

# PenPALS

NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

February 2023



*“to vigorously make known the love  
of Christ ...”*

-Rev. Jonathan Manor



News from the PALS Field

PALS Gatherings

DOXOLOGY Grants Available



### “LIFE TOGETHER IN PALS” 2023 FACILITATOR CONFERENCE

Plans are coming together for this year’s PALS Facilitator Conference on June 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>!

Mark your calendar and look for all the event details coming soon!

-Rev. Jonathan Manor, PALS Director



# YOUR SYNOD AT WORK



*I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU, ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING MY PRAYER WITH JOY, BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW. AND I AM SURE OF THIS, THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL BRING IT TO COMPLETION AT THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS 1:3-6*

This past week here at the LCMS International Center, the employees were invited to gather for the quarterly Operations Team Forum. These forums afford us the opportunity to hear from our Chief Mission Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, and President Harrison; to be updated on the work of the Synod here in the building, throughout the nation, and around the world. I've been serving in my new role as Director of PALS and Continuing Education for four months now, and in that time there have been two forums. What wonderful encouragement I've received from our Synod leadership, as the blessings of the Lord and His faithfulness have been shared with us.

That sharing of information, and the sharing of the mission and ministry work together, are some of the wonderful things I have experienced as I have begun working here at the Synod. As a parish pastor, I made an effort to stay aware of what was happening in our circuit, in our district, and at the Synod level. I shared that information with our congregation members – the events and happenings, the resources and support, the work being done to equip and encourage us in our sharing of the Gospel in our community and beyond – and I encouraged them to be involved and make use of those resources. I knew that even though I was serving way out in the New England District, the Synod way over in St. Louis was working hard to support all congregations of the Synod, including ours.

I knew this and shared this...**but now I see it and share in it.** In the cubicles and conference rooms – the hallways and stairwells – the scheduled meetings and the impromptu conversations...the work of the Synod to

*vigorously make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world is happening every day.* There is intentional collaboration happening between the president's office and the mission units and the financial folks – with the LCMS boards and the Council of Presidents and the seminaries. I see it, and many of you have too, as you've been here in the International Center. If you haven't had that opportunity, and you find yourself in the St. Louis area, get ahold of me and I'd be happy to have you as my guest so you too can see and experience the wonderful work that is happening here in support of our life together.

That life together has been blessed by the Lord through the mission and ministry of the LCMS, her congregations and workers and members, for 175 years. Most of you are familiar with that history, the faithfulness of the Lord through the joys and challenges, and the way that our life together is lived out today in the LCMS. But there are many in our Synod who are new to the LCMS, or simply unfamiliar with how the relationships work between congregations, circuits, districts, and Synod.

For those who are unfamiliar, we have a great resource! "Life Together as Synod" is an informational video series on our mutual commitment to confession, mission, and good order. It is a relatively new resource, beginning in late 2021, and it has been very well received by the PALS groups who have utilized it, and the pastors that have shared it with their congregations. Each module has a short video, and a talk sheet to encourage conversation about our life together. There are currently 10 video modules available, with more in the works. If you have not used these with your PALS groups or in your congregations, please consider doing so.

God's blessings to you all, as we journey through the season of Lent, looking to the cross of Christ, and living life together as Synod under the steadfast love of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

*Jonathan*

Rev. Jonathan Manor, Director of PALS and Continuing Education



## PALS GATHERINGS

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### *Iowa District East*

The **Iowa District East** PALS group gathered together in January, without their facilitator! PALS facilitator, **Pastor Daniel Pool**, was called to do a funeral, and guest speaker, **District President Brian Saunders**, stepped in and hosted the entire event. Participating pastors enjoyed a worship and lunch together, as well as time with President Saunders around the discussion of preaching. President Saunders also encouraged the group to ask him questions about parish life, district, and synod issues.

### *North Dakota District*

PALS facilitator, **Pastor Bernie Worrall** led his **North Dakota District** PALS group in a winter retreat this past month. PALS pastor, **Rev. Chris Durham** led the Order of Matins. PALS pastor, **Rev. Brian Doel** led a *Preach the Word* study. Wives enjoyed a book study, and the group worked through funeral devotions and discussion together.

### *Minnesota South District*

PALS wives' facilitator, **Mrs. Melissa Jones** led a **Minnesota South District** PALS gathering for PALS wives. The group enjoyed a study using the book *Daring Greatly*.

PALS facilitator **Pastor Stefan Wismar** led PALS pastors in a study on the word dipsychos (double-minded) and enjoyed a time of casuistry.

### *Nebraska District*

The **Nebraska District** PALS group met at the district office this month. **Pastor Charles and Brenda Schmidt** led the group in a study of PALS courses, *Life Together as Synod* and *Pastoral Care and Ethics at Life's End*. Brenda prepared lunch for the group. Wives studied portions of the Bible study *Be Still and Know* as well as *I'm More Than a Pastor's Wife*. Participants enjoyed having babysitting provided on site.

### *Ohio District*

**Pastor Stephen and Heidi Lutz** enjoyed gathering their PALS group together for an evening of fellowship and games followed by a day of study, casuistry and meals. Participants used the *Life Together as Synod* videos and talk sheets.



## Northern Illinois District

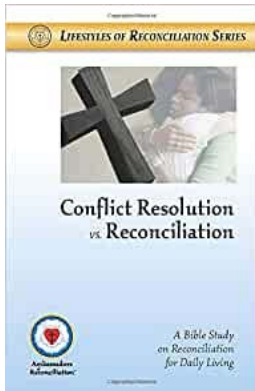


PALS pastors, wives, and children met together for a winter retreat hosted by PALS Facilitators, **Pastor Leonard and Lori Payton**. The group worked through PALS course *Making Pastoral Referrals with Confidence* by Bev Yahnke. Guest speaker, **Pastor Mike Gudgel** shared his insight and the work of the **Northern Illinois Wellness Committee**. Thank you PALS wife, **Karin Antonetti** for arranging the child care! Hymn sings, casuistry, fellowship, and time together in worship was greatly appreciated by all.

PALS participants shared, “PALS provides a place to reinforce what was taught at seminary with the practical experience that comes in the parish.” And “Make time for it. It’s hard. You’re busy. But make time for it because it is worth it.”

## Minnesota North District

**Pastor Guys and Emily Roberts** enjoyed gathering their PALS group for a Super Bowl party once again hosted by the **Ruopps**. Thanks **Diana!** A PALS Winter Retreat followed the next 2 days. The group studied **Ambassadors of Reconciliation** course *Conflict Resolution vs Reconciliation*. Participants gathered at the Baymont Hotel and enjoyed worship at **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Baxter, Minnesota**.



## RESOURCES

There are still PALS/DOXOLOGY grants available for all recent PALS grads and for current PALS facilitators. Grants are available to participating PALS pastors after the completion of the PALS program. Pastors will ideally be in the 4th or 5th year of their first or second call(s). This grant is for the DOXOLOGY Classic program, and covers half of the tuition for PALS grads, and full tuition for PALS facilitators.

DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel is a recognized service organization of the LCMS that serves pastors and the congregations and agencies they serve. The Classic program includes three separate conference retreats – totaling ten days of training for pastors in advanced soul care skills, three days of training for laity in how they can facilitate a climate of healthy relationships in their congregations, and three days of enrichment and encouragement for pastors’ wives.

Contact the PALS office ([Robyn.Armbrust@lcms.org](mailto:Robyn.Armbrust@lcms.org)) for a grant application. To learn more about DOXOLOGY, visit their website at [www.doxology.us](http://www.doxology.us) or talk with Rev. Manor, a DOXOLOGY grad.

