the needs of our PALS pastors and their wives and how we can address those needs.

While being a pastor is a sacred and joyful from the Lord, it's not always easy. Being a husband, wife, and pastor's wife and family is not always easy either. PALS is meant to get alongside our new pastors and wives to care for them, help them navigate the new and sometimes bumpy beginnings, and share in mutual encouragement and support. We want to do that the BEST WE CAN. If you have suggestions for PALS, or there are barriers that are keeping you from participating in PALS, please let me know at [james.baneck@lcms.org](mailto:james.baneck@lcms.org). You, and your service to the Lord and His Church, is very important to us!





## APPRECIATION FOR SERVICE

---

**Pastor Vernon and Dee Sandersfeld** are ending their service as PALS facilitators for the **Montana District**. The Sandersfelds have served faithfully and lovingly for **6 years**-in a district that is challenged with great distances between congregations/PALS participants. Pastor and Dee covered lots of miles, made phone calls, sent texts and emails to keep connected. Thank you, Sandersfelds, for going above and beyond to serve the families in your care!

## PALS GATHERINGS

---

- We thank God for the ways that PALS serves our new pastors and their families. One PALS participant recently commented, *“The PALS program has greatly assisted our transition from being an SMP vicar to ordained pastor at our home congregation.”*
- **Pastor Stephen and Ursula Sohns** recently visited with one of the new pastors and pastor’s wife in their PALS group. They were blessed to be able to care for **Rev. Josh and Candice Hahn, and baby Charlie**, by enjoying a meal with them at a restaurant in Giddings TX.



## THANK YOU FOR EVALUATING

---

### LIFE TOGETHER AS SYNOD

*An informational video series on our mutual commitment to confession, mission and good order.*

Modules 1-6 can be found at <https://resources.lcms.org/life-together-as-synod-video-series/>.

Modules 7-10 are currently under production.

- Module 7, *Relationships in the Synod*, presented by Minnesota North District President, Emeritus, Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow
- Module 8, *Office of Pastoral Education*, presented by Rev. Dr. James Baneck, LCMS Executive Director of Pastoral Education
- Module 9, *Districts in the Synod*, presented by Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, LCMS 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President, Rev. Dr. Scott Murray
- Module 10, *District Presidents and Council of Presidents*, presented by Kansas District President, Rev. Justin Panzer



LIFE TOGETHER AS SYNOD 