

CHRIST IS RISEN

..... INDEED

Sunday, July 19

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Today's Business Issue 2B

Morning Session

- 8:00 Matins—*Rev. Peter K. Lange*
- 8:30 Preparations for Opening Business Session
- 8:40 Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel
- 8:45 Electronic Voting System and Microphone Queue
- 9:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
- 9:20 Standing Rules
- 9:35 Convention Schedule
- 9:45 President's Report (Part 3)
- 10:15 Consent Calendar
- 10:30 Welcome and Greetings from Pacific Southwest District
- 10:35 Convention Essay—*Rev. Dr. Jon S. Bruss,*
"Christ is the Truth"
- 11:00 Essay Responder—*Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray*
- 11:10 Presentation—All Nations Ministry
- 11:25 National Witness (#1)
- 12:00 Recess

Afternoon Session

- 1:30 Midday Prayer—*Rev. Brady L. Finnern*
- 1:55 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(Announce presidential election result)
- 2:00 Response from newly elected president
- 2:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(Voting delegate registration report)
- 2:10 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for First Vice-President
- 2:20 ... for Central Regional Vice-President
- 2:30 ... for East-Southeast Regional Vice-President
- 2:40 ... for Great Lakes Regional Vice-President
- 2:50 ... for Great Plains Regional Vice-President
- 3:00 ... for West-Southwest Regional Vice-President
- 3:10 Ballot to determine ranking of vice-presidents
- 3:20 Greetings—Concordia Plan Services, *Kevin Herweck*
- 3:30 Omnibus Resolutions A, B, C
- 3:55 Committee for Convention Nominations
*(Nominations from the floor for Secretary of Synod
and Synod Board of Directors)*
- 4:10 Presentation—International Mission: *Spread the Gospel*
- 4:30 International Witness (#2)
- 5:00 Life Together (#4)
- 5:40 Evening Prayer
- 6:00 Recess
- 7:00 Evening—*LCEF Ice Cream Social (North Ballroom 120 A–D)*

DAILY WORSHIP AND ESSAYS

Essayist—“Christ is the Truth”



The Rev. Dr. Jon S. Bruss is the seventeenth president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW). He was installed in September 2024. Previously, he joined the faculty of CTSFW as an associate professor of systematic theology in 2022. From 1991 through 2002, Bruss served on the faculty of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, and thereafter at St. Olaf College, the University of the South, and the University of Kansas. He colloquized into The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in 2006 and took a pastoral call in 2013 to St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kan., where he served as assistant pastor (2013–2015), then senior pastor (2015–2022), until his call to join the faculty at CTSFW. Bruss graduated with a B.A. from St. Olaf College in 1989 and earned a Master of Divinity from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1994. He also holds a master’s and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota. Bruss has been a contributing translator to the CPH *Luther’s Works* supplement, most notably the *Annotationes in Matthaeum* and has published and presented frequently on topics in theology and classics. He currently serves on the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, the Pastoral Formation Committee, and the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry. Bruss’s wife, Dr. Kristine Bruss, serves as CTSFW’s chief communications officer. They have one grown daughter, Ingrid (Peter).

Essay Responder



The Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray is the LCMS third vice-president, representing the West-Southwest Region. He has served as a vice-president since 2010. In 2025 Murray retired as senior pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas, where he was called in 1996. For 22 years he produced a devotion every weekday called “Memorial Moments,” based on the church fathers. He has authored or edited several books and written numerous journal articles. Born in Kitchener, Ontario, Murray graduated with a B.A. from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich., in 1980 and earned a Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1983. He also holds a master’s degree from Loyola University and a doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Murray and his wife, Maryann, live in Houston. They have two married daughters and seven grandchildren.

Preacher—Matins



The Rev. Peter Lange has served as LCMS First Vice-President since 2019. In addition to chairing the colloquy committees for pastoral and commissioned ministry, he serves on the Synod Board of Directors, Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Council of Presidents and Praesidium, as well as the Board of Regents for Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., and Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. Previous service includes Kansas District president, senior pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kan., and associate pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Concordia, Mo. He and his wife, Marcia, live in St. Louis. They have four married daughters and fourteen grandchildren.

Preacher—Midday Prayer

The Rev. Brady Finnern is husband to Amy, father of Kajsa, Averil, Elias, and Xavia, track & field coach, and president of the Minnesota North District (195 congregations and 26 schools). Finnern graduated with a B.A. from Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn. in 2002 and earned a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2006. He served St. John, North Prairie from 2006–2010 and Messiah, Sartell from 2010–2022 until his election as district president. Finnern is the host of Concord Matters on Worldwide KFYO and currently serves as chairman of the Council of Presidents.

Convention Chaplain

The Rev. Sean Daenzer is director of LCMS Worship and the chaplain at the Synod's International Center. He previously served for seven years as pastor of a dual parish in rural North Dakota. Daenzer holds a Bachelor of Music in organ from Hope College, Holland, Mich. (2006), and a Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary (2011). He and his wife, Audrey, have four living children (Lucia, Monica, Renata and Christina) and two awaiting the resurrection (Perpetua and Matthias).

Assistant Chaplain

The Rev. Brian Crane is the Senior Pastor of Eternal Life Lutheran Church in Mesa, Arizona, where he has served since October 2022. He previously served congregations in Wisconsin, as well as on the staff of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. He also was a Chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserve. Rev. Crane was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. He attended the University of Maryland, College Park (BA, Government and Politics, 1995). He spent eight years with the Federal Government in Washington, D.C., before enrolling at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (M.Div., 2007). Rev. Crane and his wife, Tabitha, have been married since 1994. They have one daughter, Annika, who is a Registered Nurse in Arizona. During his free time, Rev. Crane enjoys exploring the desert Southwest, stargazing and astronomy, and spending time with his family.

Daily Kantor

Rev. Elect Matthew Machemer will serve as associate pastor and kantor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind. Beginning in August 2026. Machemer has most recently served Concordia Theological Seminary as associate kantor from 2014–2026. Before joining the staff at the seminary, Machemer served as kantor of Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church and School in Hartland, Mich. from 2010–2014. Prior to that, he served as a church musician and music educator for parishes in Michigan and Illinois. Machemer graduated from Concordia University Chicago in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in music education. He holds a Masters in Church Music from Concordia University Wisconsin in 2021 where he specialized in organ performance and a Masters of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne in 2026. He has studied organ with Dr. Steven Wente, Dr. James Freese, Mr. Wayne Petersen, and Mr. Robert Hobby. Machemer lives in Fort Wayne, Ind. with his wife, Andrea, and their four lovely children: Noah, Ella, Henry, and Winston.

Opening Service Kantor



Mr. Jonathan D. Rudy currently serves as cantor/director of music at Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, Tenn., where he leads the congregation and musical ensembles in song. He is a native of Batavia, Ill., and is proud to follow a sacred music vocation. Rudy regularly appears in locations across the United States, including at 2024 LCMS Worship Institute, the 2016 American Guild of Organists (AGO) National Convention in Houston, the 2017 Association of Lutheran Church Musicians National Conference, as well as performances with the Elgin Symphony and Fox Valley Symphony Orchestras. Rudy was awarded First and Audience Prizes in the 2014 National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance. Rudy received his Doctorate in Organ and Sacred Music at Indiana University, studying with Janette Fishell and Bruce Neswick. His prior degrees are from Indiana and Valparaiso Universities (studying with Lorraine Brugh and Karel Paukert). Rudy lives in Clarksville, Tenn. with his beautiful wife, Katie, and their three children.

Opening Service Choir Conductor



Mr. Jonathan Busarow is the executive artistic director of the Fort Wayne Children's Choir. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Valparaiso University, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from The Ohio State University, and Kodaly certification from the Kodaly Institute at Capital University. Busarow has served on the faculty of Purdue University Fort Wayne and Valparaiso University, teaching voice and choral music education. He lives in Fort Wayne, Ind., with his wife, Nicole, and their children, Simon, Matthias, Timothy, and Daniel. He is a member at Redeemer Lutheran Church where he also serves as an elder. Busarow also serves on the Redeemer Classical School Board of Directors and the English District Board of Directors.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

The 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
July 18–July 23, 2026 • Phoenix Convention Center • Phoenix, Arizona

Floor committee meetings were held May 29–31, 2026 in St. Louis. The schedule is considered tentative as Bylaw 3.1.9 (i)(2) states that the President “shall, at the first session and during the course of succeeding sessions of the convention, announce the order of business for the day and following days.” Unless otherwise indicated, all activities take place in the Phoenix Convention Center North Building.

Friday—July 17, 2026

Registration Desk open 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

1:30–5:30 Floor Committees—closed meetings (1st floor, West Building)

Saturday—July 18, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:30–noon Floor Committee open hearings (1st floor, West Building)

10:00 Break

10:30–noon Floor Committee open hearings (1st floor, West Building)

12:00 Lunch on your own

1:00–5:00 Floor Committee closed meetings, if necessary

1:30–3:00 All Delegate and Representative Orientation (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

5:00 Delegate Dinner (Ballrooms A–D, 1st floor)

7:00 Pre-service music (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

7:30 Opening Divine Service with Holy Communion (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

2:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Voting delegate registration report)

2:10 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for First Vice-President

2:20 ...for Central Regional Vice-President

2:30 ...for East-Southeast Regional Vice-President

2:40 ...for Great Lakes Regional Vice-President

2:50 ...for Great Plains Regional Vice-President

3:00 ...for West-Southwest Regional Vice-President

3:10 Ballot to determine ranking of Vice-Presidents

3:20 Greetings—Concordia Plan Services, Kevin Herweck

3:30 Omnibus Resolution A, B, C

3:55 Committee for Convention Nominations (Nominations for Secretary of Synod and Synod Board of Directors)

4:10 Presentation—International Missions: Spread the Gospel

4:30 International Witness (#2)

5:00 Life Together (#4)

5:40 Evening Prayer

6:00 Recess

7:00 LCEF Ice Cream Social (North Ballroom 120 A–D)

Monday—July 20, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:00 Matins—Rev. Christopher S. Esget

8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)

8:30 Consent Calendar

8:40 Greetings—LCEF, Rev. J. Bart Day

8:55 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)

10:00 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Balloting for Secretary and Synod Board of Directors)

10:40 Special Recognition—LCMS President Emeritus, Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

10:45 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger, “Christ Changes Everything”

11:10 Essay Responder—Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller

11:20 Life Together (#4)

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Dr. Terrence C. Chan

1:45 Minutes

1:50 Committee for Convention Nominations (other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities)

2:30 Presentation—International Missions: Planting Churches

2:50 International Witness (#2)

3:20 Greetings—The LCMS Foundation, David Fiedler

3:25 Greetings—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rev. Mark G. Schroeder

Sunday—July 19, 2026

Registration Desk open 7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:00 Matins—Rev. Peter K. Lange

8:30 Preparations for Opening Business Session

8:40 Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel

8:45 Electronic Voting System and Microphone Queue

9:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)

9:20 Standing Rules

9:35 Convention Schedule

9:45 President’s Report (Part 3)

10:15 Consent Calendar

10:30 Welcome and Greetings from Pacific Southwest District

10:35 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Jon S. Bruss, “Christ is the Truth”

11:00 Essay Responder—Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray

11:10 Presentation—All Nations Ministry

11:25 National Witness (#1)

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Brady L. Finner

1:55 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Announce presidential election result)

2:00 Response from newly elected president

- 3:35 Structure and Administration (#9)
- 4:45 Presentation—National Missions: *Church Planting*
- 5:15 National Witness (#1)
- 5:45 Vespers
- 6:00 Recess
- 8:00 *Erin Bode Concert (Sheraton Phoenix, Ballroom ABC)*

Tuesday—July 21, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

- 8:00 Morning Prayer—Rev. Dr. Nabil S. Nour
- 8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections
- 8:30 Greetings—Concordia Publishing House, Jonathan D. Schultz
- 8:35 Consent Calendar
- 8:45 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
- 9:35 Convention Essay—Dr. Michael A. Thomas, “*Christ Conquers Death*”
- 10:00 Essay Responder—Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller
- 10:10 Presentation—Military Chaplains, Rev. Criag G. Muehler
- 10:30 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
- 11:00 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
- 12:00 Recess
- 1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor
- 1:45 Minutes
- 1:50 Greetings—Concordia Historical Institute, Rev. Dr. Daniel Harmelink
- 1:55 Presentation—Church Relations, Rev. Dr. Jonathan E. Shaw
- 2:10 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
- 2:55 Special Recognition—*National and International Church Body Representatives*
- 3:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
- 3:55 Special Recognition—*Newly elected and outgoing Synod Board of Directors*
- 4:00 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
- 4:40 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
- 5:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
- 5:45 Responsive Prayer
- 6:00 Recess
- 6:00 LHM and LWML Reception, (Room 120 AB)

Evening—Alumni Receptions

Wednesday—July 22, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

No exhibitors

- 8:00 Morning Prayer—Rev. Benjamin T. Ball
- 8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections
- 8:30 Consent Calendar
- 8:40 Greetings—Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, Eden Keefe
- 8:45 Greetings—Lutheran Hour Ministries, Kurt Buchholz
- 8:50 Finance (#8)
- 9:40 Structure and Administration (#9)
- 10:35 Convention Essay—Rev. Kirk M. Clayton, “*Christ’s Resurrection for You*”
- 11:00 Essay Responder—Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller
- 11:10 University Education (#7)
- 12:00 Recess
- 1:30 Commemoration of the Faithful Departed—Rev. Dr. Michael E. Gibson
- 2:00 Minutes
- 2:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
- 3:00 University Education (#7)
- 4:20 Special Recognition—New and Outgoing Officers
- 4:25 Presentation—International Missions: *Showing Mercy*
- 4:45 Mercy (#3)
- 5:15 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
- 5:50 Responsive Prayer
- 6:00 Recess
- 7:30 President Elect’s Reception (*North Ballroom 120 A–D*)

Thursday—July 23, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–Noon (3rd floor)

No exhibitors

- 8:00 Matins—Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa
- 8:20 Consent Calendar
- 8:30 Minutes
- 8:35 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)
(*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
- 8:55 Finance (#8)
- 9:20 Life Together (#4)
- 10:25 Mercy (#3)
- 11:05 Unfinished Business
- 11:50 Itinerarium
- 12:00 Adjournment

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

The following report of the results of the June 6–22 electronic balloting for the election of the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for the 2026–29 triennium was received from Election-America, on June 23, 2026, and publicly announced the same day, following notification of the candidates. Matthew C. Harrison was elected to a sixth term as President, his having first taken office September 1, 2010. The collated official statements regarding the three successive ballots, as received from Election-America, Inc. (a Garden City, N.Y., company also known as YesElections), read as follows:



Official Statement of the Online Vote 2026 LCMS Presidential Election

Candidate	Ballot 1		Ballot 2		Ballot 3		Ballot 4	
	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage
Matthew C. Harrison	2,050	43.84%	2,243	46.32%	2,524	50.10%		
Joel D. Biermann	1,822	38.96%	2,229	46.03%	2,414	47.92%		
Benjamin T. Ball	371	7.93%	212	4.38%	100	1.98%		
Brady L. Finnern	321	6.86%	158	3.26%	—	—		
Peter K. Lange	112	2.40%	—	—	—	—		<i>not needed</i>
Total Ballots	4,676		4,842		5,038			
Total Electorate	5,478		5,478		5,478			
Percentage Voted	85.36%		88.39%		91.97%			

As in the elections conducted in 2019 and 2023, congregations and parishes (hereafter, “parishes”) directly registered their voters, doing so through the same fully-online process introduced in 2023. Pursuant to 2019 Res. 9-12, provision of almost real-time parish registration status to district presidents “for the sole purpose of their encouraging registration for greater congregational participation” (Bylaw 3.12.2.3 [d]). Registrations were accepted from October 18, 2025, until the bylaw-mandated deadline, March 8, 2026 and remained open to certain substitutions until eight days prior to the election, a deadline set by the Secretary. The Office of the Secretary and several districts communicated extensively with congregations, their self-reported lay leaders, and pastors by mailings and plentiful emails, augmented by online and print official notices, to encourage registration. The voter list was, as required by Bylaw 3.12.2.3, held confidential throughout the process.

Of the 5,046 parishes (accounting for combination of 5,629 member congregations into multi-congregation parishes) eligible to vote at the time of the election, 2,956 (58.6%) registered at least one voter by the deadline, compared to 62.6% in 2023.

Of the 5,046 parishes, 895 lacked a registerable pastor during the registration period and 1,054 were without an eligible voting pastor at the time of election, collectively leaving 1,078 parishes with no pastoral vote to register or cast. The total number of *possible* eligible voters for the election was therefore 9,014. Of this estimated maximum, 5,478 voters (60.8%, compared to 65.1% in 2023 and 65.3% in 2019) were registered by their parishes and reported to Election-America, including 2,653 pastors and 2,825 laypersons. Summarizing the above, 5,256 voters (2,597 pastors and 2,659 laypersons, collectively representing 2,907 parishes), cast at least one vote in the series of ballots for an overall registered-and-eligible voting rate of 96.0% (compared to 82.6% in 2023 and 90.3% in 2019, both completed in single rounds).

My office is grateful again to Election-America for its reliable, secure, and cost-effective assistance in conducting this election, procured with the assistance of the Board of Directors of the Synod (Bylaw 3.12.2.4), for now the fifth time and the second with five candidates (and for facilitating for the second time the prior nominations process for President and vice-presidents, which also increased assurance and operational efficiency and reduced cost). No issues of reportable significance were encountered, though telephone and email support was provided throughout by Rosters and Statistics staff and Election-America.

This was our first experience with multiple rounds of voting. Reminder emails received a lot of attention on the internet during and after the process. Reminder emails were set to be sent at 8am Central Time on the morning each round opened. These were delayed to 11:25am in round 3 due to an issue at the contractor. Those who vote before the email is sent do not need a reminder and are not sent the reminder email. A misunderstanding of this fact led, in internet reactions, to concerns of emails not being received by some. While a small number of emails inevitably wind up being filtered due to recipient or provider settings, the emails sent by the contractor had all headers necessary to reduce the likelihood of their being treated as spam and were sent to all voters who had not voted at the time they were sent out. All voters also received email communications from LCMS that each voting round was about to begin, as well as the mailed, printed credentials sent before the first round, with instructions to retain them for possible run-offs. On July 9, a wayward test in the contractor’s IT department resulted in the release of a “time to vote” email to our voter list. We regret this error, which again garnered immediate internet attention. Voters did not experience

atypical challenges in participating. The record-setting voting rate in the third round (91.97%, higher than in any previous election) speaks for itself. We are grateful for the work of dedicated staff and a capable contractor and will continue to work to refine and improve the process.

John W. Sias, *Secretary*

APPENDIX TO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS: ASSESSING THE MECHANISM FOR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, 2013–2026

This convention is the fifth to elect the President pre-convention (2010 Res. 8-17) and the third to provide for direct registration of voters (2016 Res. 11-03A). As Overtures 9-21 and 9-22 propose a return to the former method, the following report provides data supporting the convention’s review of the election process, building on a similar report in the previous triennia (2019 *TB*, 2B:240–45; 2023 *TB*, 2B:286–90). In the following, the *participation rate* (percent of votes cast out of the potential 100%-registration maximum) is the product of the *registration rate* (percent of potential eligible electors registered by congregations or parishes of the Synod) and the *voting rate* (percent of registered electors that cast their votes). Whether voters *participate* is reported by the election contractor; for whom individual voters vote is *not*.

Longitudinal Aggregate Comparison, 2013–26 Process, by Congregation or Parish

The number of congregation-or-parish (hereafter, “parish”) voting units declined from 2013–26, due to congregation closure, consolidation, and formation of multi-congregation parishes (Bylaws 2.5.5; 3.12.2.3). The estimated number of vacancies (the lack of a called-and-installed pastor at a parish, which would limit a parish to a lay voter only) also increased through this period. District convention attendance declined significantly from 2013 to 2016, while it was a prerequisite for voter registration (data are not readily available for 2019–23), but the move to direct parish registration (2016 Res. 11-03A, *Proc.*, 196) seems to have reduced the registration rate by a larger amount (offset to some extent by increased voting rates in 2019 and 2026; see Tables 1 and 2 below).

The requirement (reflected in 2019–2026 elections) that parishes take explicit action to register their voters appears to have negatively impacted per-parish and per-electors registration rates, particularly for vacant parishes, but also generally. The adoption of electronic registration and allowance for districts, with virtually real-time registration reports in hand, to encourage it (2019 Res. 9-16, *Proc.*, 201), may have slowed but did not reverse a continued decline in voter registration. The parish registration rate for 2026 was markedly reduced from that in 2023 and 2019 (58% vs. 63%). The “end-to-end” parish participation rate for 2026 (the percentage of parishes that cast at least one vote) was reduced only slightly relative to 2023 and 2019, though it remains lower than for the prior, district convention-connected registration process. (It is important to note that present-day district convention attendance has not been assessed; a return to the former process cannot be *assumed* to improve participation.)

Table 1: Parish-Level Participation in Presidential Elections, 2013–26

	Congregations / Parishes				
	2013	2016	2019	2023	2026
Congregations or parishes (Theoretical maximum)	5,527	5,465	5,376	5,167	5,043
(estimated vacant)	706	797	909	1,037	1,079
Attended district conventions ('13–'16) / Registered ('19–'26)	4,700	4,323	3,407	3,236	2,959
one delegate / voter	893	1,037	356	433	430
two delegates / voters	3,807	3,286	3,046	2,803	2,529
Registered and eligible at time of election, “parish registration rate”	4,358	4,285	3,402	3,232	2,957
(percent of theoretical maximum)	78.85%	78.41%	63.28%	62.55%	58.64%
At least one parish voter voted, “parish voting rate” (for 2026, voted in at least one ballot)	4,039	3,865	3,295	2,992	2,907
(percent of registered/eligible)	92.68%	90.20%	96.85%	92.57%	98.31%
Overall “end-to-end” “parish participation rate” (voted / theoretical maximum)	73.08%	70.72%	61.29%	57.91%	57.64%

The previous convention’s report on the presidential election process (2023 *TB*, 2B:286–90) detailed factors significantly related to the likelihood of parishes to register to vote. Parish pastoral vacancy dramatically reduces the likelihood of a parish registering. Although we contact parishes also by mail about registration, parishes for which we have fewer than three email contacts (pastor, lay leaders, administrators), also are progressively less likely to register. Participation increases steadily with parish size. There are some variations across regions and districts, but these correlate to some extent with the variation of the above characteristics across these units. The noted report contains a more detailed analysis of these factors, as well as a comparison of representation rates to those of an in-convention election of the President.

Longitudinal Aggregate Comparison, 2013–26 Process, by Registered Elector

The following table shows the number of electors registered / voters participating in presidential elections, 2013–26. Each parish noted in the above analysis could register a lay elector and, if not vacant through the registration period and between the end of the change period and beginning of election, a pastoral elector. While the end-to-end participation rate of votes cast per theoretically registerable elector declined gradually through the first decade from an initial high of 62.16% in 2013 to a low of 53.78% in 2023, with a greater decline among lay electors, extremely high voting rates in 2026 offset lackluster registration to boost end-to-end levels somewhat (to a level of 58.35%).

Table 2: Elector-Level Participation in Presidential Elections, 2013–26

	2013			2016			Electors 2019			2023			2026		
	Total	Pastor	Lay	Total	Pastor	Lay	Total	Pastor	Lay	Total	Pastor	Lay	Total	Pastor	Lay
Voters of congregations or parishes * (Theoretical maximum)	10,348	4,821	5,527	10,133	4,668	5,465	9,875	4,499	5,376	9,297	4,130	5,167	9,007	3,964	5,043
Attended district conventions ('13–16) / Registered ('19–26)**	8,507	4,143	4,364	7,609	3,673	3,936	6,505	3,172	3,331	6,053	2,927	3,126	5,509	2,682	2,827
Registered and eligible at time of election as percent of theoretical maximum	8,201	3,843	4,358	7,348	3,418	3,930	6,449	3,118	3,331	6,045	2,927	3,126	5,478	2,653	2,825
	79.25%	79.71%	78.85%	72.52%	73.22%	71.91%	65.31%	69.30%	61.96%	65.02%	70.87%	60.50%	60.82%	66.93%	56.02%
Voted***	6,432	3,235	3,197	6,157	3,046	3,111	5,823	2,919	2,904	5,000	2,525	2,475	5,256	2,596	2,659
as percent of registered/eligible	78.43%	84.18%	73.36%	83.79%	89.12%	79.16%	90.29%	93.62%	87.18%	82.71%	86.27%	79.17%	95.95%	97.85%	94.12%
as percent of theoretical maximum	62.16%	67.10%	57.84%	60.76%	65.25%	56.93%	58.97%	64.88%	54.02%	53.78%	61.14%	47.90%	58.35%	65.49%	52.73%

* The theoretical maximum number of pastoral voters is the number of parishes reduced by the number of parishes vacant *either* throughout the registration period or at the election.

** 2023 statistics did not distinguish electors who became ineligible without replacement (largely, pastors taking calls) between registration and the election.

*** In 2026, voting rate indicates voters that cast a vote in *at least one* of the three ballots. The rates for the separate ballots are as follows: Ballot 1: 4,676 voted (85.36%), including 2,388 pastors (90.01%) and 2,288 lay (80.99%); Ballot 2: 4,842 voted (88.39%), 2,491 pastors (93.89%) and 2,351 lay (83.22%); Ballot 3: 5,038 voted (91.97%), 2,540 pastors (95.74%) and 2,498 lay (88.42%).

John W. Sias, *Secretary*

VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BALLOT

The 2026 Synod convention will mark the fifth time that the new process for determining the slate of candidates for the election of the First Vice-President will be used. The first step in the process was the Synod-wide balloting that ended February 18, 2026, which resulted in a list of the twenty nominees receiving the most nominations who agreed to allow their names to be included in the list from which the President-elect would choose the five candidates for the election of the First Vice-President. For more information regarding the nominating process and its results, see page 13 of the *Biographical Synopses & Statements of Nominees* booklet that accompanied the *Convention Workbook* published several months prior to the convention.

The second step in the process is provided by Bylaw 3.12.2.6:

3.12.2.6 Prior to all other elections, the convention shall elect the First Vice-President.

(a) The President-elect shall select from the list of 20 nominees for the Office of First Vice-President five nominees who have consented to serve if elected, at least two of whom shall be taken from the top five nominees.

(b) Balloting will proceed with the candidate receiving the smallest number of votes eliminated from consideration until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, who shall be declared elected.

As required, President-elect Matthew Harrison has selected five of the 20 nominees who received the most ballots in the nominating process and who consented to serve if elected. As required by Bylaw 3.12.2.6 (a), two of the five are taken from the top five nominees. The candidates, therefore, for the election of the First Vice-President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are the following:

Christopher S. Esget

Alfonso O. Espinosa

Eric T. Lange

Peter K. Lange

Don R. (Richard) Stuckwisch Jr.

Biographical information regarding these candidates is provided on pages 13–24 of the *Biographical Synopses & Statements of Nominees* booklet included with the mailing of the *Convention Workbook*.

The final step in the process, the actual election of the First Vice-President, will be the first election to take place at the convention.

John W. Sias, *Secretary*

LATE REPORTS

Report LR65

Fifth Circuit Opinion Impact on The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

As The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Synod) heads into its triennial convention this summer, we are reminded of the importance that the Synod convention, as the chief ecclesiastical authority of the Synod, has in determining the life of our church body. We also are reminded of the great blessing it is to exercise our faith freely under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

These reminders are reflected in the recent decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which affirms the right of the Synod, under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, to establish and operate under our religious governance structure without interference by the civil courts. A concurring opinion also agrees with the Synod about the clear meaning of our Constitution and Bylaws embodying what the Synod has decided in its governance structure. It is fair to state that no other country in the world guarantees such religious freedom.

The Synod is an ecclesiastical organization of self-governing congregations. It takes seriously its mission, including its confession of faith as stated in Article II of its Constitution and its Objectives as stated in Article III of the Constitution. To carry out this mission, the Synod has consistently recognized the distinction between the two kingdoms. This distinction is recognized throughout the Synod's governance structure and in the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws. To carry out left-hand kingdom matters, the Synod has created corporations, including specifically the corporation named The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS, Inc.), which is sometimes referred to as "corporate Synod."

At the 2023 convention, Synod concluded in Resolution 7-03:

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirmatively conclude that the CTX president and those CTX administrators who have advocated for and supported the purported separation have acted in direct conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws;

The Synod acting in convention then directed the LCMS, Inc. to "to take all appropriate actions to address this situation."

The Board of Directors, following the directive of the Synod in Convention, authorized LCMS, Inc., to bring a lawsuit against Concordia Texas (CTX), Donald Christian, and others. The purpose of this lawsuit was to carry out the directive in Resolution 7-03 to attempt to bring CTX back into the fold of the Synod. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Texas. CTX and other defendants attempted to avoid federal court by arguing the federal court did not have jurisdiction and that the lawsuit must be remanded to the Texas state court. It based this argument on the contention that civil courts should determine that Synod's understanding of its own religious governance structure — its church "polity" — was wrong, and that LCMS, Inc., could not and did not represent Synod's legal interests. This procedural attempt led to the recent decision by the Fifth Circuit.

The Fifth Circuit issued its opinion on jurisdiction on June 4, 2026. By way of background regarding the lawsuit, the Court explained that the CTX Board of Regents had "voted unilaterally to change its internal governing documents to reject the authority and governance of LCMS." The Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) concluded this action was "null and void." The 2023 Synod convention affirmed the CCM. The Court noted that CTX and other defendants refused to follow the CCM opinion and 2023 convention action. As a result, LCMS, Inc., was "forced" to bring the lawsuit to confirm the CCM and Synod in convention decisions and address the actions of CTX and other defendants.

Turning to the jurisdiction issue on appeal, the Fifth Circuit first explained that "the courts of this country are infused with a history of religious tolerance and are guided more specifically by the First Amendment to interfere as little as possible in the affairs that constitute governance of ecclesiastical bodies." The Court then observed that the Synod's governance documents recognize a "two kingdoms" doctrine which "maintains a distinction between spiritual and secular authorities." Thus, the Court held that the First Amendment required civil courts to respect the Synod's sincere ecclesiastical decision to designate LCMS, Inc., to represent its civil interests.

The Fifth Circuit explained that "The church autonomy doctrine, a corollary of the First Amendment, protects religious institutions' internal management decisions and doctrinal self-governance from judicial intrusion." The Court explained that failure to honor the church autonomy doctrine on matters of church governance would have grave implications. This could include coercive efforts to force a religious institution into embracing a particular church polity. Such coercion would violate both the Free Exercise Clause and Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The Fifth Circuit accordingly concluded that CTX's attempt to use civil courts to restructure the internal governance of the Synod violated the First Amendment.

This ruling of the Fifth Circuit does not bring the *LCMS v. Christian, et al.* lawsuit to an end. But it does affirm the rights of the Synod to govern itself and the ability of the Synod in convention to carry out the life of the church on matters of internal church governance without intrusion of secular authorities. The Synod members can also be confident that the Synod Board of Directors is committed to protecting the Synod's rights under the First Amendment via LCMS, Inc.

LCMS Board of Directors

RESOLUTION ACTION REPORT

Floor Committee (continues on next page)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
01		Prop. for CC (1)				
02						
03						
04	Prop. for CC (1)					
05		Prop. for CC (1)				
06						
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Resolution Number

Key Adopted / Ad.: Adopted Declined / Dc.: Declined Pending / Pd.: Pending before assembly
 Ad. Am.: Adopted *as amended* Proposed / Prop.: Proposed A/, B/, C/, etc.: Action on published revised resolution
 CC.: Consent Calendar (#): Action in session #

Example: In column 2, row 05: A/Ad. Am. (3): Res. 2-05A was adopted as amended in session 3.

This table, updated daily, is provided for your convenience and the information contained herein is unofficial. The official record is contained in the convention minutes produced by the Secretary and will be published in the *Convention Proceedings*.

Floor Committee (continued from previous page)

	7	8	9	10		
01						
02						
03						
04						
05						
06						
07						
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09						
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11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18					Omnibus Resolution A	
19					Omnibus Resolution B	
20					Omnibus Resolution C	

Key Adopted / Ad.: Adopted Declined / Dc.: Declined Pending / Pd.: Pending before assembly
 Ad. Am.: Adopted *as amended* Proposed / Prop.: Proposed A/, B/, C/, etc.: Action on published revised resolution
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CONSENT CALENDAR

Preamble

Standing rule 10 states, “any remaining resolutions may be placed on a consent calendar if they are deemed by the chair to be non-controversial, courtesy, or honorific in nature and it shall require 10 percent of voting delegates to remove said resolution from the consent calendar. All resolutions not successfully removed shall be adopted without further action of the convention. The chairman may publish in each day’s *Today’s Business* a consent calendar for consideration that day.”

WHEREAS, the following have been presented by the President for adoption as part of the day’s consent calendar and not removed by request of at least ten percent of the voting delegation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following resolutions shall stand adopted and be so reflected in the minutes and proceedings of the convention:

<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Title</u>
Res. 1-04	To Give Thanks for 130 Years of Deaf Ministry
Res. 2-01A	To Give Thanks for LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
Res. 2-05	To Give Thanks to God for 125 Years of Gospel Ministry, Partner Churches, and Mission in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

OMNIBUS RESOLUTIONS (REVISED)

Issues Addressed by Previous Convention(s)

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION B

WHEREAS, A number of issues have been presented through overtures to which the Synod, in convention, has previously spoken; and

WHEREAS, After careful consideration of these matters, there appears to be insufficient rationale to change or alter the stated position of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That petitioners offering the following overtures be referred to previous convention action as indicated.

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Previous Action</u>
Ov. 1-11	To Inspire Training for Witness	2023 Res. 1-01A
Ov. 1-26	To Strengthen Christ Centered Homes Through Family Discipleship Work	2019 Res. 12-07B
Ov. 4-37	To Continue to Oppose Practice of Couples Living Together outside Marriage and To Support Pastors and Congregations Who Lovingly Call to Repentance, Give Absolution, and Help to Live in Harmony with God’s Word	2023 Res. 5-11
Ov. 5-10	To Encourage and Promote Biblical Teaching of Creation	1932 Report of Committee 20, adopted (“A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod”); 1967 Res. 2-31; 1973 Res. 3-01 (“A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles”); 2004 Res. 2-08A; 2019 Res. 5-09A

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Previous Action</u>
Ov. 5-31	To Reconsider Issue of Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov. 5-32	To Reconsider Issue of Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov. 5-33	To Reconsider Issue of Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov 5-34	To Direct that the Synod and Its Commission on Theology and Church Relations Study and Reexamine Woman Suffrage in Light of Synod's Historic Practice and Holy Scripture, so as to Address and Resolve Confusion and Disunity	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov. 7-08	To Encourage Congregations to Include in Annual Mission Budgets Support for Regional University of Concordia University System	2023 Res.7-06B
Ov. 7-25	To Appeal for Recognized Ecclesiastical Relationship with Luther Classical College	2023 Res. 7-04B
Ov. 9-34	To Strengthen Convention Participation of Ministers of Religion—Commissioned	Bylaws 3.1.5, 3.1.3.1; 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-35	To Strengthen Nonvoting Advisory Role of Commissioned Ministers at Synod Conventions	Bylaws 3.1.5, 3.1.3.1; 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-42	To Change to Four-Year Convention Cycle	Declination of 2023 Res. 9-09A
Ov. 9-43	To Amend Const. Art. VIII A 1 to Change to Four-Year Convention Cycle	Declination of 2023 Res. 9-09A
Ov. 9-50	To Adopt Dual Title of <i>Bishop and President</i> for District Presidents	1981 Res. 3-19
Ov. 9-51	To Authorize Title <i>Bishop</i> for Synod President and District Presidents	1981 Res. 3-19

REVISED RESOLUTIONS

1. NATIONAL WITNESS

To Celebrate and Encourage All Nations Ministry in North America

RESOLUTION 1-01A

Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overture 1-01 (*CW*, 277)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Great Commission: “Make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) and He gave the Holy Spirit so that His disciples would be “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, The Church Triumphant in Revelation 7 is shown to be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, redeemed and gathered in praise before God on His throne, and these passages have inspired Synod mission efforts in North America and around the world; and

WHEREAS, God’s Word calls us “to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24–25); and

WHEREAS, In this triennium, milestone anniversaries of mission in North America includes 90 years of Chinese ministry and 100 years of Hispanic ministry in 2026; 150 years of Black ministry in 2027; and 50 years of Hmong ministry in 2028; and these milestones serve as reminders of Christ’s faithfulness and opportunities to stir up one another toward love and good works; and

WHEREAS, The mission efforts have also resulted in the formation of an All Nations Council, made up of representatives of many ethnic ministries in North America, that has convened five times, learning from local ministers and districts, building capacity for collaboration, praying together and discerning opportunities for engagement together in mission. The All Nations Council includes entities such as:

- Black Ministries of the Southeastern District;
- Black Ministries of the Southern District;
- Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building;
- the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society in North America;
- the Evangelical Mekane Yesus Lutheran Fellowship in North America;
- the Hispanic Missionary League and National Hispanic Convention;
- the Hmong Mission Society;
- Messiah for Muslims;
- the Multi Asian Gathering;
- LCMS Native American ministries of the Northern Cheyenne and Navajo Nation;
- the Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society; and
- the Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society;

therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to commemorate these milestone anniversaries by highlighting the encouraging news in various ways that the Synod is a church of every nation, of all peoples, tribes, and languages (Rev. 7:9); and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to provide information to members about the Synod’s resources that make known the Law-Gospel faithfulness of Christ for all peoples and the Synod’s condemnation of racism and that provide guidance for outreach and witness to people who are not yet part of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Communications regularly spotlight the practical ways that congregations and districts are witnessing across ethnic and language boundaries, especially in their own communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks for the work of Lutheran Heritage Foundation for the many catechetical materials provided to support ministry among multiethnic communities and their work on the recent production of *Himnario Luterano* (resources.lcms.org/general/himnario-luterano-spanish-lutheran-hymnal); and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with Concordia Publishing House (CPH) to prepare materials to facilitate congregational and family ministry among people of many languages and cultures in the U.S., to include exploring the potential of CPH worship material of its Spanish, Chinese, French, and other language hymnals being made available in digital format through Lutheran Service Builder or another platform; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM work with CPH to explore the potential of adding theologically-sound materials in English that originated in Black/African American, Chinese, Hispanic, Hmong, and other traditions to the materials available in digital format through Lutheran Service Builder or another platform; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention lift our hearts in gratitude and praise to God, standing to sing the doxology in celebration of His mission in North America among people of all ethnicities and languages, giving thanks for the many individuals who have served in these ministries.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no incremental costs for the exploration of development of resources; preparation of materials not scoped will have incremental cost not estimable at present (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Give Thanks to God for 150 Years of Black Ministry

RESOLUTION 1-03A

Overtures 1-02–03 (*CW*, 277–78)

WHEREAS, Christ our Lord commissioned His Church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, Revelation 5:9, 13:7, and 14:6 speak of salvation freely offered and the proclamation of the Gospel to “every nation and tribe and language and people”; and

WHEREAS, Many other passages of Holy Scripture testify to God’s love for all people and our obligation to likewise love our neighbors regardless of ethnic, geographic, or social background; and

WHEREAS, 2027 marks the 150th anniversary of LCMS Black Ministry with its establishment at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., at the 1877 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America; and

WHEREAS, The Synod created institutions to provide education for African Americans with Immanuel Lutheran College in Greensboro, N.C. (1903–1961) and Concordia College Alabama (1922–2018) which formed hundreds of church workers and led to the establishment and ongoing ministry of many congregations and schools; and

WHEREAS, Synod universities and seminaries continue to prepare workers of African descent for service in the church as future leaders following the pattern of both faithful servants who have gone before and those who continue to serve and lead in the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission, in conjunction with Concordia Publishing House, is preparing a scholarly book and supporting materials on the successes, struggles, and opportunities of the Synod’s ministry and outreach to communities of color including an updated history of LCMS Black Ministry, which will be published for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary (2023 Res. 11-03A, “To Love and Disciple Peoples of All Ethnicities, Languages, and Skin Colors”); and

WHEREAS, The history of LCMS Black Ministry is one of both “roses and thorns” (Rev. Dr. Richard C. Dickinson, *Roses and Thorns* [Concordia Publishing House, 1977]); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod lament past failures to meet the scriptural standards of love for one another and reaffirm the scriptural condemnation of racism in all its forms; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod remember with thanksgiving the legacy of faithful servants of the Gospel in LCMS Black Ministry, celebrate those presently serving, and pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up countless more; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations, districts, recognized service organizations, and other ministry partners be encouraged to promote and support the 150th anniversary celebration of LCMS Black Ministry, scheduled to be held in Charlotte, N.C., July 7–10, 2027.

To Prioritize Revitalization Work

RESOLUTION 1-05A

Report R1 (*CW*, 1–5); Overture 1-08 (*CW*, 281)

WHEREAS, The Synod has prioritized revitalization of its congregations; and

WHEREAS, Many existing Synod congregations have plateaued or are declining in membership or worship attendance; and

WHEREAS, Congregational revitalization is centered in the new life that is found in God’s Word being proclaimed in purity and His Sacraments being rightly administered; and

WHEREAS, The 2013 and 2016 Synod conventions approved the increased focus on revitalization and the expansion of *re:Vitality* from the Office of National Mission (ONM) (2013 Res. 3-08A, “To Reaffirm Faithful Church Revitalization as a Priority of the Office of National Mission,” *Proc.*, 120; 2016 Res. 1-03, “To Expand the Work of Revitalization and Encourage the Use of *re:Vitality* Program,” *Proc.*, 132–33); and

WHEREAS, Congregations are encouraged to make use of revitalization resources as these are made available; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention pray to almighty God for those congregations in need of revitalization and give thanks for the ongoing revitalization efforts across the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the ONM to coordinate with district personnel to review and expand the revitalization resources and strategies available for congregations and circuits; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged regularly at the district and circuit levels to engage in biblically-based, confessionally-faithful best practices concerning planning for the future, outreach to the community, caring for inactive members and intentionally incorporating current members into the life of the church (Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 3:6; 14:40).

To Support Lutheran Congregations and Schools in Urban Contexts

RESOLUTION 1-06A

Overtures 1-9–10 (*CW*, 281–82)

Rationale

Throughout its history, the Synod has had congregations and schools in urban contexts. Many of these congregations and schools have ceased operations or have greatly curtailed ministries due to shifts in demographics, even as more people live in urban contexts in the United States. Unfortunately, the urban congregations that exist tend to be small and lacking funds and expertise. Assisting with parish operation and governance, developing sustainable funding models, encouraging networking for mutual conversation and consolation, and encouraging workers to serve in urban contexts would be ways to invest in urban contexts so that people may continue to hear the Good News about Jesus, and so that existing congregations and schools may be supported and new congregations and schools may be planted.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks for congregations and schools in urban contexts; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with districts to enhance networking for congregations, schools, and workers in urban contexts throughout the Synod for the sake of sharing resources and best practices and grant opportunities; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM work with districts to advise regarding ways to provide congregations and schools in urban contexts with administrative assistance for governance that could include payroll services, sharing a bookkeeper, insurance recommendations, strategic planning, and the like; and be it finally

Resolved, That the ONM; LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services; Lutheran Church Extension Fund; Concordia Plan Services; and other data-collecting agencies of Synod share available demographic data upon request with congregations, schools, and workers in urban contexts so that plans for outreach to people in urban contexts may be developed locally.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate an annual cost to corporate Synod of \$30,000 in contract labor to support coordination, visitation, etc.; cost to districts in collaboration would be additional (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Increase Church Planting at the Parish Level

RESOLUTION 1-07A

Overture 1-06 (CW, 280)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ wants all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and has commanded His Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, Acts 2:42 shows that the Church of baptized believers gathered around the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, which are foundational to the life and mission of the Church both in function and in goal; and

WHEREAS, The early Christians, having been gathered around Word and Sacrament, were sent into the world and established new churches as they went; and

WHEREAS, This historic pattern of Word and Sacrament expansion allows the local congregation (uniquely suited as the front-line mission outpost) to be the driving force in church planting; and

WHEREAS, Through the generous support of private foundations (such as the Bolick Foundation) the Office of National Mission (ONM) is able to support church planting across the Synod through training, networking, and church planting grants of up to \$100,000; and

WHEREAS, The ONM is currently working with 33 active church plants from all regions of the Synod, and has distributed \$590,000 in grants and anticipates distributing an additional \$2,080,000 as those church plants work through the LCMS Church Planting process (Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff, verbal update to floor committee, May 29, 2026); and

WHEREAS, The ONM, in partnership with districts, has identified 64 additional church planting sites for which additional grant funding will be necessary (Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff, verbal update to floor committee, May 29, 2026); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Church Planting process includes six phases: concept, feasibility, planning, start-up, formation, and expansion (“What does LCMS Church Planting have to offer?,” lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/church-planting, accessed May 31, 2026), and is intended to support the difficult, yet God-pleasing work of church planting with guidance and ongoing support; and

WHEREAS, Planting new congregations is an important strategy for intentionally reaching the unchurched and dechurched, especially in regions without a local confessional Lutheran presence, including many urban contexts; and

WHEREAS, The planting of new, sustainable Word and Sacrament ministries is a priority of the Synod for both the Office of International Mission and the ONM; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage districts, circuits, and congregations to plant churches through preaching stations supported by existing congregations and their pastors; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the ONM to continue to partner with districts to identify locations at the parish level and support the planting of Synod congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM continue to work with districts to establish a numerical goal for planting new congregations over the coming triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage districts to continue to fund the planting of new congregations in a way that multiplies the impact of the grant from the ONM; and be it further

Resolved, That special attention be given to planting congregations in regions where people do not have access to the pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod commend the LCMS Church Planting process as a faithful approach to fulfilling Christ's command to make disciples of all nations, while respecting the role of districts to use models that are beneficial to their local contexts.

To Educate Young People

RESOLUTION 1-08A

Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overtures 1-10, 15, 17–19, 23 (*CW*, 282, 285–87, 289)

WHEREAS, The LORD commands us to teach our children the Word of God diligently (Deuteronomy 6); and

WHEREAS, The Large Catechism states, "... if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God and the world" (LC I 172–73); and

WHEREAS, Christian parents are to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord so that their children may live as faithful, responsible, and God-fearing citizens in the world; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran schools in urban, suburban, and rural contexts, as extensions of Lutheran congregations, promote this God-pleasing end; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has more than 1,700 schools and early childhood centers (*lcms.org/school-ministry*, accessed May 30, 2026) with curricula informed by the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions (see *lutheranschools.org*), served by thousands of educators who go above and beyond in nurturing students academically, emotionally, and spiritually, even amidst cultural shifts and economic strains; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod affirm the God-given vocation of parents as the primary educators of their children; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod thank God for Lutheran schools and homeschools, and for those who learn and work in them, and encourage them as they use doctrinally-sound curricula and books; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with districts to foster networking for congregations, schools, and workers, especially in urban and rural contexts, to maintain robust ministry presence; and be it finally

Resolved, That the ONM work with districts to identify and provide resources to plant new congregations and schools in areas that are underserved.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no incremental costs as this activity is covered in the current budget and scope of the Office of National Mission (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Promote Ministry Among Youth and Young Adults

RESOLUTION 1-09A

Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overtures 1-13, 21 (*CW*, 284, 288)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching the baptized (Matt. 28:19–20), and to raise up successive generations in the faith; and

WHEREAS, The Church has the responsibility to understand and live out the variety of gifts given to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:4–31); and

WHEREAS, Even in the face of many challenges, the Lord assures His Church that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17), and that "[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4); and

WHEREAS, The Synod, through the Office of National Mission (ONM) (LCMS Youth Ministry in particular), has conducted research to help congregations better understand and retain Millennials, notably publishing *Relationships Count: Engaging & Retaining Millennials* (Concordia Publishing House [CPH], 2020), a three-phase research project that used surveys and focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of retention rates of young people in the Synod, which

1 informed the creation of the *Seven Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry* (which provides resources and encouragement
2 [youthsource.com/seven-practices]) to families, LCMS congregations, and church workers; and

3 WHEREAS, Broader, nationally representative research shows important context about the religious lives of
4 American adolescents: as of a 2020 Pew Research Center study, about 63 percent of U.S. teenagers (ages 13–17) identify
5 as Christian, compared with a higher share (72 percent) among their parents; a small set (4 percent) of U.S. teenagers
6 (ages 13–17) are affiliated with non-Christian faiths; and fully a third (32 percent) of U.S. teenagers are religiously
7 unaffiliated; additionally, Pew found that roughly four in ten U.S. teens report attending religious services at least once
8 or twice a month, with about one-third reporting weekly attendance, and that the attendance of both teenagers and their
9 parents is mostly identical, percentage-wise; this data highlights both the continuing presence of faith among many
10 teenagers and the pastoral challenge of forming regular worship and faith practices among them and their families
11 (“Religious affiliation among American adolescents,” [pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/religious-affiliation-](http://pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/religious-affiliation-among-american-adolescents)
12 [among-american-adolescents](http://pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/religious-affiliation-among-american-adolescents), accessed March 20, 2026); and

13 WHEREAS, A new generational cohort, commonly labeled Generation Alpha (roughly children born beginning
14 around 2010), is coming of age in cultural and technological circumstances that differ from Millennials and Generation
15 Z; and understanding Generation Alpha’s particular formation patterns, media ecosystems, family structures, and
16 religious orientations will help the Synod equip pastors, teachers, and other church workers to help them and their
17 families to grow in the Christian faith and piety; and

18 WHEREAS, The Barna Group reported in the fall of this past year a significant, surprising resurgence in Christian
19 faith and church attendance led by young adults (“New Barna Data: Young Adults Lead a Resurgence in Church
20 Attendance,” Barna, Sept. 2, 2025, barna.com/research/young-adults-lead-resurgence-in-church-attendance); and

21 WHEREAS, Many of these reports point to cultural circumstances possibly accounting for the resurgence, including
22 a stronger sense of mortality after the pandemic; the desire for meaningful community in the face of increased cultural
23 isolationism; valuing clear moral frameworks; and seeking structure, authenticity, and purpose amidst societal
24 uncertainty; therefore be it

25 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for the young men and women in the church
26 and cherish them as among those who are carrying on the saving faith on earth; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the faithful service of pastors, teachers, other church
28 workers, youth workers, congregational leaders, and volunteers throughout the Synod, and commend to the church’s
29 continued prayer and support those who labor to bring the Gospel to our young people and to form them in the life of
30 the church; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the work of Synod districts, LCMS Youth Ministry,
32 Synod camps, CPH, Higher Things, LCMS U, campus ministries, and other entities serving young men and women; and
33 be it further

34 *Resolved*, That the Synod direct the ONM and LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services to undertake or
35 commission a focused, methodologically rigorous study of the Millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha that
36 identifies (1) patterns of religious identity and practice, and (2) formative influences (i.e., family, school, digital media,
37 peers); and be it finally

38 *Resolved*, That the ONM then publicize a summary of findings, along with a set of practical resources and concrete
39 strategies that prioritize catechesis, regular worship participation, Lutheran doctrine and practice, parental support, and
40 joyful involvement in the life of the Body of Christ, so that congregations and schools of all sizes may apply the findings
41 in local ministry contexts.

42 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
43 *Committee, anticipate that the potentially significant incremental costs to corporate Synod of a study, publications,*
44 *and resources not yet scoped are difficult to estimate at this time (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

To Confess God's Design for the Family

RESOLUTION 1-11A

Overtures 1-24–25, 32 (*CW*, 289–291, 293)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod upholds the scriptural mandate for families and the church to nurture faith in the home: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road” (Deut. 6:6–7 NIV); and

WHEREAS, Luther declares, “let everyone know that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God above all things [Proverbs 1:7]” (LC I [Fourth Commandment] 174); and

WHEREAS, The Fourth Commandment, as explained in the Large Catechism, places all authority over a child on the parents of that child, so that we confess, “For all authority flows and is born from the authority of parents. Where a father is unable alone to educate his ... child, he uses a school master to teach the child. ... So all whom we call ‘masters’ are in a place of parents and must get their power and authority to govern from them” (LC I [Fourth Commandment] 141–42); and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission (ONM) and organizations that support those seeking to live according to God’s design for the family, such as Concordia Center for the Family, are great blessings to this work in the church; and

WHEREAS, Government in our society—at federal, state, and local levels—has attempted or may attempt to step between children and their parents (impeding the parents’ duty to raise their children in the faith and life of the Christian confession) in various ways, including but not limited to:

- laws that allow, recommend, or give children sex change operations or medical procedures for “transitioning” minors without parents’ approval;
- laws that permit minors to get an abortion without parents’ approval;
- laws that label parents who refuse their minor children sex change operations and procedures, or abortions, as engaging in child abuse;
- laws that remove children from the custody of parents who refuse their minor children sex change operations and procedures, or abortions;
- school policies that encourage children to “transition,” use gender-confusing language, or introduce sexual or gender identities that do not conform with the child’s birth sex without parents’ approval;
- school policies that promote various anti-scriptural social agendas without parents’ approval;

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention plainly state our religious objection to government interference in Christian parents’ duty to raise their children in the faith and life of the Christian confession; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage all Synod congregations, pastors, commissioned workers, and lay leaders to make use of training and resources (such as those from the Family Ministry Office and Concordia Center for the Family); and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM be prepared to inform congregations about public resources available to support their biblical convictions; and be it finally

Resolved, That we urge our congregations and schools boldly to confess and witness to the truth in the public square.

To Strengthen the Synod’s Digital Witness and Congregational Connections

RESOLUTION 1-13A

Reports R1.2.5–1.3 (*CW*, 32–37); President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:26)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to make disciples of all nations through the proclamation of the Gospel (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, Since the days when Martin Luther employed the printing press to spread the message of the Reformation, Lutherans have sought to use available means of communication in service to Christ’s command to make disciples of all nations; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has continued this tradition through publications, radio broadcasting, and digital communications, including such ministries as *The Lutheran Witness*, KFUE Radio, Synod’s online resources, and auxiliaries such as Lutheran Hour Ministries; and

WHEREAS, The Church receives such technologies as useful tools that may serve the proclamation of God’s Word while recognizing that these tools must remain servants of the Church’s mission and never replace the gathering of God’s people around Word and Sacrament; and

WHEREAS, Many people today first encounter the Church and seek information about Christianity through online resources, such as young adults finding—through *lcms.org* and Lutheran podcasts—faithful Lutheran congregations where they may hear God’s Word and receive His gifts; and

WHEREAS, A strong and accessible online presence provides opportunities to connect such individuals with faithful Lutheran congregations where they may hear God’s Word, receive His gifts, and be gathered into the life of Christ’s Church; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage the Office of National Mission (ONM) and LCMS Communications to develop a coordinated strategy to strengthen our Synod’s digital witness to Jesus Christ that assists those seeking a Lutheran church in locating nearby congregations of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM and LCMS Communications be encouraged to coordinate their efforts in support of evangelism, outreach, and connection to local congregations; and be it finally

Resolved, That the ONM and LCMS Communications report their progress to the Council of Presidents during the 2026–2029 triennium.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no incremental costs as this work is already underway to strengthen lcms.org (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

To Give Thanks for LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

RESOLUTION 2-01A

Overtures 2-06 (*CW*, 296–97)

WHEREAS, From the Civil War through both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and more recent areas of conflict, Synod pastors, serving honorably and with distinction as military chaplains, bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those protecting our great nation; and

WHEREAS, Some chaplains serve on forward bases in harm’s way; others, onboard ships maintaining vigilant watch over the seven seas; yet others walk the flight line on isolated air bases, engaging airmen on matters of faith and family as they load fighter aircraft for combat operations; and

WHEREAS, These “pastors in uniform” provide Word and Sacrament ministry while enduring hardship, constant peril, and danger; and

WHEREAS, These chaplains meet the needs of military personnel and their families stationed around the world and provide a vital link to home; and

WHEREAS, Synod chaplains have been recognized for their excellence in theology and pastoral care by their peers and frequently called to significant leadership posts within the U.S. Department of War at the Pentagon; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) supports almost 125 chaplains representing the church on active duty; in the Reserves, National Guard, Civil Air Patrol, and Coast Guard Auxiliary; as Directors of Religious Education; and in the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, MAF assists and trains congregations through Operation Barnabas, working to equip and encourage local pastors and congregations of the Synod in compassionate care and witness by training them for outreach to all military-connected people (active, reserve, retired, veterans, and their loved ones); and

WHEREAS, The Synod cares deeply for those who currently serve, for those who have donned the cloth of our nation in uniform, and for those who served our nation and live in our communities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its congregations to intentionally recognize and care for current and former military members, veterans, and family members in their midst by joining the network of care provided through Operation Barnabas; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations are asked to encourage their pastors to consider serving as chaplains in the National Guard or the Armed Forces Reserves; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for MAF, Operation Barnabas, and MAF leadership, including its director, the Rev. Craig Muehler, and assistant director, the Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana.

To Direct Districts and Encourage Congregational Participation in Global Mission through Prayer, Partnership, and Support

RESOLUTION 2-02A

Overtures 2-01–02 (*CW*, 295)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, The Lord exhorts His people to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38), and assures His Church that He “is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20); and

WHEREAS, The Church is called to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3), including fellowship and cooperation in the work of the Gospel across nations and cultures; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has long carried out this mission through the sending of missionaries and the support of partner churches throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The Synod presently carries out its support of missionaries through the significant contributions of agencies like Mission Central (an extension of LCMS Mission Advancement), the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, and others; and

WHEREAS, FORO is a Spanish word for “forum”: A FORO connects missionaries with partners (individuals, churches, organizations, or schools) who are interested in the mission in that place for conversation, support, and prayer. FOROs were created to provide a means of relationship to fill those needs through networking, learning, volunteering, and planning; and

WHEREAS, The FORO model aligns congregations, districts, and the Synod in Lutheran missiology (spreading the Gospel, planting Lutheran churches, and showing mercy), keeping funding and accountability unified in mission together; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has established structures, including the Network Supported Missionary (NSM) model, which aids missionaries, as well as—through partnerships that foster prayer, financial support, and active participation in Synod mission projects among districts, recognized service organizations, congregations, and other Synod entities—the FORO model; and

WHEREAS, 2023 Resolution 2-07A, “To Commend the Use and Attendance of FOROs,” encouraged the use, attendance, and expansion of the FORO model in all four regions of the Office of International Mission (OIM); and

WHEREAS, During the last triennium, the OIM has expanded the number of FOROs from 11, in one region, to 20, across all four regions; and

WHEREAS, Some congregations have not yet been connected to specific mission efforts, whether through financial limitations or lack of awareness, and thus may be missing opportunities to participate more fully in the Lord’s mission; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the many blessings that have come forth from the FOROs in Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Belize, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Bolivia, Cuba, Germany, Spain, South Africa, Malawi, Eritrea, Rwanda, and the Philippines, with more in development; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct each district to assess the feasibility of adopting a FORO partnership and present it for consideration at their next district convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to include regular prayers in corporate worship and in their life together for the Lord’s mission, for His Church throughout the world, and for the raising up and sustaining of faithful workers in the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That all Synod congregations be encouraged to actively participate in an international mission through the FORO model, as faithful stewards of the Gospel and all of God’s gifts; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged, where possible, to adopt and support one or more missionaries of the Synod’s international mission work, committing themselves especially to faithful prayer and, as they are able, to financial support; and be it further

Resolved, That the OIM develop and implement a communication plan to assist congregations and districts to expand opportunities to be connected meaningfully to mission work—whether through missionary support, FORO partnerships, or other faithful means; and be it finally

Resolved, That these opportunities be commended to all congregations of the Synod for prayerful consideration, that they may participate more fully in the Lord’s work of gathering His Church from all nations.

To Give Thanks to God for Missionary Care Provided by the Office of International Mission

RESOLUTION 2-03A

Reports R1.2.2, R7 (*CW*, 19–28, 54–55); Overture 2-03 (*CW*, 295–96)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ commands His Church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20), and the Synod carries out this work through the sending of missionaries around the world; and

WHEREAS, The Office of International Mission (OIM) strives to deploy and sustain physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy missionary families for faithful, enduring service in the spreading of the Gospel, the planting of Lutheran churches, and the showing of mercy in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, The OIM begins its comprehensive approach to missionary care already in recruitment and discernment, carefully evaluating the suitability of missionary households and seeking appropriate placement for their well-being and effective service; and

WHEREAS, The OIM provides extensive pre-deployment training and support for missionaries, spouses, and children—equipping them with the theological, cultural, and practical preparation, while also offering care, resources, and clarity during a time often marked by uncertainty and transition; and

WHEREAS, The OIM continues its care on the mission fields through regionally-based care circles, pastoral support, regular care conversations, language and cultural training, appropriate housing, educational benefits for children, healthcare, opportunities for rest and continuing education, and other resources directed toward the whole person—body, mind, and spirit; and

WHEREAS, The OIM intentionally supports missionaries and their families at the end of their service through reintegration into life in the United States, providing transitional resources, intentional time for reflection and adjustment, and opportunities for the Church to give public thanks for their service; and

WHEREAS, This comprehensive care has led to a more than doubling of the five-year and ten-year retention rate of missionaries, resulting in a more robust and consistent missionary presence in the field; and

WHEREAS, Our recruiting efforts are resulting in an increase in the number of missionaries that we have in the field, currently 120 Synod and Alliance missionaries and their families—for a total of at least 349 people in need of pastoral care; and

WHEREAS, This comprehensive care is carried out through the collaborative work of the Global Care Team and regional care circles, reflecting synodwide commitment to the well-being of those sent in Christ's name; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for the faithful and compassionate care provided to missionaries and their families through the OIM; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend and support the OIM's ongoing efforts to care for missionaries holistically, so that they may serve with endurance, faithfulness, and joy; and be it further

Resolved, That the OIM establish a full-time chaplaincy in each region, as feasible and necessary, by the 2029 Synod convention to expand our pastoral care for our missionaries; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations, districts, and all members of the Synod be encouraged to pray for the Synod's missionaries and their families, to engage with them in mutual encouragement, and to support the mission of the Gospel; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod rejoice that through the faithful service of missionaries, supported by the OIM, the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate the annual cost to be \$800,000, including adding a chaplain in each region and associated costs. Historical success at fully funding missionaries is expected to continue and apply to these positions, so that that this would not add incremental burden on the unrestricted resources of the Synod (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

3. MERCY

To Commend and Encourage Life Ministry Efforts of Congregations, Schools, Districts, and Recognized Service Organizations

RESOLUTION 3-01A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 17); Overture 3-02 (CW, 299)

WHEREAS, God has created every human life (Job 10:9–11; Psalm 139:13–16; Jer. 1:5), and people are taught by Holy Scripture to love those in need in every stage of life, from conception to death, with not only our words but also our actions (1 John 3:16–18; James 1:22–27); and

WHEREAS, Increasing numbers of Lutherans are planning and participating in pro-life marches (such as the National March for Life), and other advocacy events across the United States; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry has awarded Million Dollar Life Match grants to Synod congregations and districts to support and expand beginning-of-life care projects, sanctity of life education and pro-life advocacy work that upholds the value of all human life, having assisted during the past triennium some 38,100 people while coordinating with 2,512 volunteers; and

WHEREAS, Through the Million Dollar Life Match initiative, LCMS congregations and districts have dedicated \$500,496.75 toward life-affirming ministries, which has been matched by \$618,083.12 from the LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM), resulting in a total investment of \$1,115,579.87 in support of these efforts; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry has created new resources that proclaim the Gospel and equip the saints for pro-life efforts that serve the neighbor and witness to Christ (many such resources to be found in the LCMS Life Ministry Library online at resources.lcms.org/reading-study/life-library); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the ongoing and increasing witness to the sanctity and dignity of every human life by Synod congregations, schools, districts, recognized service organizations (RSOs), and by LCMS Life Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry, the ONM, the Office of the President, and district staff members be encouraged to participate in not only Synod efforts, but also other peaceful and law-abiding ecumenical and civic pro-life organizations and events, when and where appropriate; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry continue to create resources, offer educational events such as conferences and webinars, and advise congregations, schools, districts, and RSOs in their pro-life work; and be it finally

Resolved, That the districts of the Synod continue to promote and encourage both church workers and congregation members to be involved in pro-life efforts, such as advocating state and federal lawmakers to protect and defend human life from conception until natural death, educating congregation members and school families about the God-given sanctity and dignity of human life, and finding myriad ways to care for the body and soul needs of fathers, mothers, babies, and whole families.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as resources commended are understood to be presently in existence and activities described are already within scope and budget (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Promote Awareness of Christian Adoption and Fostering Needs

RESOLUTION 3-02A

Overture 3-01 (CW, 299)

WHEREAS, Adoption figures prominently in Holy Scripture (Gal. 4:5) and the baptismal theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, Christians have an historical legacy of enacting this Gospel by undertaking and coordinating care for “orphans and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27); and

WHEREAS, In the United States, the Synod, her congregations, and recognized service organizations (RSOs) have especially exemplified these concerns and embodied this mercy; and

WHEREAS, Some 117,000 children nationwide are awaiting families and homes through adoption this year (www.adoptuskids.org/meet-the-children/children-in-foster-care/about-the-children, accessed May 30, 2026); and

WHEREAS, In many jurisdictions, state involvement in adoption imposes restrictions that result in a significant proportion of these children receiving placements in situations contrary to the heavenly Father’s design and intention for sexuality and marriage and without regard for their eternal welfare; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has not explicitly spoken about the connection of adoption to our doctrine and our vocation to serve these neighbors in need; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention, in grateful response to our own baptismal adoption as children of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, affirm our Christian privilege and responsibility to advocate and undertake protecting and providing for children awaiting adoption and fostering, particularly that they might enter His kingdom by Baptism and belief in His saving name; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage our Synod and district leaders and congregations to promote awareness of Christian adoption and its Christ-pleasing benefits and promote awareness of Christian adoption and fostering needs, agencies, and opportunities; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention recognize and praise the RSOs of the Synod that do the work of Christian adoption and foster care, and strongly encourage our churches and members to pray for these ministries, advocate for their mission, and give them financial support through church offerings.

**To Thank God for Work of LCMS Disaster Response and Human Care Partners
and To Require Districts to Appoint Disaster Response Coordinators**

RESOLUTION 3-03A

Overtures 3-03-04 (*CW*, 299–300)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and the Lord calls His Church to works of mercy that flow from His mercy given to us in Christ Jesus; and

WHEREAS, Since its current organizational structure was established in 2005, LCMS Disaster Response has faithfully equipped the church for acts of mercy in times of crisis, trained and coordinated Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) volunteers, trained leaders, and supported congregations and districts in times of disaster; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Disaster Response currently works through 104 key leaders across 35 districts, and in collaboration with six recognized service organizations (RSO), supporting a network of more than 9,200 trained LERT volunteers and more than 80 pieces of specialized disaster equipment, enabling faithful and compassionate response; and

WHEREAS, In the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response provided \$3,427,748 in national disaster relief grants, mobilized 6,630 LCMS responders who collectively contributed 77,350 hours of service across training and deployment, with 4,755 LCMS responders completing training during this same period (Mary Henrichs, “‘Gospel at the center’: LCMS Disaster Response update,” *Reporter Online*, January 28, 2026, reporter.lcms.org/2026/gospel-at-center-disaster-response-update); and

WHEREAS, In the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response and its volunteers have responded to disasters in the United States (including hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, tornadoes, floods, wildfires, and other emergencies) and have provided enhancements with new training options for LERT volunteers and trainers, showing Christ’s mercy in tangible acts of service and bringing the comfort of the Gospel with pastoral care to thousands of survivors; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Disaster Response also extended Christ’s mercy internationally in the past triennium, distributing \$1,082,873 in international grants, including response to the 2024 floods in Brazil, where eight churches were rebuilt, 200 pastors and lay leaders were trained in disaster response, thousands of confessional materials were replaced, and more than 2,200 families received assistance; and response to the 2024 wildfires in Chile, where construction materials were provided to rebuild homes, over 30,000 meals were distributed, and more than 8,000 people were served through preaching, teaching, mercy care, and spiritual support (*ibid.*); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a rich history of caring for the most vulnerable, and in the past triennium this has included disaster relief and support for legal immigrants and refugees through LCMS Disaster Response and with various RSOs; and

WHEREAS, The congregations and members of the Synod have generously contributed their time, resources, and prayers to sustain these vital ministries of mercy; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for His mercy and provision through the ongoing work of LCMS Disaster Response and its human care partners, especially for the witness and service offered through LERT volunteers, districts, and RSOs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage continued support and prayer for those vulnerable neighbors affected by natural disasters, and for those who serve faithfully in times of crisis; and be it further

Resolved, That each district appoint a district disaster response coordinator to work directly with LCMS Disaster Response and offer LERT training modules in the district; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend LCMS Disaster Response, its staff, leaders, and volunteers, to the Lord’s continued care, asking Him to strengthen their work in mercy and to bless their proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks for these efforts and seek additional ways to extend Christ’s mercy to those in need, so that the church at large may continue to bear witness to the love of Christ through acts of mercy and service; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod joyfully confess that every act of mercy flows from Christ Himself, “who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction” (2 Cor. 1:4), to the glory of God and the comfort of His people.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be covered by the present budget; districts may incur costs for establishing coordinators if not already in service (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Encourage Use of Counseling and Telehealth Services for Care and Retention of Church Workers

RESOLUTION 3-04A

Overture 3-07 (CW, 301–2)

WHEREAS, Church workers of the Synod experience unique vocational stressors inherent to ecclesial callings, including isolation, heavy workloads, public scrutiny, financial strain, and relational pressures; and

WHEREAS, Research within and outside the Synod demonstrates increasing rates of burnout, depression, anxiety, suicidality, marital distress, loneliness, financial uncertainty, and certain addictive behaviors among pastors and other church workers; and

WHEREAS, Professional counseling, including counseling delivered via telehealth, has demonstrated efficacy in treating burnout, depression, anxiety disorders, trauma-related distress, marital and family conflict, financial stress, and certain addictive behaviors; and

WHEREAS, Church workers of the Synod will benefit from Christ-centered, clinically competent counseling services that are confessionally aligned with the doctrine and practice of the Synod and are well positioned to serve church workers confidentially whether in-person or via telehealth; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage its workers to view the use of professional counseling services as faithful stewardship of the gifts of body and mind entrusted to them by God; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend telehealth counseling as a resource for addressing burnout, depression, anxiety, suicidality, marital and family distress, financial stress, and certain addictive behaviors among church workers; and be it further

Resolved, That districts, congregations, schools, and recognized service organizations be encouraged to become familiar with existing and available counseling and telehealth services that are confessionally aligned with the doctrine and practice of the Synod and to share such information as part of a culture of care and support for church workers; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod affirm that timely access to counseling services may assist church workers in remaining in their calls and continuing faithful service to Christ’s Church through the proclamation of the Gospel; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod and districts be encouraged in the upcoming triennium to consider how to address the acute and growing need for more capacity in counseling and telehealth services that are confessionally and doctrinally aligned with the Synod in light of future advancements in telehealth services and the growing acceptance of these counseling services as beneficial to worker wellness; and that such encouragement be offered in a manner that respects Christian freedom, confidentiality, and pastoral discretion, without mandate or compulsion; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission, in cooperation with Concordia Plan Services and other appropriate Synod entities, be directed to study the possibility of establishing a synodwide telehealth counseling network staffed by licensed mental health professionals who are confessionally committed to the doctrine and practice of the Synod, with particular attention to ensuring affordability, confidentiality, and accessibility for church workers and their families across all districts.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, note a feasibility study not yet scoped to the point of estimating potential cost (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Commend Efforts to Serve Worker Wellness and Encourage Participation in Concordia Plan Services

RESOLUTION 3-05A

Overture 3-06 (*CW*, 301)

WHEREAS, It is a mission priority of the Synod to promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers; and

WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents (COP), LCMS Worker Wellness, and Concordia Plan Services (CPS) have collaborated to create a strategic plan that has been disseminated to districts pursuant to 2023 Resolution 1-06A, “To Direct Districts and Council of Presidents to Provide Strategic Plan for Addressing Wellness of Church Workers”; and

WHEREAS, The strategies involve the efforts of both professional church workers and the congregational lay leaders and ministry leaders; and

WHEREAS, Soldiers of the Cross has provided \$241,705 of financial assistance to 98 rostered church workers this past triennium, and Veterans of the Cross has provided \$717,751 to 30 recipients in the same period, demonstrating both the generosity of the church and the real and ongoing burdens borne by its servants; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 20 percent of rostered church workers are not covered by the CPS health plans; and

WHEREAS, The Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross crisis financial grants offered to church workers demonstrate that workers who are not covered by CPS health plans are vulnerable to significant adverse financial impact when there are serious health and medical needs of the workers and their family members; and

WHEREAS, The CPS mission statement is to “Serve ministries ... Care for workers ... So that the Word of God spreads” (“Purpose and Values,” concordiaplans.org/who-we-are/careers, accessed May 30, 2026); and

WHEREAS, CPS’s ability to fulfill its mission and hold down the rising costs of health insurance for workers is enhanced by its worker wellness programs and by increasing the number of workers enrolled in CPS; and

WHEREAS, The business practices, ethical posture, and church-worker wellness programs of CPS are governed by the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, CPS health plans are customized for the needs of church workers, the assets of the health plans are designed to bear the health burdens of the members (Gal. 6:2), and the health plans have varied financial options for Synod ministries; therefore be it

Resolved, That the COP, LCMS Worker Wellness, and CPS be commended and thanked for their work to provide leadership and a strategic plan, and for their collaboration on Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross grant programs; and be it further

Resolved, That districts, congregations, schools, and ministries not enrolled in a CPS health plan be encouraged to annually consider and compare their current health plan with those available through CPS; and be it finally

Resolved, That the lay leaders of Synod congregations, schools, and recognized service organizations be advised and encouraged to make use of resources, programs, and plans created by the districts, CPS, and LCMS Worker Wellness, and endeavor to form the local culture to be supportive of and caring for the holistic well-being of church workers, members, and visitors.

To Encourage Synod to Respond to the Growing Addiction Crisis

RESOLUTION 3-06A

Overture L3-09 (*TB*, 1:45–46)

WHEREAS, Addiction started with the original sin and the continuing temptation by Satan: “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5 NIV; see also Prov. 25:28; Matt. 26:41; Heb. 4:14–16); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul warns not to sin against one’s body (1 Cor. 6:12–20), Christians are called to obey civil law, including not purchasing or using illegal drugs (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17), and this warning was also given by James: “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” (James 4:17); and

WHEREAS, Deaths related to drug overdoses totaled almost 80,000 people in the U.S. in 2024, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least two-thirds of drug overdose deaths were linked to opioids (CDC, [cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db549.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db549.htm)); and

WHEREAS, More Americans died in 2024 due to opioid-related overdoses than the highest number of Americans killed in a single year (CDC, [cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20250514.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20250514.html)):

- by gun violence (48,830 in 2021 [CDC, [cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/firearms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/firearms.html)]);
- by vehicular death (54,589 in 1972 [Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates, 1899–2023, cdan.dot.gov/tsftables/Fatalities%20and%20Fatality%20Rates.pdf]);
- by HIV/AIDS (50,000 in 1995 [CDC, [cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046531.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046531.htm)]);
- in the combined Vietnam and Iraq Wars (62,651 casualties [Defense Casualty Analysis System, dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/conflictCasualties]);

and

WHEREAS, In addition to opioid-related addictions there is an increase in the use of other highly addictive street drugs such as methamphetamine. At the same time, legally obtainable substances are proving addictive. While alcohol use disorder remains high (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/alcohol-topics/alcohol-facts-and-statistics/alcohol-use-disorder-and-united-states-age-groups-and-demographic-characteristics), addiction to products such as inhalers and cough medicines, and other over-the-counter substances is increasing. There is also a trend in the availability of Narcan-resistant drugs (Brian Mann, “Historic decline in U.S. overdose deaths threatened by changing street drug supply,” *NPR*, April 14, 2026, [npr.org/2026/04/14/nx-s1-5783750/overdose-fentanyl-medetomidine-xylazine](https://www.npr.org/2026/04/14/nx-s1-5783750/overdose-fentanyl-medetomidine-xylazine)); and

WHEREAS, While addiction harms personal mental wellness, and physical well-being, addiction also negatively impacts families and communities, according to the Center for Addiction Research and Effective Solutions (AIR, air.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Big-Ideas-Housing-Social-Determinants-of-Addiction-August-2022.pdf). Substance abuse and addiction are significant contributing causes for homelessness and incarceration (National Institute on Drug Abuse, nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice); and

WHEREAS, Christians are vocationally called to minister to brothers and sisters in Christ struggling with sin (Gal. 6:1–2; James 5:19–20). God gives hope to all Christians who are struggling, including those dealing with addiction (1 Cor. 10:13; 1 John 2:15–17); and

WHEREAS, Recovery after years of addiction can be a long process; many in recovery often need job training, housing, healthcare, and guidance to obtain work; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) continue to identify and share ways churches and recognized service organizations can support restoring the hope of Christ to those impacted by addiction (Heb. 6:19–20), and report a summary of these findings and resources to the 2029 Synod convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM encourage each district to establish at least one new partnership with a faith-based care ministry for those suffering from addiction by the 2029 Synod convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention pray for those suffering from substance abuse and addiction (Rom. 12:11–12; Phil. 4:13).

4. LIFE TOGETHER

To Amend Bylaws to Refine Process for Creating Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphases

RESOLUTION 4-02A

Overture 4-12 (CW, 307–9)

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention (2023 Res. 4-02, “To Affirm and Continue *Making Disciples for Life* as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–2026 Triennium”) instructed the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission to offer a recommendation to the 2026 Synod convention for refining the process for adopting triennial mission and ministry emphases; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws require the Synod in convention to approve triennial mission and ministry emphases with a process that requires input from every circuit and district of the Synod (Bylaws 3.8.2.2, 3.8.3.2; 4.2.1 [b, d]; 5.2.3 [g], 5.3.1 [a][5]); and

WHEREAS, The mission boards of the Synod conducted extensive fraternal discussions with every district of the Synod over the past triennium about the work of the Synod and the triennial mission and ministry emphasis, including the procedure for developing triennial mission and ministry emphases; and

WHEREAS, These fraternal discussions with the districts concluded that the current procedure for developing triennial mission and ministry emphases has proven to be cumbersome and unworkable; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's mission boards and the Council of Presidents are to assist the President of the Synod in establishing the goals for mission and ministry of the Synod (Bylaws 3.3.1.1.1 [a], 3.8.2, 3.8.3); therefore be it

Resolved, That the two mission boards, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, and in continued fraternal dialogue with the districts, be charged with recommending to the Synod in convention triennial mission and ministry emphases for adoption; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.3.1.3 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Powers and Duties – Ecclesiastical and Administrative

3.3.1.3 The President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative.

...

(q) He shall collaborate with the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission in assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.8.2 and 3.8.2.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for National Mission

3.8.2 The Board for National Mission is charged with developing and determining policies for the coordination of and in support of district ministries which support congregations and schools (Bylaw 1.2.1 [n]). ~~These policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention.~~ Under the leadership of the President of the Synod, pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall assist in identifying the specific goals for the Office of National Mission. Policies determined by the board (implemented by staff) may include but not be limited to:

...

3.8.2.2 The Board for National Mission shall, during the course of each triennium between national conventions of the Synod, work with the Board for International Mission to gather pertinent and sufficient information from the Synod's members that will facilitate the boards' assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases, and shall, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, after fraternal dialogue with the districts, develop accordingly a joint overture to the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto. ~~The boards shall also provide a joint report in advance of the Synod's district conventions, offering ideas and guidance for proposing triennial mission and ministry emphases to the national convention.~~

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.8.3.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for International Mission

...

3.8.3.2 The Board for International Mission shall, during the course of each triennium between national conventions of the Synod, work with the Board for National Mission to gather pertinent and sufficient information from the Synod's members that will facilitate the boards' assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases, and shall, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, after fraternal dialogue with the districts, develop accordingly a joint overture to

the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto. ~~The boards shall also provide a joint report in advance of the Synod's district conventions, offering ideas and guidance for proposing triennial mission and ministry emphases to the national convention.~~
and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.2.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

4.2 District Conventions

4.2.1 Conventions of the districts shall afford opportunities for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information. They are the principal legislative assemblies, which amend the district's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, consider and take action on reports and overtures, and handle appropriate appeals.

(a) The conventions of the districts shall be governed by the bylaws adopted by the Synod for its conventions, insofar as these may be applicable.

~~(b) The district convention is the instrument to receive overtures (Bylaw 3.1.6.2), including overtures and recommendations for synodwide mission and ministry emphases submitted by member congregations and adopted by a circuit forum.~~

~~(c) Following in-depth study and discussion, the district convention shall act on the overtures and may, as determined by the convention, submit overtures to the national convention.~~

~~(d) The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention.~~

(e) Each district may adopt other regulations, provided these are not contrary to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

...

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 5.2.3 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

5.2 Circuit Visitors

...

5.2.3 Each circuit visitor shall assist the district president within the circuit.

...

(f) He shall seek to strengthen the spirit of cooperation among pastors, commissioned ministers, and congregations.

~~(g) He shall assist in the development and attainment of Synod-wide mission and ministry emphases.~~

(h) He shall assist the district president, as requested, in promoting and obtaining unanimous participation by congregations in the submission of annual statistical reports.

...

and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaw section 5.3 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

5.3 Circuit Forums

5.3.1 The circuit forum is the group which aids the process of keeping congregations, particularly the lay leaders, commissioned ministers, and pastors, supportive of one another in their common confession and mutually active in developing programs for the good of member congregations, in considering and recommending new work, and in suggesting improvements for services and programming at the national and district levels and is encouraged to meet at least twice a year.

(a) The circuit visitor shall endeavor to provide resources, opportunities, and assistance so God's people can grow in their faith.

(b) Among the functions which the circuit forum may perform are the following:

(1) To study the Scriptures and the Confessions in order to promote an evangelical spirit in our walking together.

...

(5) To serve as a setting to review and evaluate programs, plans, and long-range directions of the district and the Synod ~~and thus participate in the triennial process of suggesting, developing, and attaining the Synod's priorities and goals.~~

...

~~5.3.4 The circuit forum may also participate in the triennial process of suggesting, developing, and attaining the Synod's priorities and goals.~~

5.3.54 The circuit forum shall be qualified to submit overtures to national and district conventions.

To Clarify Oversight and Revitalize Role of Registered Service Organizations

RESOLUTION 4-04A

Report R1 (*CW*, 1–5); Overtures 4-32–35 (*CW*, 319–22); President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:28); Late Overture L4-57 (TB, 1:46–48)

WHEREAS, The 2016 Synod convention created a task force to review the current structure and recommend the best model for the Synod's relationship to recognized service organizations (RSOs) (Res. 4-03B, "To Convene Task Force to Review Recognized Service Organization Program and Bylaws," *Proceedings*, 146–47); and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention adopted the recommendation of the task force in Resolution 4-06A, "To Amend Bylaw Section 6.2 to Revitalize Synod's Recognized Service Organization Program" (*Proc.*, 137–42), and began implementing the vast new recommendations; and

WHEREAS, 2019 Resolution 4-06A (*ibid.*) granted RSOs numerous privileges, under the ecclesiastical oversight of district presidents who report any concerns to Synod's mission offices (Office of International Mission or Office of National Mission) (Bylaw 6.2.1 [b–c]); and

WHEREAS, The Synod Board of Directors (BOD), Board for International Mission, and Board for National Mission were charged with creating policy for RSO oversight, and implementation delegated to staff; and

WHEREAS, "Over the past five years, 115 organizations have been granted RSO status; in the same period, 77 have been terminated, denied or withdrawn. Of those 77, 49 organizations did not represent LCMS doctrine and practice adequately and RSO status was ended." (President's Report, Part 2, *Today's Business*, 1:28); and

WHEREAS, Some mercy service organizations (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]) have been influenced by law or controlling regulation, on occasion, to facilitate actions contrary to the Word of God; and

WHEREAS, Other organizations intentionally promote and facilitate actions contrary to the Word of God; and

WHEREAS, The role of and faithful work of RSOs are to be commended, celebrated, and encouraged; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod remain patient as the RSO Office and Synod continue implementing all the revisions from the 2016 task force and 2019 resolution that resulted in the current Bylaw section 6.2, "Recognized Service Organizations" in collaboration with the appropriate district president; and be it further

Resolved, That the RSO Office keep the BOD apprised of legal and regulatory constraints which may burden an RSO's religious exercise, and the BOD be encouraged to monitor this area for potential to stand with our organizations in the unfettered "extension of the divine mercy without compromising the church's scriptural and confessional standards" (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]), to which they may be entitled under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or other laws protecting religious liberty, and thus with those RSOs striving to remain faithful; and be it further

Resolved, That the RSO Office withdraw RSO status from organizations that intentionally promote actions contrary to the Word of God, including but not limited to unnatural or unbiblical family structures; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks for the work of our many faithful RSOs.

To Amend Bylaws to Reinstate Commission on Worship

RESOLUTION 4-06A

Overtures 4-23–31, 40–42, 46 (*CW*, 314–19, 324–27)

Preamble

The Word of God and the Sacraments are the means by which God has promised to deal with us (SA III VIII 10). It is by these means that justifying faith is obtained (AC V). In order to obtain this faith, the ministry of purely teaching the Gospel and rightly administering the Sacraments was established and continues in the church, serving as the marks of the true Christian Church and its unity (AC V; VII).

The public teaching of God’s Word and administration of the Sacraments in Christian congregations is commonly referred to as “worship.” Such worship is an essential and necessary public activity for every Christian congregation. In faithful public worship the following common purposes of the members of the Synod (congregations and individual ministers) are enacted: to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith” (Const. Art. III 1), to strengthen one another “in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God” (Const. Art. III 2), to educate and nourish Christians of all ages (Const. Art. III 5), and to recognize, promote, express, conserve, and defend confessional unity in the true faith (Const. Art. III 6). “Worship” necessarily encompasses a variety of faithful church practices and customs. Holy Scripture does not require precise uniformity in these. Neither is the true unity of the Church to be found by outward uniformity (AC VII 2). Nevertheless, the Synod from inception has consistently affirmed that a recognizable uniformity of order and church practice is desirable and worthy of pursuit (Const. Art. III 7).

In fact, the Synod has found this pursuit of recognizable uniformity and faithfulness of such importance that it has conditioned membership in the Synod concerning the prayers and rites, songs and hymns used in worship. The Synod requires (based on the confessional basis of Const. Art. II) that its members “exclusive[ly] use ... doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” (Const. Art. VI 4).

Furthermore, we have the clear teaching of Holy Scripture regarding being united by God’s Word in worship. For example, Scripture teaches that we are to “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). The unity we have in God’s Word (John 17:20–21; Eph. 4:11–13) finds expression in our worship.

To assist its members in these things, the Synod adopts official hymnbooks and agenda and gives attention to the conduct of rites, preaching, administration of the Sacraments, and music by her members (e.g., 2016 Res. 4-04A, “To Appeal to the LCMS Congregations, Workers, and Institutions within Christian Freedom for Love’s Sake to Retain a Common Order of Service for the Lord’s Supper”). Recognizing the vital importance of worship, the Synod maintained a Commission on Worship from the 1930s until 1981, although it was first acknowledged in Synod Bylaws in 1960. After a brief hiatus, the Commission on Worship was reinstated in 1983 and continued until the Synod’s restructuring in 2010. The Commission on Worship was historically appointed in its entirety by the President of the Synod.

Such a Commission on Worship is clearly desirable: to coordinate, guide, and instruct the Synod by efforts that faithfully carry forward the Lutheran heritage of worship in the present day; to assure broad input and knowledgeable expertise from the Synod’s membership in matters of worship and future hymnal projects; to coordinate the aims of the Synod, the President of the Synod, and Concordia Publishing House; to pursue what is excellent in each new generation so that the church’s song would neither become novel nor stagnant; and to do so faithfully and cost-effectively.

WHEREAS, Worship in Word and Sacrament is a mark of the church and as such is a “vital function of the church and as such its importance must be strongly emphasized” (1983 Res. 5-06, “To Reinstate Commission on Worship”); and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of Synod, reflecting this emphasis, directs congregations of Synod “to strive for uniformity in church practice,” to “develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with [the Synod’s] common profession of faith” (Const. Art. III), and to make “exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” (Const. Art. VI 4); and

WHEREAS, The Synod was served regularly by a Commission on Worship prior to 2010 to assist it in meeting such objectives and conditions for membership, and faithfully in the interim by the LCMS Office of National Mission’s Worship Ministry area; and

WHEREAS, With the elimination of the Commission on Worship in 2010, there now exist no bylaw guidelines or processes for the production and adoption of agendas, hymnbooks, supplements, or other worship resources for use by the members of Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reinstate a Commission on Worship as a separate commission; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.9.1 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

3.9 Commissions

3.9.1 The commissions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are the following:

1. Commission on Constitutional Matters
2. Commission on Doctrinal Review
3. Commission on Handbook
4. Commission on Theology and Church Relations
5. Commission on Worship

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.9.6 be added as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Commission on Worship

3.9.6 The Commission on Worship exists to provide guidance and materials in matters of worship to the members of the Synod to assist them in their responsibility to make exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school (Const. Art. VI 4) and in their objective to strive for uniformity in church practice and appreciate a variety of responsible practices and customs in harmony with the Synod's common profession of faith (Const. Art. III 7).

3.9.6.1 The Commission on Worship shall consist of seven voting members including ordained and commissioned ministers and laypersons:

1. One ordained minister who is a parish pastor
2. One commissioned minister who is a director of parish music or parish teacher
3. One layperson
4. One additional ordained minister
5. One additional musician who is either a commissioned minister or a layperson
6. Two additional members

3.9.6.2 The commission may solicit the assistance of additional persons who are well qualified to render valuable and necessary service to the church through the commission. Such persons may serve in an advisory capacity.

3.9.6.3 The members of the Commission on Worship shall be selected as follows:

- (a) The parish pastor, the Director of Parish music or parish teacher, and the layperson shall be elected by a convention of the Synod.
- (b) The additional ordained minister, additional musician, and two additional members shall be appointed by the President of the Synod in consultation with the Council of Presidents.
- (c) Vacancies that occur in the positions that were filled by the President shall be again filled by the President in consultation with the Council of Presidents.
- (d) In the case of vacancies that occur in positions that were filled by election of a national convention of the Synod, the appointing body shall be the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which shall follow the nominating procedures for filling vacancies in board and commission positions elected by the Synod as outlined in the Bylaws of Synod.

3.9.6.4 The Commission on Worship may create an executive director position and fill it in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies of corporate Synod.

(a) The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.

(1) Upon the formation of the Commission on Worship, the appointment of the executive director shall be made by the President of the Synod. Thereafter, the slate of candidates for the initial

appointment of the executive director shall be selected by the commission in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the President of the Synod.

(2) In the event of a vacancy, the commission and the President of the Synod shall act expeditiously to fill the vacancy. This commission shall present its list of candidates to the President.

(3) The commission shall conduct an annual review of its executive director and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.

(4) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the commission takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.

(b) Any interim executive director appointment by the commission shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of the executive director.

(1) Such interim appointee must be approved by the President of the Synod in consultation with the commission and may not serve more than 18 months.

(2) Such interim appointee shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis, excepting the process of filling a vacancy in Bylaw 3.9.6.4 (a)(2) being followed, with the interim appointee having been included on the commission's list.

(c) The executive director of the commission shall normally attend all meetings of the commission except when his own position is being considered.

(d) The commission may create and fill other staff positions in accordance with the human resources policies of corporate Synod adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5. Such staff may attend meetings of the commission upon request of the commission.

3.9.6.5 The commission shall embrace, recognize, and pursue opportunities to provide guidance, resources, and events that deepen understanding, participation, and excellence in the preparation and conduct of Lutheran worship.

(a) It shall consult with the practical theology and the music departments of Synod colleges, universities, and seminaries to assist them to establish and affirm principles and practices in liturgy, church music, and church art that best express the true confessional theology of worship in Word and Sacrament of the Lutheran church.

(b) It shall support the growth of congregations' and church workers' discernment in selecting worship resources that edify the church.

(c) It shall facilitate the development, adoption, and revision of agenda and hymnbooks to be adopted as official agenda and hymnbooks of the Synod.

(1) All agenda and hymnbooks that are to be accepted as official agenda and hymnbooks of the Synod shall be given such status only by a convention of the Synod.

(2) All such agenda and hymnbooks shall be considered by the convention only after a process of exposure and testing decided upon by the Synod in convention.

(3) It shall represent the Synod in the preparation of agenda and hymnbooks in which the Synod may engage in cooperation with other synods.

(4) Revisions to adopted official agenda and hymnbooks shall be made only by a convention of the Synod after requesting an evaluation and subsequent recommendations by the Commission on Worship.

(d) It shall review and at its discretion exercise approval over all material related to corporate worship in liturgy and hymnody made available through the Synod's various boards, mission offices, and commissions. The commission shall be available to review materials from recognized service organizations upon request.

(e) It shall maintain regular coordination and consultation with Concordia Publishing House to provide guidance and alignment of its worship-related offerings.

and be it further

Resolved, That the 2026 Synod convention, upon adoption, would proceed with the filling of the elected positions on the newly constituted Commission on Worship, and, in order to achieve continuity through a plan of staggered terms, the constituting election shall elect the layperson to a half term of three years and the remaining elected members to a full six-year term; and be it finally

Resolved, That the following overtures, which request action for which responsibilities are herein designated to the Commission on Worship, be referred to that Commission upon its constitution for consideration and possible response: Ov. 4-24–31, 40–42, 46.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate the annual cost to be \$175,000, including regrading the LCMS Worship director position to executive director, travel for quarterly commission meetings, part-time chaplaincy/counseling support for the International Center previously handled by the LCMS Worship director, and misc. other costs (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Direct the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to Examine Current Political and Social Issues

RESOLUTION 4-08A

Overtures 4-13–22 (CW, 309–14)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture declares that God created all humanity in His image (Gen 1:27) and that all believers are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28), condemns all forms of racial hatred as sinful (1 John 3:15), and exhorts us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:36–40; James 2:1, 8–9); and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has regularly spoken to political and social issues affecting Christ’s Church (2023 Res. 11-02A, “To Reject All Forms of Racism and Affirm Our Witness to All People”; 2019 Res. 11-04A, “To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities”; 2016 Res. 1-06, “To Celebrate Legacy of Rosa J. Young and Encourage Launch of Rosa J. Young International Academies”; 2013 Res. 3-09, “To Continue to Support and Promote Black Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod”; 1995 Res. 2-05A, “To Commend for Study the CTCR Document Racism and the Church”; 1992 Res. 3-03, “To Combat All Racism”; 1983 Res. 1-20, “To Encourage Bringing the Gospel to Jewish People”; 1983 Res. 3-09, “To Clarify Position on Anti-Semitism”; 1981 Res. 8-07, “To Oppose Racism and Violence”; 1979 Res. 4-11, “To Reaffirm Efforts to Combat Racism”; 1977 Res. 10-18A, “To Make Every Effort to Eliminate Racism”; 1973 Res. 9-22, “To Continue Efforts to Combat Racism”; 1971 Res. 9-32, “To Encourage Christian Action to Combat Racism”); and

WHEREAS, In recent years, certain ideologies and distortions have proliferated, leading to widespread confusion and harmful division especially in the church; and

WHEREAS, Current political and social issues such as racism (White supremacy and Kinism), antisemitism and specific aberrations associated with Christian Nationalism, demonstrate an urgent need for theologically sound resources to address these concerns, providing faithful care for those harmed by these ideologies and distortions; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention condemn all forms of racial hatred as sinful (Acts 17:26; 1 John 3:15); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to examine such political and social issues, especially racism (White supremacy and Kinism), antisemitism, and Christian Nationalism, providing definitions, updating documents, and preparing new documents by the end of this triennium for the edification of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors and congregations make use of these resources to foster repentance, reconciliation, and Christ-centered unity proclaiming that for those who belong to Christ by faith, “There is neither Jew nor Greek ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

To Amend Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)

RESOLUTION 5-06A

President's Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:30)

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(1–3) speaks of “formal” recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship, which suggests that the Synod also *informally* recognizes fellowship, a confusing phrase understood by certain other churches to mean practicing church fellowship without recognized unity in the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(1–3) speaks of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations' (CTCR) “approval” within the church fellowship recognition process which, more accurately, is the CTCR's recommendation that the Synod in convention approve the recognition of such church fellowship; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

...

3.9.5.2.2 The Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall assist the President of the Synod at his request in discharging his constitutional responsibilities for maintaining doctrinal integrity as he relates to other church bodies.

...

(b) It shall address itself to potential fellowship and/or partner church relations as follows:

(1) ~~Formal recognition~~ Recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the Synod and another church body shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after ~~the approval of the commission~~ recommends such recognition.

(2) ~~Formal recognition~~ Recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the Synod and a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) may be declared by the Synod President only after ~~the approval of the commission~~ recommends such recognition and the Synod President consults ~~consultation~~ with the Praesidium. Such recognition shall be subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.

(3) ~~Formal recognition~~ Recognition of a mission of the Synod as a self-governing partner church shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod by the Board for International Mission only after ~~the approval of the commission~~ recommends such recognition.

To Reaffirm the Synod's Positions on Men and Women in the Church

RESOLUTION 5-08A

Overtures 5-30, 35 (*CW*, 354–55, 357)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture clearly teaches that the pastoral office is reserved for qualified men, and therefore prohibits women from publicly preaching, teaching, or leading worship in the assembled congregation (1 Timothy 2; 1 Corinthians 11; 1 Corinthians 14); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has repeatedly affirmed this biblical teaching and opposed the ordination of women into the pastoral office as contrary to the Word of God (1971 Res. 2-04, “To Withhold Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office”; 1977 Res. 3-15, “To Reaffirm the Synod's Position on Women with Reference to the Pastoral Office”; 1986 Res. 3-10, “To Reaffirm the Position of Synod on Ordination of Women”; 1998 Res. 3-25A, “To Affirm Position of Synod that Only Men May Hold the Pastoral Office”); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has urged against practices such as women serving as elders or assisting in the distribution of the Lord's Supper, due to potential confusion with the distinctive functions of the pastoral office (1989 Res. 3-10, “To Address Practice of Women Serving Holy Communion”; 2016 Res. 5-14, “To Reaffirm Biblical Teaching on Man and Woman in the Church”); and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has published many documents pertaining to the appropriate roles of men and women in the Christian Church that explain these positions, including *Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* (1985), *The Creator's Tapestry* (2009), *CTCR Review of 2005 Task Force Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices* (2014), and *The Order of Creation: Theology, History, Definition* (2022); therefore be it

Resolved, That these CTCR documents be commended to the Synod for study and guidance, especially as concerns arise over the ordination of women, women's board and committee membership, and the role of women in the worship life of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod again unequivocally reaffirm its opposition to the ordination of women to the pastoral office as contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage men, as it did in 2016 Resolution 5-14, "to continue to exercise leadership in their congregations even as they are encouraged to exercise their God-given leadership in a God-pleasing manner in their homes"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage women to exercise their Spirit-given gifts in faithful service in scripturally appropriate ways within congregations, districts, and Synod structures to the glory of God and the building up of Christ's Body; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod commend the faithful service of women throughout its history and in the present, and actively encourage women to serve the church in various commissioned and lay vocations, including but not limited to: teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, parish assistants, and directors of church ministries (Bylaw 2.6.1.1), as well as many volunteer roles of leadership, mercy, witness, and support.

To Reaffirm Sanctity of Human Life Regarding Practice of In Vitro Fertilization

RESOLUTION 5-11A

Overtures 5-19–21 (*CW*, 347–49)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that human life is a sacred gift from God, who is the Creator of all life (Gen. 1:26–28; Psalm 139:13–16); and

WHEREAS, Christ sanctified and redeemed all human beings, including human embryos, in His incarnation and conception by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, His shed blood upon the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20–23); and

WHEREAS, The tradition of the Christian Church, in accordance with the creation order revealed in Holy Scripture, has consistently upheld the sanctity of human life and the dignity of procreation as an act that belongs within the marital union between a man and a woman (Gen. 1:27–28; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 19:4–6); and

WHEREAS, The practice of in vitro fertilization (IVF) involves the creation of human embryos outside the womb, which can result in the needless destruction or indefinite freezing of embryos; and

WHEREAS, IVF can commodify human life by treating embryos as objects to be purchased, stored, or discarded, instead of recognizing that life is a gift of God; and

WHEREAS, The desire for procreation of children is good, right, and godly in the context of marriage; and

WHEREAS, The Synod recognizes the pain of childlessness and that some people, desiring to have children, may have used IVF without a full understanding of any potential theological implications; and

WHEREAS, Every child, regardless of how he or she is conceived, is created by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, and called by God the Holy Spirit to be in an eternal relationship with Him by faith; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod condemn the needless loss of life that can occur through the use of IVF; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage married couples struggling to bear children to seek pastoral care and guidance before pursuing reproductive technologies, and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage pastors and other church workers to serve married couples who have troubled consciences with respect to prior use of IVF and minister to them and to all people such that they may receive the comfort of Christ and His redeeming love; and be it further

Resolved, That all our congregations faithfully and compassionately speak to the God-given value and worth of all human beings; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod urge its members to uphold the biblical understanding of procreation as a sacred act within the marital union; and be it finally

Resolved, That this matter be referred to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in order to provide theological clarity and give a clear foundation for a doctrinal resolution.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Give Thanks to God for 1700th Anniversary of First Council of Nicaea

RESOLUTION 5-13A

Overtures 5-37, 5-44 (CW, 358–59, 362)

WHEREAS, The year 2025 marked the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea, its having begun in Asia Minor on May 20, A.D. 325; and

WHEREAS, The First Council of Nicaea opposed Arianism and confessed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the Scriptures, that the Son is *homoousios* (“of the same substance”) with the Father, equal in power, majesty, and glory; and

WHEREAS, The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are in concord with the ancient symbols of the faith, including the Nicene Creed; and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continues to confess the doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to the Holy Scriptures and the ecumenical creeds, especially the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which deal specifically with the nature of the eternal relations between the persons of the Holy Trinity; and

WHEREAS, Heresies, errors, and other potential misunderstandings of the doctrine taught and confessed in these ancient ecumenical creeds are in need of renewed attention and response, including discussion surrounding the eternal subordination of the Son (Carl L. Beckwith, “Eternal Subordination of the Son: Arianism Past and Present,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 89, no. 4 [October 2025]: 307–28) and modern social trinitarian teachings that view God as an inherently relational being, emphasizing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct, conscious persons with three distinct wills in an eternal, perichoretic, loving communion who serve as a model for human relationships, among others; and

WHEREAS, Certain Christian groups have made a mockery of the ecumenical creeds by changing their language to accommodate views at odds with biblical theology, morality, and views of gender and sexuality; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage ongoing catechesis of pastors, church workers, and congregations in the classical trinitarian doctrine confessed by the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, for the sake of the Gospel and the right confession of the Triune God, especially as it is expounded in Luther’s catechisms; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod task the Commission on Theology and Church Relations with producing a study of the texts, theology, and usage of the three ecumenical creeds and of the contemporary theological errors challenging those creeds and their doctrine for the sake of the edification of the church.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

To Amend Bylaws to Enhance Responsibilities of Synod Mission Boards and To Direct Board of Directors, Board for National Mission, Board for International Mission, and Chief Mission Officer to Review Overture 9-11

RESOLUTION 9-16A

Overture 9-11 (CW, 471–73)

WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention made substantial changes to the structure and organization of the national Synod office that impacted significantly the mission operations of the Synod. These changes included creating the Chief Mission Officer (CMO) position and creating the Board for National Mission (BNM) and the Board for International Mission (BIM). The bylaws governing the BNM and BIM have been in effect for 15 years, allowing time to assess their overall efficiency and effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, The CMO is ultimately responsible to the President of the Synod, but also is subject to the actions of the BNM and BIM; and

WHEREAS, Current bylaws provide that the BNM and BIM have responsibility for developing and determining policies impacting the Synod's national and international mission operations but have limited influence on the selection of the CMO, limited ability to influence the budget, and limited ability to ensure proper implementation of the policies they develop; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable and would assist in the overall coordination and efficiency of the Synod's mission operations to better align the responsibility of the BNM and BIM with the authority given to the BNM and BIM, and enhance the ability of the BNM and BIM to better advance the Synod's operations both within the United States and worldwide; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.8.2.1, 3.8.2.4, 3.8.3.1 and 3.8.3.4 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for National Mission

...

3.8.2.1 The Board for National Mission shall have ~~oversight of supervision of~~ the implementation of policies adopted by the board and implemented by the Office of National Mission for the coordination of and in support of district ministries which support congregations and schools. The board shall annually review and ~~endorse~~ approve the Office of National Mission strategic plan and review and ~~provide input on~~ approve the Office of National Mission initial annual budget proposal prior to its submission for approval by the Board of Directors. The board shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the President of the Synod regarding doctrine and administration consistent with the President's responsibility under Constitution Art. XI B 1–4 (also Constitution Art. XI B 7; Bylaws 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.3) between conventions of the Synod and ultimately shall be responsible to the Synod in convention (Constitution Art. XI A 1–2).

...

Office of National Mission

3.8.2.4 The Office of National Mission implements the policies of the Board for National Mission under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer and the Board for National Mission and shall be responsible for domestic ministries that especially serve congregations and schools through the districts of the Synod. Such district ministries may include but not be limited to:

- Lutheran school ministries and accreditation
- human care and domestic mercy efforts
- stewardship
- evangelism
- church planting and revitalization
- youth ministry

...

Board for International Mission

...

3.8.3.1 The Board for International Mission shall have ~~oversight~~^{supervision} of the implementation of policies adopted by the board and implemented by the Office of International Mission for the coordination of and in support of ministries of the Synod in foreign countries. The board shall annually review and ~~endorse~~^{approve} the Office of International Mission strategic plan and review and ~~provide input on~~^{approve} the Office of International Mission ~~initial~~^{initial} annual budget proposal prior to its submission for approval by the Board of Directors. The board shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the President of the Synod regarding doctrine and administration consistent with the President's responsibility under Constitution Art. XI B 1–4 (Constitution Art. XI B 7; Bylaws 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.3) between conventions of the Synod and ultimately shall be responsible to the Synod in convention (Constitution Art. XI A 1–2).

...

Office of International Mission

3.8.3.4 The Office of International Mission implements the policies of the Board for International Mission under the supervision of the Board for International Mission and the Chief Mission Officer and shall be responsible for the work of the Synod in foreign countries. Such responsibilities may include but not be limited to:

- placement and support of foreign missionaries
- establishment and maintenance of international schools
- coordination of international relief efforts
- policy recommendations to the Board for International Mission
- support and encouragement of international partner churches in conjunction with the office of the President

...

and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Directors, BNM, BIM, and the CMO together review the remaining proposed bylaw changes contained in Overture 9-11 and, if necessary, recommend structural changes to the Synod convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That they bring these recommendations to the 2029 Synod convention.

NEW FLOOR COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

To Call Upon the AALC to Honor the Bonds of Fellowship and Resolve Matters Threatening the Unity of Doctrine and Practice

RESOLUTION 5-15

Report R1.1 (*CW*, 5–15); Overture 5-09 (*CW*, 341)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) recognized church fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) at its 2007 convention (Res. 3-01, “To Declare Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the American Association of Lutheran Churches”), on the basis of full agreement in doctrine and practice, a fellowship for which the Synod gives thanks to God and earnestly desires to continue in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3); and

WHEREAS, Since that time, the AALC has received into its membership certain pastors and congregations previously removed from the LCMS for cause, or denied reinstatement, or otherwise separated from the LCMS while not in good standing, without their first being reinstated into the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The AALC’s actions have raised concerns within the LCMS about our continuing agreement in doctrine and practice and about our ability to work productively together toward real reconciliation as sister churches; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention solemnly call upon the AALC to honor the fellowship it holds with the LCMS, and to rectify the situation of the pastors and congregations it has received from the LCMS without prior resolution of the matters at issue concerning them according to LCMS bylaws; and be it further

Resolved, That until these situations are resolved, the Secretary of the Synod shall compile a list for use by the district presidents identifying all clergy and congregations removed for cause or otherwise separated from the LCMS while not in good standing and yet received into membership in the AALC without prior resolution of the matters at issue concerning them according to LCMS bylaws; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod, as the chief ecumenical officer, continue in formal dialogue with the AALC regarding this matter and any other issue(s) in which the unity of doctrine and practice between the LCMS and the AALC is in question; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the Synod report to the 2029 Synod convention whether there is unity in doctrine and practice with the AALC or whether the differences between the LCMS and the AALC are such that the basis for church fellowship no longer exists.

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

To Amend Bylaw 3.12.2 to Elect the Synod President at Convention

RESOLUTION 9-18

Overtures 9-21–22 (*CW*, 477–80); President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:34); President’s Report, Part 3 (*TB*, 3:TBD)

WHEREAS, The voting process for President of the Synod was shifted away from the Synod’s highest legislative authority, that is the Synod in convention, to the congregations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, For most of the Synod’s history, the President of the Synod was elected by the convention; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention changed the longstanding practice of electing the Synod President at the convention and conferred that right to congregations using electronic voting (Res. 8-17, “To Elect the Synod President” [*Proc.*, 167]); and

WHEREAS, The move to direct representation has seen decreased registration in every election since this process was adopted, to wit:

- The 2013 presidential election saw only 8,201 registered electors, and only 6,432 votes cast, the latter, representing only 62.16 percent of theoretical maximum participation (2013 *Today's Business*, 2:221);
- The 2016 presidential election saw only 7,348 registered electors, and only 6,157 votes cast, the latter, representing only 60.76 percent of theoretical maximum participation (2016 *Today's Business*, 2:334);
- The 2019 presidential election saw only 6,449 registered electors, and only 5,823 votes cast, the latter, representing only 58.97 percent of theoretical maximum participation (2019 *Today's Business*, 2B:239);
- The 2023 presidential election saw only 6,053 registered electors, and only 5,000 votes cast, the latter, representing only 53.78 percent of theoretical maximum participation (2023 *Today's Business*, 2B:286);

and

WHEREAS, For the 2026 presidential election, “of the Synod’s 5,046 parishes (accounting for combination of 5,629 member congregations into multi-congregation parishes) eligible to vote at the time of the election, 2,956 (58.6%) registered at least one voter by the deadline, compared to 62.6% in 2023. Of the 5,046 parishes, 895 lacked a registerable pastor during the registration period and 1,054 were without an eligible voting pastor at the time of election, collectively leaving 1,078 parishes with no pastoral vote to register or cast. The total number of *possible* eligible voters for the election was therefore 9,014. Of this estimated maximum, 5,478 voters (60.8%, compared to 65.1% in 2023 and 65.3% in 2019) were registered by their parishes and reported to Election-America, including 2,653 pastors and 2,825 laypersons. Summarizing the above, 5,256 voters (2,597 pastors and 2,659 laypersons, collectively representing 2,907 parishes), cast at least one vote in the series of ballots for an overall registered-and-eligible voting rate of 96.0% (compared to 82.6% in 2023 and 90.3% in 2019, both completed in single rounds) (2026 *Today's Business*, 2B:259); and

WHEREAS, The longstanding method of presidential election by convention delegates served the Synod well for generations, providing deliberative engagement, theological reflection, and real-time responsiveness to the church’s needs; and

WHEREAS, The entrusted Synod convention delegates currently elect other Synod officers at the convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the election of the Synod President be conducted by delegates to the Synod convention; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.12.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Elections of President and First Vice-President

...

~~3.12.2.3 The Secretary of the Synod shall compile and maintain the voters list for the election of the President of the Synod. This list and any of its parts shall not be disseminated.~~

~~(a) This voters list shall include:~~

~~(1) the pastor of each member congregation or multi-congregation parish (assisting pastors are not eligible)~~

~~(2) a lay person from the congregation or parish~~

~~(b) The congregation or parish shall present to the Secretary of Synod 90 days prior to the election, via a secure and verifiable method provided by the Secretary, the voter(s) selected by the congregation or parish, as well as an attestation by two of the congregation’s officers that the voter(s) are properly authorized by the congregation to vote on its behalf. If a congregation or parish has more than one pastor eligible to vote, the congregation shall designate which pastor will cast a vote on behalf of the congregation.~~

~~(c) If one or both voters are unavailable, congregations shall be provided opportunity to select substitute voters up to a deadline designated by the Secretary.~~

~~(d) The registration status of congregations shall be made available to respective district presidents for the sole purpose of their encouraging registration for greater congregational participation. The registration status of congregations shall not be further disseminated.~~

~~3.12.2.4 Six weeks prior to the national convention, the Secretary of the Synod shall provide, via a secure and verifiable method, opportunity for two voting delegates from each congregation, as determined according to Bylaw 3.12.2.3, to vote for one of the candidates for President. The Secretary shall, with the approval~~

of the Board of Directors of the Synod, obtain the assistance necessary to accomplish this task. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, a second or succeeding ballots are required for a majority; the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the ballot, and another vote shall be taken in the same manner.

~~3.12.2.5 Following the completion of the election and at least two weeks prior to the convention, the Secretary shall notify the candidates of the results of the ballot(s). He shall thereafter also make the results known to the public. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.~~

3.12.2.3 Prior to all other elections, the convention shall elect the President.

3.12.2.4 Each voting delegate shall be entitled to vote for one of the candidates for President. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

(a) If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the four candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be retained on the ballot, and another vote shall be taken.

(b) Thereafter, the candidate receiving the smallest number of votes shall be eliminated on each subsequent ballot until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.

3.12.2.65...

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

To Give Thanks to God for 125 Years of Gospel Ministry, Partner Churches, and Mission in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION 2-05

Resolution 2-05 (*TB*, 1:74)

To insert, at *TB* 1:75, after line 3, the additional *whereas*:

WHEREAS, God has been working through faithful LCMS clergy, congregants, and community members from Latin America and Caribbean regions to do vital work for the kingdom, even as they are losing their protected and religious worker status; therefore be it

To insert, at *TB* 1:75, after line 17, the additional *resolved*:

Resolved, That Synod entities, such as the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, are encouraged to leverage their religious liberty advocacy and lobby the United States government to reinstate R1 Religious Worker visas to currently suspended Latin American and Caribbean countries; and be it finally

Joshua Salzberg
Lay Delegate, Pacific Southwest District

SLATE OF CANDIDATES

The 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (2026)

Office / Candidate	1 st Ballot	2 nd Ballot	3 rd Ballot	4 th Ballot
First Vice-President of the Synod				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. Christopher S. Esget (EN)				
2. Alfonso O. Espinosa (PSW)				
3. Eric T. Lange (NOW)				
4. Peter K. Lange (MO)				
5. Don R. (Richard) Stuckwisch Jr. (IN)				
Regional Vice-President				
Central Region				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. Benjamin T. (Ben) Ball (SI)				
2. Joel D. Biermann (MO)				
3. Peter J. Brock (IN)				
4. Jeffrey P. Cloeter (MO)				
5. Michael P. Schuermann (CI)				
East-Southeast Region				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. Wally M. Arp (SELC)				
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)				
3. Jeffrey E. Skopak (SE)				
4. Deric A. Taylor (NJ)				
5. Luke T. Zimmerman (EN)				
Great Lakes Region				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. Mark D. Brandt (MI)				
2. Jamison J. Hardy (EN)				
3. David P. Ramirez (SW)				
4. Eric C. Skovgaard (SW)				
5. Sean A. Willman (MI)				
Great Plains Region				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. David C. Mumme (MNS)				
2. Nabil S. Nour (SD)				
3. Matthew R. Richard (ND)				
4. Scott C. Sailer (SD)				
5. Steven D. Turner (IW)				
West-Southwest Region				
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)				
1. Timothy P. (Tim) Ahlman (PSW)				
2. Alfonso O. Espinosa (PSW)				
3. Bradley W. Jurischk (TX)				
4. Eric T. Lange (NOW)				
5. Yohannes A. Mengsteab (TX)				

Secretary of the Synod*Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)*

1. Richard C. Rudowske Jr. (MO)
2. John W. Sias (MO)

LCMS Board of Directors**Central Region***Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Andrew N. Grams (MDS)
2. Aaron J. Silletto (IN)
3. Kevin W. Washburn (MDS)

West-Southwest Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Trey Cox (PSW)
2. Jerald L. Folkerts (RM)
3. Stephen Reavis (TX)
4. Jesse L. Yow Jr. (CNH)

At-Large*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Thomas J. Deadrick (SD)
2. David C. Eastburn (IE)
3. John W. Edson (MNS)

At-Large*Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Nathan T. Domsch (NEB)
2. Jay A. Krause (SI)
3. Jan W. Lohmeyer (SO)

Board for National Mission**Central Region***Ordained or Commissioned Minister**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Douglas L. Rutt (MO)
2. Michael P. Schuermann (CI)

Great Lakes Region*Ordained or Commissioned Minister**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Peter C. Bender (SW)
2. Miriam R. Yakimow (MI)

West-Southwest Region*Ordained or Commissioned Minister**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Kevin W. Austin (PSW)
2. Thomas E. Chryst (TX)
3. Neil S. Vanderbush (TX)

East-Southeast Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Rande T. Casaday (EN)
2. David L. Daniels (SE)
3. Karen A. Dowbnia (EN)

Great Plains Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Vernon W. Kettelhake (NEB)
2. Sarah Rausch (SD)

Board for International Mission**East-Southeast Region***Ordained or Commissioned Minister**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. James A. Douthwaite (SELC)
2. Gregory D. Jans (NJ)
3. Rachel E. Jaseph (SE)

Great Plains Region*Ordained or Commissioned Minister**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Richard X. Her (MNS)
2. Daniel Preus (MNN)
3. Brent D. Smith (NEB)

Central Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Adam D. Fosse (KS)
2. Seth R. Hinz (MO)

Great Lakes Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Kelly Bone (MI)
2. John L. Powers (SW)

West-Southwest Region*Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Richard P. Fielitz Jr. (CNH)
2. Terence Lung (CNH)

Commission on Theology and Church Relations*Ordained Minister (parish pastor)**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. Andrew C. Kennell (MO)
2. Martin R. Noland (CNH)
3. Mark P. Surburg (SI)

Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Keith G. Chuvala (TX)
2. Paul P. Edmon (NE)

Concordia Historical Institute**Board of Governors***Ordained Minister (elect 2, 6-year term)*

1. Rodney A. Benkendorf (MO)
2. Mark A. Loest (MI)
3. David P. Ramirez (SW)
4. Robert V. Roethemeyer (IN)

*Commissioned Minister or Layperson**(elect 1, 6-year term)*

1. David Duesenberg (MO)
2. Alessandro Mereaglia (NOW)
3. Matthew C. Phillips (NEB)

Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors

Layperson (elect 4, 6-year term)

1. Heidi K. Abegg (EN)
2. Jeff Bull (IW)
3. Thomas R. Halvorson (MT)
4. Mark Hemingway (EN)
5. Seth R. Hinz (MO)
6. Noreen L. Linke (RM)
7. Sarah Rausch (SD)
8. William M. Thompson II (MO)

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod Board of Directors

Ordained or Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Michael L. Kumm (SD)
2. Kevin D. Robson (MO)
3. Blaise C. Sedney (SE)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Jason Behr (SW)
2. Matthew W. Hurtienne (EN)
3. Julie A. Johnson (SI)
4. Jonathan H. Kramer (MO)
5. Gretchen A. Roberts (MDS)
6. Ryan Weir (KS)

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation Board of Trustees

Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Mark L. Huff (MI)
2. Todd C. Riordan (IN)

Layperson (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Glenn R. Pittsford (TX)
2. Franklin E. Simek Jr. (SI)
3. Mark O. Swenson (MNS)

Concordia University System Board of Directors

Ordained Minister (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Jacob C. Bobby (SD)
2. Matthew E. Borrasso (SE)
3. Mark S. Nuckols (SW)

Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne, Ind.) Board of Regents

Ordained Minister (elect 2, 6-year term)

1. Randall L. Golter (IE)
2. Timothy M. Klinkenberg (PSW)
3. Korey D. Maas (MI)
4. Jeffrey E. Skopak (SE)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Matthew C. Janssen (MO)
2. Mark W. Meehl (NEB)

Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Elizabeth R. Killinger (TX)
2. Michael D. Lange (PSW)
3. Christian A. Preus (MNS)

Concordia Seminary

(St. Louis, Mo.) Board of Regents

Ordained Minister (elect 2, 6-year term)

1. Joel A. Brondos (CI)
2. Warren W. Graff (RM)
3. Bruce E. Keseman (SI)
4. Richard C. Rudowske Jr. (MO)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Sarah E. Gaffney (SI)
2. Michael S. Staub (TX)

Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Michelle M. Kazmierczak (IN)
2. Noreen L. Linke (RM)
3. Mark O. Stern (NI)

Concordia University Chicago (River Forest, Ill.) Board of Regents

Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Matthew D. Bean (SE)
2. Rene G. Castillero (SI)
3. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. (IN)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Jeremy T. Geidel (NEB)
2. Nathanael Hahn (WY)
3. Paul R. Steinhaus (NW)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Alicia K. Dietrich (SI)
2. David Walz (NI)
3. Alison C. Witte (OH)
4. Mark D. Wolfrum (NI)

Concordia University, Irvine (Calif.)

Board of Regents

Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Brian L. Kachelmeier (TX)
2. Elroi Reimnitz (PSW)
3. Muluneh Taye (CNH)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Robert S. Fogo (TX)
2. Sarah E. Gaffney (SI)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Harry Edmon (NOW)
2. Laura G. Hemminger (NOW)
3. Gary C. Nelson (CNH)
4. Brian T. Yamabe (CNH)

Concordia University, Nebraska (Seward, Neb.)**Board of Regents***Ordained Minister* (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Scott T. Adle (NEB)
2. Luther C. Biggs (NEB)
3. John David K. Zischke (MDS)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Craig A. Ernstmeyer (MO)
2. Jay A. Krause (SI)
3. Alan P. Runge (NI)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Dan Buman (NEB)
2. Christopher P. Heins (MO)
3. Bruce D. Schultz (KS)
4. Douglas Tewes (NEB)
5. Stan Ullerich (IW)

Concordia University, St. Paul (Minn.)**Board of Regents***Ordained Minister* (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Jeffrey P. Cloeter (MO)
2. Adam T. Filipek (ND)
3. Donald J. Fondow (MNN)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. John Chilman III (PSW)
2. Tia M. Esser (SD)
3. Gary L. Volberding (MNS)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Karl Abbott (SE)
2. Paul C. Hinz (TX)
3. Richard A. Rolf (MI)
4. Rosa Summers (MNS)

Concordia University Texas (Austin, Texas)**Board of Regents***Ordained Minister* (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Keith W. Schweitzer (IW)
2. Neil S. Vanderbush (TX)
3. Richard A. Zeile (MI)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Christopher R. Marshall (SW)
2. Miguel A. Ruiz (TX)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Jon Allen (EA)
2. William Brandt (TX)
3. Bob L. Ssekyanzi (TX)

Concordia University Wisconsin (Mequon, Wis.)**Board of Regents***Ordained Minister* (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Jonathan E. Conner (IW)
2. Dwayne M. Lueck (NW)
3. Lance A. O'Donnell (SW)

Commissioned Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Jennifer Knox (SW)
2. Paul R. Steinhaus (NW)

Layperson (elect 2, 3-year term)

1. Jon Allen (EA)
2. Rande T. Casaday (EN)
3. David Lambert (EN)
4. Stephen M. Saunders (SW)

Commission on Worship**This election will take place if Res 4-06 is adopted.***Ordained Minister (parish pastor)*

(elect 1, 6-year term)

1. John M. Berg (SW)
2. David A. Kind (MNS)

Commissioned Minister (parish teacher)

(elect 1, 6-year term)

1. Matthew C. Janssen (MO)
2. Miguel A. Ruiz (TX)

Layperson (elect 1, 3-year term)

1. Noreen L. Linke (RM)
2. Joseph L. Olson (SW)

ELECTION CANDIDATE CHANGES

Report on Candidates for Commission on Worship

Elect 1 minister of religion—ordained (parish pastor), 1 minister of religion—commissioned (parish teacher) (6-year term), 1 layperson (3-year term)

Duties: Outlined in Resolution 4-06

Qualifications: Outlined in Resolution 4-06

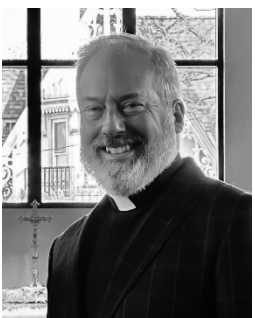
MINISTERS OF RELIGION—ORDAINED



Elect 1 minister of religion—ordained (parish pastor) (6-year term)

John M. Berg, Sheboygan, WI; Trinity, Sheboygan, WI (SW); LCMS 58; Pastor. **S:** Mbr. CUW BOR, Chm. CUW BOR 2, Chpln. Concordia Deaconess 5 **D:** 1VP SW, CV SW 9, Member CUW Fnd. Bd **C:** Pastor 33.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16). Worship stands at the heart of the Church’s life, for through the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments, Christ Himself serves His people with His saving gifts. We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition of liturgy and hymnody. Cherishing this living heritage, we also seek to foster new hymns and liturgies that faithfully confess Christ according to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. If elected to the Commission on Worship, I would promote Christ-centered worship marked by confessional unity and joyful faith.



David A. Kind, Blaine, MN; University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, MN (MNS); LCMS 56; Pastor. **S:** Campus Min Think Tank, VP/Director Higher Things, CUSP BOR. **D:** 3VP 3, Nom. Cmte. MNS, **C:** Pastor 29. **O:** Admis. Couns. CTSFW 2.

As a pastor and theologian I have dedicated myself to the study and teaching of the history, theology and practice of the Church’s worship, and of our Lutheran liturgy in particular. For me this has been no mere academic venture, but one that stands at the heart of each congregation’s life as we gather around our Lord’s saving and enlivening Holy Gospel and Sacraments. I would bring Biblical wisdom and liturgical expertise to every discussion, decision, and work the commission undertakes. I believe it vitally important to the worship life of every congregation that we have theologically, doctrinally and confessionally sound guidance and materials from the Synod to will help unify and strengthen us all in the Faith of Christ Jesus.

MINISTERS OF RELIGION—COMMISSIONED

Elect 1 minister of religion—commissioned (parish teacher) (6-year term)



Matthew Carl Janssen, St. Louis, MO; Hope, St. Louis MO (MO); LCMS 45; Music Ed. **S:** Conv. Deleg. **C:** Kantor/Dir. of Music 12. **O:** Dir. of Bands Luth. HS 20, Founder/Music Dir. *Sanctus Winds* Band.

In worship and the Divine Service, we receive the gifts of Word and Sacrament and are strengthened for service in Christ’s kingdom. As an LCMS church musician and music educator for more than 20 years, I have developed a deep passion for meaningful worship and for teaching the faith through music. Through service on the Commission on Worship, I would seek to encourage church leaders in providing enduring and faithful worship opportunities, collaborate with other Synod entities to develop and share helpful worship resources, and help cultivate the next generation of church musicians and hymnwriters as they proclaim the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Also candidate for: Board of Regents, Ft. Wayne



Miguel A Ruiz+, Keller, TX; Messiah, Keller TX (TX); LCMS 15; Dir. of Parish Music. **S:** Plng. Com. for Inst. on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music. **C:** Church Musician 14. **O:** Guest Lecturer CTSFW, Spkr. at Various Confs., Music Tchr. 14.

I am a lifelong church musician and an adult convert to Lutheranism who was drawn to the LCMS by the purity of our theological confession and the beauty of our doxological tradition. I believe it is critical that we advocate for and equip our congregations to understand and embrace the most salutary worship practices from our historic treasury. My lifelong learning has been dedicated to discovering the riches of our musical and liturgical lineage and sharing what I’ve learned to promote more clarity on how our patterns of worship immerse us in the scriptures and our hope in Christ.

Also candidate for: Board of Regents, Concordia University Texas

LAYPERSONS

Elect 1 layperson (3-year term)



Noreen L. Linke, Fort Collins, CO; Peace with Christ, Fort Collins CO (RM); LCMS 38; Homemaker/Church Organist. **S:** Mem. BOR CTX, Co-Chm. Governance Com. BOR CTX, Mem. CSP Formal Visitation Team, . **C:** Church Choir/Musician, Nom. Com., DCE, Youth Grp. Dir., VBS Dir., Bible Study Tchr., SS Tchr. **O:** Admin. Asst. 7, Owner/Mgr. Linke Rentals 7.

I would be a productive and experienced member of the Commission on Worship, if elected. In my early adult life, my family struggled to find an LCMS congregation that clearly delivered the Gospel of Christ and His Gifts. Most churches we visited were using new worship forms that were lacking, and it was leading to a spiritual crisis for us. I soon realized that the historic liturgy and faithful Lutheran hymnody, both old and new, are the best vehicles for delivering the Gospel. Lutheran worship and doctrine is a lifelong study of mine and remains a priority in my life.

Also candidate for: Board of Regents, St. Louis; Board of Directors, Concordia Publishing House



Joseph L. Olson, Whitefish Bay, WI; Our Savior, Whitefish Bay, WI (SW); LCMS 25; Attorney. **S:** Mem. BOR CUW 2, Chm., CPH BOD 4, Chm. Investment-Finance Com./Audit Com. CPH BOD 6. **C:** Elder, Teach youth Bible Study **O:** WELS Outside Lgl. Counsel 5, Michael Best Strategies LLC, VP 12, Michael Best & Friedrich LLP, Associate 6, Partner 16.

The Church is called to make a clear confession of the hope we have in Christ Jesus. We do this in our Confessions, in the preaching of the Word, in the right administration of the sacraments, in our music, and in our worship practices. Lex orandi, lex credendi is real, it is meaningful, and it must be minded. Our Confessions are replete with discussion of the rites and practices used in our Churches and the role these rites and practices play in the life of the Church. I would be honored to serve on the commission.

NOTICES

Note about each cover of *Today's Business* issues: The table of contents begins with pages from the first issue of *Today's Business* and continues with each daily issue, ending with the current issue page numbers. Pages are numbered sequentially through all volumes.

What is the process for making amendments to bylaw language contained in resolutions?

This is spelled out in the back of the *Handbook*, in Chapter 7. In summary, it says that:

- Amendments must be presented in writing.
- Amendments must be presented to the floor committee.
- Amendments must then be examined by the CCM and the COH.

If you wish to amend a bylaw in a resolution coming from a floor committee, it is necessary to present your proposed amendment to the CCM and the COH for review prior to offering it from the floor. When it is finally brought to the convention, it must be presented in writing—ideally in *Today's Business*.

Convention Chaplains

The chaplains and deaconess are available for spiritual care and support throughout the convention. They can be contacted by emailing chaplain@lcms.org for a timely response.

Convention Chapel: Room 106B (West Building)

The chapel will be open for personal prayer and meditation during most hours that the building is open for convention business. Signs will indicate if the chapel is closed or in private use. Please be respectful and wait until the door is opened. Please note: the chaplains and deaconess may not always be present at the chapel but will remain on call.

Individual Confession and Absolution: 106C (West Building)

The room is used for individual confession. One or more chaplains will be present during the lunch break (Noon–1:30 PM) Sunday–Wednesday. Confession may also be heard by appointment.

Prayer Requests

Specific prayer requests can be submitted in writing at the chapel or by email at chaplain@lcms.org. Please indicate whether your request is private or public.

Requests for Public Prayer

Those requests marked "public" may be offered in the convention hall during the daily services. Due to the volume of prayer requests received and out of respect for privacy, we cannot promise each public prayer will be offered during public worship. A chaplain will bring every petition to God in private prayer.

Concordia Deaconess Conference (LCMS RSO) – Exhibit Booth #117

Stop by Booth #117 to register for our daily umbrella drawing. Delegates and advisory delegates, Synod leaders, and guests are encouraged to visit! Five umbrellas will be given away each day of the convention. We invite you to visit our exhibit, learn more about the Concordia Deaconess Conference, and the services of LCMS Deaconesses, and enter for your chance to win.

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