



CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS

2023

WE PREACH!
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

68TH REGULAR CONVENTION
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
July 29–Aug. 3, 2023 | Milwaukee, Wis.



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25

CONTENTS

Contents	3
Preface.....	7
Officers and Convention Staff	9
Registered Delegates and Representatives	11
Tabular Summary of Registrations.....	21
Convention Floor Committees.....	23
Convention Schedule	25
Minutes.....	27
Slate of Candidates and Election Results.....	55
Special Standing Rules	65
President’s Report, Part 3.....	69
Convention Sermons	75
<i>We Preach Christ Crucified</i> — Matthew C. Harrison.....	75
<i>Of One Mind: The Church’s Life in Christ</i> — Peter K. Lange	77
<i>Bound to Us by Him</i> — Scott R. Murray	78
<i>Gospel Power</i> — John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	80
<i>Know Christ Jesus</i> — Benjamin T. Ball	81
<i>Paul Testifies before Kings</i> — Christopher S. Esget.....	82
<i>Lord, Help Me to Be a Fool</i> — Nabil S. Nour.....	84
<i>There Is No Distinction; We ALL Are Saved by Grace</i> — Ely Prieto	86
<i>Christ, the Death of Death, Our Foe</i> — John C. Wille	88
<i>Keep On Praying</i> — Josemon T. Hoem	89
Convention Essays.....	91
<i>We Preach Christ Crucified</i> — Thomas J. Egger	91
<i>The Power of God on the Cross</i> — Abjar Bahkou	95
<i>The Wisdom of God</i> — Russell P. Dawn.....	99
<i>The Redemption of the World</i> — Juhana Pohjola	102
Special Presentations	107
<i>The Biblical and Reformation Heritage of LCMS Pastoral Formation</i> — Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.	107
<i>Our Residential Seminaries: Deep Pastoral Formation and Worldwide Impact</i> — Thomas J. Egger.....	109
<i>Persecuted for Your Faith, Part I</i> — Päivi M. Räsänen	111
<i>Persecuted for Your Faith, Part II</i> — Juhana Pohjola	114
Resolutions	115
1. National Witness.....	115
To Stimulate Training for Witness	115
To Aid Small Congregations and Multi-Congregation Pastors and Parishes.....	116
To Plant More Churches	116
To Continue to Address Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues	117
To Increase Mission Efforts to Immigrants and Various Cultural Groups in North America	118

To Direct Districts and Council of Presidents to Provide Strategic Plan for Addressing Wellness of Church Workers	119
To Address Mental Health among Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers	120
To Promote and Commend the Synod's Digital and Online Resources	121
2. International Witness.....	123
To Commend, Strengthen, and Give Thanks for Alliance Missionary Program	123
To Promote and Collaborate with the Office of International Mission	124
To Strengthen Pastoral Care of Missionaries and Clarify Ecclesiastical Supervision	124
To Commend Synod Seminaries for Work in International Witness	125
To Provide Resources for Discerning Validity of Requests to Support International Mission Work	126
To Study Synod Relationships with Independent Lutheran Congregations in Foreign Mission Areas	126
To Commend Use and Attendance of FOROs	126
3. Mercy	129
To Encourage and Support More Fervent Teaching, Proclamation, and Efforts to Promote Culture of Life among God's People.....	129
To Increase Awareness among Synod Congregations of Human Trafficking.....	130
To Continue the Synod's Efforts to Address Mental Health and Mental Illness	130
To Commend and Give Thanks for Synod Work regarding Disaster Response	132
To Recognize and Thank the Synod for Mercy Shown to God's People through COVID-19 Pandemic.....	132
4. Life Together.....	135
To Commend and Encourage Continued Use of the <i>Koinonia</i> Project and Give Thanks to God for the Sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.....	135
To Affirm and Continue <i>Making Disciples for Life</i> as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–26 Triennium	135
To Affirm and Continue Mission Priorities for 2023–26 Triennium.....	136
To Give Thanks for Spanish Language Hymnal <i>Himnario Luterano</i> and Commend Its Use.....	138
To Encourage In-Person Corporate Worship	138
To Give Thanks for Preservation of the Gospel in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.....	139
5. Theology and Church Relations	141
To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan	141
To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland	142
To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Uganda	144
To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine	146
To Recognize the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka as a Self-Governing Partner Church.....	148
To Clarify and Simplify Bylaws regarding Routes to Altar and Pulpit Fellowship.....	149
To Recognize That the Synod Is Not in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Japan Lutheran Church	150
To Affirm In-Person Communion	152
To Review Guidance on Admission to the Lord's Supper.....	153
To Articulate Theology and Philosophy of Lutheran Education	155
To Reaffirm Synod's Biblical Positions on Marriage and Sexuality	155
To Address Lutheran Theological Principles of Mission and Ministry in Post-Christian Context	156
To Address Uses of Online Technology	156

To Uphold Proper Elements and Reverential Administration of the Lord's Supper.....	157
6. Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries.....	159
To Affirm and Strengthen <i>Set Apart to Serve</i> in Word and Action	159
To Encourage Proper Pastoral Formation through Our Synod's Seminaries.....	160
To Affirm and Strengthen the Synod's Commitment to Well-Formed Clergy for the Sake of the Gospel	161
To Affirm and Provide Guidance for the Service of Laity	163
To Affirm and Clarify Bylaw 3.10.2.4 by Amending.....	164
To Support and Participate in Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support and <i>Preach the Word</i>	164
To Recommend and Implement Rigorous Program of Study in Circuit <i>Winkels</i>	165
To Recognize and Honor the Pastor's Wife	165
7. University Education.....	167
To Recognize and Give Thanks for Work at Concordia College—New York.....	167
To Honor and Give Thanks for Ministry of Concordia University, Portland	167
To Call Concordia University Texas Leadership to Repentance	168
To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod	170
To Bring Accountability to Concordia Boards of Regents and to Improve Doctrinal Fidelity and Amenability to Ecclesiastical Supervision	190
To Support Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System	192
8. Finance	193
To Respectfully Decline Overtures	193
9. Structure and Administration.....	195
To Amend Bylaws to Provide Clarity for Cross-Circuit and Cross-District Multi-Congregation Parishes.....	195
To Amend Various Bylaws to Provide Clarity or to Address Practical Considerations	197
To Clarify Bylaws Regarding Appointment of a Synodwide Corporate Entity Chief Executive .	203
To Establish Mission Board Responsibilities Regarding Mission Office Strategic Plan and Annual Budget Proposal.....	204
To Simplify Circuit Elections.....	204
To Appoint Task Force to Evaluate Current Electoral Circuit Parameters	206
To Provide for Continuity of Service in Regional Positions	209
To Strengthen Nonvoting Advisory Delegate Participation at Conventions.....	210
To Appoint a Task Force to Prepare the 2026 Convention to Consider Implementing a Four-Year Convention Cycle.....	211
To Amend Bylaws 3.6.4 and 3.6.4.4.1 to Clarify Use of Lutheran Church Extension Fund Financial Resources and Related Services	211
To Amend Bylaw 3.12.2.4 to Change How Subsequent Ballots Are Determined in Election of Synod President	212
10. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution	213
To Amend Dispute Resolution and Expulsion Bylaws to Address Practical Considerations and Clarity.....	213
To Amend Bylaws to Clarify Application of Pre-Call Consultation and <i>Call and Be Served By</i> (Bylaws 2.5.2–3) beyond Member Congregations.....	216
To Provide Application of Standards of Accountability to Members of Synod	218
To Direct Revision of Council of Presidents Policy regarding Placement	218
To Speak to Spiritual Care of Victims of Sexual Misconduct by Individual Members of the Synod	219
To Amend Bylaw 2.11.2.2 regarding Candidate Status	219

11. Church and Culture.....	221
To Encourage Appropriate Use of Social Media	221
To Reject All Forms of Racism and Affirm Our Witness to All People.....	222
To Love and Disciple Peoples of All Ethnicities, Languages, and Skin Colors	223
To Address Abortion and Use of Fetal Tissue in Vaccines	223
To Address the Relationship between Church and State in an Increasingly Hostile Environment	224
To Oppose Mandatory Registration of Women into the Draft.....	225
12. Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth.....	227
To Produce Uniform Set of Lutheran Academic Standards for Our Schools.....	227
To Confess Authority God Gave to Fathers and Mothers.....	227
To Address Commissioned Minister—Teacher Student Debt	229
To Commend and Give Thanks for Lutheran Schools	230
To Encourage Family Devotions, Lutheran Fathers, and Young Men	231
To Encourage Use of Current Research and Resources for Ministry to Youth.....	231
Delegate Resolutions	233
To Call for Repentance and Forgiveness by All Parties to the Concordia Texas Conflict	233
To Establish a Standing, Synodwide Process for Ongoing Exchange and Conflict Resolution ...	233
Omnibus Resolutions.....	235
Omnibus Resolution A: Responsibility Assigned to Others	235
Omnibus Resolution B: Issues Addressed by Previous Convention(s)	237
Omnibus Resolution C: Expressions of Encouragement and Gratitude	238
Resolution Action Report.....	239
Correlation of Reports, Overtures, and Resolutions.....	241
Entered into Rest	243
Index	249

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PREFACE

The following pages contain the official record of the 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, conducted at the Baird (formerly, Wisconsin) Center, Milwaukee, Wis., July 29—August 3, 2023, with 1,023 voting delegates and 453 advisory delegates, representatives, and official guests in attendance.

The resolutions contained in this volume are presented in the form in which they were finally acted upon by the convention. Each had its origin in one or more reports and overtures submitted, in accordance with Bylaws 3.1.6–3.1.6.2, by authorized individuals and entities, including the districts, circuits, and congregations of the Synod. Twelve floor committees prepared a final total of 101 resolutions (including the three omnibuses). Of these, 87 were acted upon in the course of the convention and 86 were adopted. A few notes may be helpful:

- An “A” or other letter attached to a resolution number indicates that the committee revised the resolution after its initial publication in *Today’s Business*, necessitating the printing of a new version.
- The line immediately following the resolution number indicates the origin of the material being acted upon, usually one or more reports or overtures printed in the *Convention Workbook* or *Today’s Business*.
- A resolution’s introductory section, whether comprising *rationale* or *preface* paragraphs or a series of *whereases*, is regarded as having the same weight and importance as the *resolves* that follow.
- A summary of the action taken by the convention, an indication of in which session that action was taken, and an excerpt of the relevant portion of the minutes, including the final vote (if tabulated), are included after each resolution. The complete *minutes*, presented earlier in this volume, and the previously published *Convention Workbook* and *Today’s Business, First Edition*, provide additional context.

A number of the resolutions have amended the Bylaws of the Synod; these will receive attention by the Commissions on Constitutional Matters and Handbook, culminating in the production of the 2023 *Handbook* in months to come. Various important aspects of our life together as a Synod—including all aspects of the relation of the Synod to its universities; the preparation and supply of pastors to the congregations and parishes of the Synod, including the small ones; care of missionaries and international relationships; various aspects of our life together as congregations and Synod in the midst of theological, practical, technological, and cultural challenges and opportunities; the philosophy and practical support of our parochial and other primary and secondary schools; the representation of our congregations at convention; and the present situation with Concordia University Texas—received and will be receiving careful attention through the triennium. A variety of issues facing every Christian and every congregation received attention worthy of wide consideration. The Synod will be well served if all our congregations, church workers, and agencies review carefully this consummation of a triennium’s work at refining Synod’s governance, objectives, and approaches.

A word of profound thanks is in order to the *Today’s Business* staff and to Concordia Publishing House, without all of whom this work would not be such as it is.

The convention theme, *We Preach Christ Crucified*, drawing on 1 Corinthians 1:23–24, continues to challenge us all to make these words our own, to speak them with one voice as the congregations of our Synod, and so to govern all we have built together. It focuses our attention on what matters: preaching. What is to be preached, every time, everywhere, to everyone? Christ, and Him crucified—and just so, Christ, the power and the wisdom of God and our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. What does it mean for us in this world? Suffering, scorn, for the wise not only count us fools but are shamed by our preaching, and by it those things that make much of their being something are brought to nothing. But what does it mean for the world that we are in it with this preaching? Life beyond all their knowing! For He who is low and despised, who seems to be nothing, is revealed to be everything, the only foundation that is laid, the One in whom all things are ours—the world, life, death, present, future—and we are Christ’s, and the Christ—even Him crucified—is of God (1 Corinthians 1–3).

May the Lord of the Church bless us as a Synod, to “agree, and that there be no divisions among [us], but that [we] be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Division, dissention, and quarreling are out of place among us. “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). God grant us truly to walk together in the preaching of *Christ Crucified*, indeed, therefore, in the wisdom and power of God and the redemption of the world—to be of one mind and heart, united in his Word, following the example of the apostolic church, and applying the diversities of our gifts to the common profit (Constitution, Preface).

John W. Sias, *Secretary*



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OFFICERS AND CONVENTION STAFF

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St. Louis, MO

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St. Louis, MO

Second Vice-President

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St. Francis, WI

Third Vice-President

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Houston, TX

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Alexandria, VA

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Worden, IL

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St. Louis, MO

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Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Nathan M. Haak, MA, MBA, CPA, St. Louis, MO

Chief Mission Officer

Rev. Kevin D. Robson, MBA, MDiv, St. Louis, MO

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Mr. Frank Simek, *Chief Administrative Officer, Convention Manager*
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Rev. Marshall R. Frisque, Fredonia, WI, *Chair, Local Arrangements Committee*

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REGISTERED DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES

*Due to 2019 Res. 9-04A and Bylaw 3.1.8, delegate home congregations are listed rather than mailing addresses.
A dagger (†) marks delegates and representatives registered but not checked in as attending.*

A. Voting and Advisory Delegates

Atlantic District

Voting Ordained

ALLSTAEDT, Jacob (Jake); St John's LC, Williston Park, NY
COHN, Daniel F; St John LC, Stuyvesant, NY
DEEBRAH, Peter A D; Ev LC of St Matthew, New York, NY
HOLLMANN, Joshua David; True Light LC, New York, NY
JOHNSON, Thomas Roger; St Luke LC, Dix Hills, NY
NIEMEIER, Nils Paul; Messiah LC, East Setauket, NY
RETHINASAMY, Johnson Elwin; Immanuel LC, Whitestone, NY
SINGH, Mohan; Trinity LC, Schenectady, NY
YOUNG, John Michael; Our Savior LC, Fishkill, NY

Voting Lay

BHAGWATPRASAD, Deochand; St Paul LC, Brooklyn, NY
CHAFFEE, Mark; Our Savior's LC, Colonie, NY
CONSIGLIO, Frank; Holy Trinity LC, Middle Island, NY
MANNING, Lynn D; Zion LC, Schenectady, NY
NELSON NOVEN, Jaime L; Mount Zion LC, Manhattan, NY
SEAMAN-CULLUM, Brittany; Trinity LC, Glen Cove, NY
SNYDER, Robert; Trinity LC, Islip, NY
SOMMER, Ron; St Paul LC, Monroe, NY
WENZEL, Peter; St Johns Ev LC, College Point, NY

Advisory Ordained

BARTELT, Philip Dale; (cong. unknown)

Advisory Commissioned

KOCIS, Betsy A; Our Savior's LC, Colonie, NY

California/Nevada/Hawaii District

Voting Ordained

BAMSCH, Duane R†; Grace LC, Grass Valley, CA
BOKRE, Dawit A; Good Shepherd LC, Hayward, CA
BREDESON, Jason J; Trinity LC, Sacramento, CA
CUMMINS, Brian K; Trinity LC, Redding, CA
JUNG, David Sungeun; Grace LC, Visalia, CA
KARLEN, Fred W; Grace LC, Cloverdale, CA
KEGLEY, Noah Albert; St Paul LC, Mountain View, CA
LAU, Shiu Ming; LC of the Holy Spirit, San Francisco, CA
MASCHKE, Jedidiah T; Bethlehem LC, Carson City, NV
MULDOWNEY, Brian Conlin; St Andrew LC, Stockton, CA
MUNDINGER, Andrew Paul; Holy Cross LC, Concord, CA
SCHLENSKER, Daniel Alfred; Shepherd Of The Hills LC, Lake Isabella, CA
ZIER, Mark A; Christ LC, Hilo, HI

Voting Lay

BYRD, Otis L III; Christ for All Nations LC, San Francisco, CA
ERWIN, Jay R; Redeemer Ev LC, Chico, CA
GUZZETTA, John; St Matthew LC, Sonora, CA
HALL, Andrew; St Paul LC, Woodland, CA
HEMKER, David J (Dave); Prince Of Peace LC, Fremont, CA
JOHNSON, Michael K; St John LC, Fallon, NV
MOSLEY, Jeffrey T; St John LC, Bakersfield, CA
NELSON, Gary C; St John LC, Petaluma, CA
SUAREZ-ABRAHAM, Anthony; Mount Calvary LC, Soquel, CA
THEAKER, Brian; Light Of The Hills LC, Cameron Park, CA
WIDSTRAND, Bryan; Trinity LC, Paso Robles, CA
YOUNG, Donald (Don); Our Savior LC, Livermore, CA

Advisory Ordained

ARNOLD, Ronald L; Our Savior LC, Sparks, NV

Advisory Commissioned

ANWYL, Evan Scott; St John LC, Bakersfield, CA

Central Illinois District

Voting Ordained

BRUER, Robert L; Mount Zion LC, Mount Zion, IL
EDDY, Mark Roland; Zion LC, Taylor Ridge, IL
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HERBERTS, Dean Zachary; St Paul LC, Wheeler, IL
HERZBERG, Andrew Edward; St Johns LC, Mattoon, IL
JAUSS, Marcus R; St Paul's LC, Bowen, IL
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UPHOFF, Aaron Daniel; Calvary LC, Watseka, IL
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WHYBREW, Kene Allen; St Paul's LC, Strasburg, IL

Voting Lay

ABBE, Larry; St Johns LC, Buckley, IL
BOESDORFER, Dennis Eugene; Zion LC, Pleasant Plains, IL
CASEBEER, John; Trinity LC, Decatur, IL
CLARK, Zachary W; St James LC, Quincy, IL
COUCH, Randy W; St John LC, Pekin, IL
DANNEWITZ, Michael W (Mike); Good Shepherd LC, Sherman, IL
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HAMM, Mark; Trinity LC, Danville, IL
HOMANN, James D (Jim); St John LC, East Moline, IL
JOERGENSEN, Stanley R; St John LC, Louisville, IL
SHAMBO, John A; Holy Cross LC, Shelbyville, IL
TRIMPE, Ken; St Pauls LC, Havana, IL
WICKLANDER, Carl D; Our Redeemer LC, Jacksonville, IL
WILCOXEN, Tim; Trinity LC, Roanoke, IL
ZIEGLER, Garrett M; St Paul LC, Altamont, IL

Advisory Ordained

HARRE, Richard R; Trinity LC, Auburn, IL

Advisory Commissioned

ERICSON, Berit; Our Savior's LC, Springfield, IL

Eastern District

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FOOTE, Robert M; Trinity LC, Ithaca, NY
GREIG, Nycholas Christopher; Trinity LC, West Seneca, NY
HAHN, Daniel Anthony Jr; St Johns Ev LC, Millvale, PA
KNUPP, Keith A; St Mark LC NT, North Tonawanda, NY
KUNTZ, Scott Allan; Mount Calvary LC, West View, PA
NICKEL, Jeffrey David; Holy Cross LC, Clarence, NY
SCHETTLER, Matthew C; St Paul LC, Fredonia, NY
SHRUM, Stephen Oakey; Trinity LC, Spencerport, NY
ZIMMERMAN, John M; Immanuel LC, Scranton, PA

Voting Lay

ALLEN, Jon; Faith LC, Penfield, NY
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CARR, Jim; Salem LC, Buffalo, NY
CWYNAR, Cindy Lynn; Mount Olive LC, Beaver Falls, PA
GRZYB, Walter; St Luke LC, Cheektowaga, NY
KRULL, Gary R; Grace LC, Niagara Falls, NY
LEHMAN, Frank D; St Andrew LC, Pekin, NY
PIOPI, Greg A; Faith LC, Easton, PA
REISS, Nancy; St Paul LC, Hilton, NY
SUTHERLAND, Brandi; St Paul LC, Eden, NY
WATERSTRAM-RICH, Kristen Marie; St Mark LC, Mendon, NY

Advisory Ordained

CWYNAR, Paul David; Mount Olive LC, Beaver Falls, PA

Advisory Commissioned

FRETTHOLD, Kathleen (Kathy); Immanuel LC, Tonawanda, NY

English District

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ANDRAE, Eric R; First Trinity LC, Pittsburgh, PA
ARNOLD, Todd Wayne; LC Of The Risen Savior, Green Valley, AZ
BELTER, Kevin Paul; Messiah LC, Danville, CA
DIETRICH, Joel Andrew Christensen; Redeemer LC, Lincoln, NE
ERHARDT, Martin K; Messiah LC, Princeton, NJ
GRAMS, Daniel E; Ascension Of Christ LC, Beverly Hills, MI
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PILLAY, Dereck; St Matthew LC, Scarborough, ON CANADA
TROUTEN, Chad David; Bethany LC, Fort Wayne, IN
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Voting Lay

ARNDT, Wade T; Blessed Sacrament LC, Hayden, ID
ASBURY, Marsha; Shepherd Of The Coast LC, Palm Coast, FL
BUSAROW, Jonathan; Redeemer LC, Fort Wayne, IN
GEORGE, Carol Helen; Trinity LC, Erie, PA
ISHAM, Thomas; Agnus Dei LC, Marshall, MI
KING, Tim; Trinity LC, New Lenox, IL
LEISTICO, Laura; Peace LC, Windsor, ON CANADA
LEU, Terry R; Prince Of Peace LC, Medina Township, OH
MACKAY, Leo; Immanuel LC, Alexandria, VA
METZGER, Colin S; Prince of Peace LC, Mesquite, NV
NELSON, Christopher (Chris); Hope LC, Hastings, MN
SOLOMON, Joel W; Zion Ev LC, Detroit, MI

Advisory Ordained

BAUE, Frederic W; Village LC, Ladue, MO
LINTHICUM, Eric Rodger; Tree of Life LC, Inverness, FL

Florida-Georgia District

Voting Ordained

CLARK, John Blair Jr (Blair); Trinity LC, Summerfield, FL
HOWE, Andrew James; Mount Calvary LC, Warner Robins, GA
LINGSCH, Keith Allan; Grace LC, Naples, FL
MAULELLA, Robert J; Faith LC, Sebring, FL
MC KENZIE, Patrick Carl; Hope LC, Jacksonville, FL
MESEKE, Paul R; Christ LC, Brooksville, FL
MICHAEL, Gregory C (Greg); Christus Victor LC, Athens, GA
MOORE, Donald A Jr; St Paul LC, Apopka, FL
MUELLER, Mark Alan; Ascension LC, Casselberry, FL
NARRING, Dana A; Faith LC, Punta Gorda, FL
PFEFFER, Dean R; Hope LC, Plant City, FL
ROEDSENS, Jacob James; Our Savior LC, Lake Worth, FL
SORENSEN, Andrew Jacob; Faith LC, Dunedin, FL
STIER, Donald L; Immanuel LC, Plantation Key, FL
WARNKE, Joseph Matthew (Joe); Christ Our Savior LC, Griffin, GA

Voting Lay

BORUCKI, Wesley B; Redeemer LC, West Palm Beach, FL
COOK, Morris D III; St John LC, Ocala, FL
DIXON, Jason Eugene; Martin Luther Chapel, Marathon, FL
FUGE, Douglas P (Doug); Good Shepherd LC, Gainesville, GA
GREEN, William M†; Zion Ev LC, Winter Garden, FL
GREUL, Mark R; Hope LC, Bonita Springs, FL
HOWARD, Fredrick J (Rick); First LC, Clearwater, FL
JONES, Steven L (Steve); St Paul LC, Weston, FL

JONES, Steven R; Our Savior LC, Zephyrhills, FL
KNIDSVIG, Lee A; Lakeside LC, Venice, FL
LIST, John M; St Paul LC, Boca Raton, FL
MUNGIN, Naomi E; St Paul LC, Jacksonville, FL
PETERSON, Joseph A (Joe); Christ LC, Perry, GA
ROBERTSON, Richard C; St Paul LC, Peachtree City, GA
YOAKUM, Kathleen A (Kathy); Christ The King LC,
Riverview, FL

Advisory Ordained

BIEL, Ronald D (Ron); Amazing Grace LC, Oxford, FL
HERMANN, Rory M; Christ Our Savior LC, Saint
Augustine, FL
MAST, Michael Wm; Christ The King LC, Largo, FL
MUELLER, Michael Lee; LC of The Cross, Port Charlotte,
FL

Advisory Commissioned

LEECH, Debra Jean; Faith LC, Eustis, FL
LEECH, William Allen; Faith LC, Eustis, FL
PROHL-KELLER, Ellen Elizabeth; Mount Calvary LC,
Warner Robins, GA

Indiana District

Voting Ordained

BECKER, Dale Andrew; Shepherd of the Hills LC,
Georgetown, IN
BROCK, Peter James; St John LC, Decatur, IN
CLARK, Adam Carroll; St Peter LC, Mishawaka, IN
CURRAO, Andrew J; Redeemer LC, Seymour, IN
DEHNING, K C (K C); St James LC, Logansport, IN
DREYER, John Michael; Our Redeemer LC, Kokomo, IN
FERRY, Joseph William (Joe); Southwest LC, Fort Wayne,
IN
GIGER, Scott Wayne; Cornerstone LC, Carmel, IN
GUAGENTI, Andrew Daniel; Holy Cross LC, Shelbyville,
KY
HARRINGTON, Daniel Robert; Holy Cross LC, Fort Wayne,
IN
HEINZ, Richard Andrew; Trinity LC, Lowell, IN
MCDOWELL, Adam Mateo; St Peter's LC, Fort Wayne, IN
MCKINLEY, Jordan J; Trinity LC, Vallonia, IN
MIEROW, Seth A; St Peters Ev LC, Indianapolis, IN
OSBUN, Michael Joshua (Josh); First LC, Hanna, IN
RIORDAN, Todd C; Faith LC, Columbus, IN
RITTNER, Philip R II (Phil); Zion LC, Columbia City, IN
SCHOECH, Eric W; Faith Memorial LC, Valparaiso, IN
TRUELSEN, Christopher David; Christ Ev LC,
Brownsburg, IN
TUCHER, Jared Christopher; St Paul's LC, Cross Plains, IN
WATT, Luke John; St John Ev LC, Indianapolis, IN
WENIG, Thomas D; Our Redeemer LC, Evansville, IN
WIIST, David E; Concordia LC, Evansville, IN

Voting Lay

BAUGHMAN, Leonard D; Trinity LC, Auburn, IN
DRYSCH, Michael; Redeemer LC, Highland, IN
EICKHOFF, Dennis R; Prince Of Peace LC, Martinsville, IN
FRANKE, Mark Alan; Ascension LC, Fort Wayne, IN
HARWEGER, Ty A; Zion LC, Seymour, IN
HAWK, David K; St Paul's LC, Fort Wayne, IN
HEINKEL, David M; Grace LC, Muncie, IN
KRUGER-ARNOLD, Amanda; St Johns LC, Lexington, KY
KUBLY, Scott; Our Saviour LC, Monticello, IN
LEININGER, Kevin J; Zion LC, Fort Wayne, IN
MUNDINGER, Gerhard H Jr; St Paul LC, Chesterton, IN
OWEN, Dean; Concordia LC, Greenwood, IN
RAGAN, Charles Edward (Charlie); Trinity LC, Henderson,
KY
SILLETTO, Aaron John; Concordia LC, Louisville, KY
SMITH, Caleb D; Emmaus LC, South Bend, IN
STOPPENHAGEN, Neil E; Bethlehem LC, Ossian, IN
TURNER, Kevin; Trinity Ev LC, Dillsboro, IN
TURPEN, Lee; St Paul LC, Evansville, IN
VANDERCAR, Michael (Mike); St Peter LC, Waymansville,
IN
WISCHMEIER, Roger Df; St Paul LC, Brownstown, IN
WOOLERY, Phil; St Peter LC, North Judson, IN

Advisory Ordained

GARD, Daniel L; Ascension LC, Fort Wayne, IN
MOEHRING, Martin K; Bethlehem LC, Ossian, IN
SCHMIDT, Ralph G; St Paul's LC, Fort Wayne, IN
SCHNEIDER, Robert W; St Paul LC, Evansville, IN

Advisory Commissioned

BAUMAN, Michelle A; St Paul LC, Columbus, IN
DENHOLM, George III; St Peters LC, Columbus, IN
KETCHER, Karol Rf; Trinity LC, Crown Point, IN
KOENEMANN, Darin D; Ascension LC, Fort Wayne, IN
MEYER, Peter John; Bethlehem LC, Ossian, IN
MIEROW, John E; St Peters Ev LC, Indianapolis, IN
OLSEN, Brenda G; St John Ev LC, Indianapolis, IN
RITTNER, Katherine E; Zion LC, Columbia City, IN
SCHALLHORN, Mark Brian; Bethlehem LC, Ossian, IN
WENDT, Paul R; St John LC, Kendallville, IN

Iowa East District

Voting Ordained

BELTZ, Samuel G; St John LC, Oskaloosa, IA
BURNS, Jesse Allen; Redeemer LC, Ventura, IA
CRAWFORD, Jonathan Thomas; St Paul LC, Dubuque, IA
ELLINGWORTH, Jon M; St John LC, Waverly, IA
FELDT, Larry L; St John LC, Denver, IA
GRAY, Andrew W; St Johns LC, Marengo, IA
GROTH, Theodore W (Ted); Trinity LC, Cedar Rapids, IA
HAMBLETON, Aaron Michael; St Paul LC, Eldora, IA
HOFT, Peter David; Park View LC, Eldridge, IA
LINGARD, David C; St Andrew LC, Van Horne, IA
PREUS, James A O; Trinity LC, Ottumwa, IA
REDHAGE, Daniel Todd; Trinity LC, Lowden, IA
VAN HEMERT, Thomas C; St John LC, Center Point, IA

Voting Lay

ARENDS, Lynn; Trinity LC, Hampton, IA
BANKO, Timothy (Tim); St Silas LC, North Liberty, IA
BAYER, Jeffrey M; St Johns Ev LC, Victor, IA
EHLER, Matthew; Zion LC, Hiawatha, IA
ELBERT, Jeffrey E (Jeff); Faith LC, Waterloo, IA
GIBSON, David L (Dave); Our Redeemer LC, Dubuque, IA
HUCK, Thomas W; St John LC, Sumner, IA
MACK, Michael (Mike); Trinity LC, State Center, IA
MCHUGH, James; St John LC, Clinton, IA
MOELLER, Thomas; Zion LC, Wilton, IA
MORTIMER, George; Bethlehem Ev Luth Cong, Mason
City, IA
OEHLERICH, Richard D; St John LC, Keystone, IA
SMITH, Stephen C; Risen Christ LC, Davenport, IA

Advisory Ordained

JOHNSON, Daniel Scott; St John LC, Hubbard, IA

Iowa West District

Voting Ordained

BOOHER, Lucas Wayne; Zion LC, Storm Lake, IA
BOOTHBY, Michael John; St Paul LC, Ireton, IA
CONNER, Jonathan Everett; Zion LC, Manning, IA
DIETRICH, Chadric Allen; Immanuel LC, Rockwell City, IA
DURAND, Edward E III; Trinity LC, Van Meter, IA
HEIMER, Jessten P; Trinity LC, Boone, IA
JOHNSON, Kevin Lynn; Holy Cross LC, Carlisle, IA
KEUNING, Jeffrey Michael; Zion LC, Dexter, IA
KOOPMAN, John Henry; St Paul LC, Emmetsburg, IA
KROONBLAWD, Cory James; St Paul's LC, Sac City, IA
MAHNKEN, Merle F; Immanuel LC, Schleswig, IA
MERRILL, Richard Charles; St John Ev LC, Charter Oak, IA
MILBRANDT, Richard W; St Peter LC, Ocheyedan, IA
PERKINS, Benjamin D; Shepherd Of Peace LC, Sergeant
Bluff, IA
RUTZ, John Benjamin; Trinity LC, Creston, IA
STEEB, Daniel Paul; Immanuel LC, Logan, IA
WITMER, Brett Peter; Bethel Ev LC, Sutherland, IA

Voting Lay

ALLERS, Terry L; Good Shepherd LC, Fort Dodge, IA
ARMBRECHT, Paul Lames; Pilgrim LC, Lake City, IA
BURT, Jon; Trinity LC, Hawarden, IA
CLAUSEN, Dennis W; St Paul LC, Ida Grove, IA
DOWNING, Charles M (Chuck); Our Savior LC, Denison,
IA
DREYER, Lynn; St Paul LC, Ames, IA
HEEREN, Steven P (Steve); Zion LC, Paullina, IA
HELMUTH, Charles; Peace LC, Des Moines, IA
JOHNSON, Jerry L; St John LC, Storm Lake, IA
JOHNSON, Loren D; St Paul LC, Clarinda, IA
LARSEN, Michael; Beautiful Savior LC, Polk City, IA
NATH, Carter J; Zion Ev LC, Lu Verne, IA
SEGEBART, Mark E; Trinity LC, Manilla, IA
SEIPOLD, Bret H; St Johns LC, Hastings, IA

SWANSON, David A; Immanuel LC, Greenfield, IA
TRACEY, Duane; Immanuel LC, Spirit Lake, IA

Advisory Ordained

GERKEN, Mark A; Faith LC, Adel, IA

Advisory Commissioned

POPP, Sarah E; First English LC, Spencer, IA

Kansas District

Voting Ordained

COOK, Theodore E Sr; Zion LC, Pittsburg, KS
DE GIOVANNI, Terry L; St Luke LC, Wheaton, KS
HARDERS, Daniel Ervin; St Peter LC, Holyrood, KS
HOSCH, Edward III (Eddie); Messiah LC, Emporia, KS
JAHNKE, Randall L (Randy); Holy Cross LC, Dodge City,
KS
JOHNSON, Thomas R; Faith LC, Derby, KS
MEASE, Van Edward (Ed); St Paul LC, Leavenworth, KS
MILLER, Philip T; Mount Calvary LC, Marysville, KS
OCKREE, Benjamin R; Calvary LC, Topeka, KS
SCHMIDT, Michael John; Peace LC, Natoma, KS
SCHULTZ, Christian Daniel; First LC, Paola, KS
SCHULTZ, Joel S A; Beautiful Savior LC, Olathe, KS
SLATER, Troy Lyn; Immanuel LC, Canton, KS
SNOW, Scott A; Holy Cross LC, Wichita, KS
STAHLCKER, Alan Roy; St John LC, Lincolnville, KS
WOLF, Philip B; Christ LC, Wathena, KS

Voting Lay

BEFORT, Warren L; Trinity LC, Burlington, KS
BRINCEFIELD, Thomas (Tom); Trinity LC, Atchison, KS
BRUNE, Milton E; Grace LC, Liberal, KS
FASSOLD, Randy C; Trinity LC, Mission, KS
GEHRKE, Stevin H; St Johns Ev LC, Topeka, KS
GIER, Tyler A; Bethlehem LC, Sylvan Grove, KS
HAUSER, Bret; St Peter LC, Humboldt, KS
JENSEN, Lyle L; Zion LC, Newton, KS
JORNS, Kenneth D (Ken); St Paul LC, Preston, KS
PIESTER, Brenda; Ascension LC, Pratt, KS
SCHULTZ, Bruce D; St John LC, Alma, KS
UFFMAN, Stanton N; Zion LC, Linn, KS
WELLER, Stephen F; Grace LC, McPherson, KS
WOLTERS, Mark A; Redeemer LC, Atwood, KS
ZENGGER, Joshua Burt (Josh); Trinity Family of Faith LC,
Basehor, KS

Advisory Ordained

HARRIES, Thomas H; Hope LC, Shawnee, KS

Advisory Commissioned

LIMBACK, Jane; Bethany LC, Overland Park, KS

Michigan District

Voting Ordained

APPOLD, Paul C; Trinity LC, Muskegon, MI
BAGNALL, George Steve; Good Shepherd LC, Cass City, MI
BAKKER, Jonathon J; Zion LC, Mount Pleasant, MI
BIBER, Paul R; Good Shepherd LC, Saginaw, MI
BLACK, Eric Steven; St Paul LC, Kalkaska, MI
BOEHNKE, Christopher M; Lakeshore Lutheran
Fellowship, Spring Lake, MI
CAMPBELL, Delwyn Xavier Sr (Del); Good Shepherd LC,
Lansing, MI
CHINERY, James D; St Martin LC, Birch Run, MI
CLARK, Paul M; St Paul LC, Fowler, MI
DENT, Matthew T; Bethlehem LC, Standish, MI
FIENEN, Daniel Henry; Grace LC, Baldwin, MI
FRECHETTE, Jeffrey David Sr; St Mark LC, Flint, MI
GAERTNER, Evan Paul; Our Shepherd LC, Birmingham,
MI
GARCIA, Adan Christopher (Chris); Immanuel LC, Bay
City, MI
GIBBONS, Nikolai James; Immanuel LC, Macomb, MI
HERTER, Paul W; Hope LC, Adrian, MI
HOFFMEYER, Alex William; Salem LC, Coloma, MI
HOPFENSBERGER, Bryan L; Peace LC, Sandusky, MI
HOWARD, Daniel Charles; Hope LC of Warren, Warren,
MI
HUFF, Mark Landon; Faith LC, Port Huron, MI
LATHAM, Mark E; St Michael LC, Traverse City, MI
MAJESKI, Eric W; Grace Lutheran Fellowship, Romeo, MI
MUHLE, Dean Ray; St Pauls LC, Hale, MI
MURRAY, Daniel Patrick; Hosanna-Tabor LC, Redford, MI

OELSCHLAEGER, Benjamin George Dopp; Good Shepherd LC, Lake Orion, MI
PHIFER, Phillip L; Trinity LC, Paw Paw, MI
ROGGOW, Aaron Warner; St Paul LC, Ann Arbor, MI
ROSCHE, Bryce S; St Matthew LC, Westland, MI
SCHAEDIG, Michael W; St John LC, Cheboygan, MI
SCHAEFFER, Glenn E; St James LC, Grand Rapids, MI
SCHWARTZ, John W; St Pauls LC, New Boston, MI
STEELE, Cameron Kamp; St Paul LC, Caro, MI
TODD, Kelly D; Christ LC, Goodrich, MI
WADE, Jeffrey Erin; St Johns Ev LC, Waltz, MI
WELLHOUSEN, Austin Michael; St Matthew LC, Walled Lake, MI
WILLMAN, Sean August; St Pauls LC, Hillsdale, MI
WOELL, Brennan Andrew; Emmanuel LC, Cadillac, MI
ZEILE, Richard A (Dr Z); St Johns LC, Taylor, MI

Voting Lay

BEIER, Beverly J; St Paul LC, Coldwater, MI
BOOS, Jennifer; Faith LC, Troy, MI
BUL, Jeremy; Immanuel LC, Saint Clair, MI
BURNS, Polly; Trinity LC, Reed City, MI
COULSON, Shannon; St Luke LC, Harrison, MI
DRAPER, Barb; Grace LC, Coopersville, MI
DUCHARME, Willard Charles (Dewey)†; Huntington Woods LC, Huntington Woods, MI
FORD, George F; Trinity LC, Traverse City, MI
GRULKE, James; Immanuel LC, Alpena, MI
HAWORTH, Mark D; St Andrew LC, Portland, MI
HOWELL, Walter W; Our Redeemer LC, Taylor, MI
JOHNSON, David W; Trinity LC, Onkama, MI
KOKE, Carol; Faith LC, Grand Blanc, MI
MEYER, Diane L; Faith LC, Prescott, MI
MILLER, Coralie; St Paul LC, Caledonia, MI
NEUMANN, Steven (Steve); Holy Cross LC, Saginaw, MI
NICKODEMUS, Daniel (Dan); Historic Trinity LC, Detroit, MI
NUTZMANN, John W; Messiah LC, Clio, MI
POLISKI, Lee A; Christ LC, New Baltimore, MI
QUITMEYER, Fritz Carl; Christ Our Savior LC, Livonia, MI
REINBOLD, Wesley Allan; Immanuel LC Of Frankentrost, Saginaw, MI
RISH, Leila; St Paul LC, Unionville, MI
ROMANCHECK, John D; Bethlehem LC, Roseville, MI
SAALFELD, James R; Peace LC, Ann Arbor, MI
SCHOTT, William M (Bill); Emmanuel LC, Dearborn, MI
SCHULTZ, Paul; St Luke LC, Nunica, MI
SEE, Walter H; Holy Redeemer LC, Dryden, MI
SHULER, Stephen (Steve); Trinity LC, Saint Joseph, MI
SMITH, Mark; Journey LC, Oxford, MI
SPENLE, Lori Ann; Holy Cross LC, Belding, MI
SPRENGER, Mark W; St Paul LC, Sanford, MI
VIGES, Philip; St Matthew LC, Holt, MI
WAGNER, Lloyd Alan Sr; Trinity LC, Jackson, MI
WARREN, Jeremy Michael; St Paul LC, Bay City, MI
WILSON, Janeane N; Zion LC, Harbor Beach, MI
WOLTEMATH, Chad R; St Luke LC, Ann Arbor, MI
WORDEN, Joseph (Joe); Redemption LC, Battle Creek, MI
YORK, Guy R; Faith LC, Highland, MI
ZOWADA, Tim D; Zion LC, Petoskey, MI

Advisory Ordained

BROMM, Glen Wade; Living Water LC, Mio, MI
LASSANSKE, Dennis L; Trinity LC, Muskegon, MI

Advisory Commissioned

ALLEN, Ronald M; St Paul LC, Ann Arbor, MI
ALTEVOGT, Lester L; LC of the Lakes, Addison, MI
FRICKE, John M; Hope LC, DeWitt, MI
GALLAGHER, John Joseph III; Trinity LC, Muskegon, MI
GIERACH, Raymond C; Trinity LC, Clinton Township, MI
HOOPER, Susan L (Sue); Faith LC, Grand Blanc, MI
HORNING, Brian Curtis; Zion LC, Petoskey, MI
JONES, Amanda Ruth; St Paul LC, Flint, MI
KRIEGER, Ruth A; Trinity LC, Berrien Springs, MI
KUSCH, David S; St John LC, Rochester, MI
LIVO, Gilbert R; Christ The King LC, Southgate, MI
MEYER, David J; St John LC, Fraser, MI
RUSSELL, Charles Patrick; St Peter LC, Macomb, MI
SPIEHS, Shawna Lynae†; Trinity LC, Utica, MI
WESTON, Amy J; St Matthew LC, Walled Lake, MI
WILLS, Paul R; Immanuel LC, Kalamazoo, MI

Mid-South District

Voting Ordained

ABRAHAM, Andrew J; Shepherd Of The Hills LC, Crossville, TN
BARTZSCH, Thomas W; River Valley Grace LC, Lamar, AR
BAUCH, Gregory D; Ascension LC, Madison, TN
LEIGEBER, Joshua Paul; All Saints LC, Jonesboro, AR
LEIGEBER, Paul A; Faith LC, Union City, TN
SCHAAF, Kent R; Grace LC, Little Rock, AR
SMITH, Gordon L; Our Savior LC, Morristown, TN
VANDERCOOK, David Dominic Sr; Trinity LC, North Little Rock, AR
WELMER, Donald Nicholas; First LC, Chattanooga, TN
ZISCHKE, John David Karl; Restoration LC, Fayetteville, AR

Voting Lay

BRUMMETT, Keith D; Faith LC, Bentonville, AR
D'ATRIO, Keith; Zion LC, Avilla, AR
DAVENPORT, Dennis R; Zion LC, Ulm, AR
DUNCANSON, Pete; Immanuel LC, Memphis, TN
FICKEN, Jack P; (cong. unknown)
HEIDEL, Dustin C; St Paul LC, Wartburg, TN
JACOBS, Dan Edward; Good Shepherd LC, Chattanooga, TN
LUPPE, Frank J; Grace LC, Clarksville, TN
PRICE, Elyse S; First LC, Little Rock, AR
REINERT, David; Redeemer LC, Mountain Home, AR

Advisory Commissioned

FISCHER, Michelle Diane; Immanuel LC, Memphis, TN
IRWIN, Jessica M†; First LC, Knoxville, TN

Minnesota North District

Voting Ordained

BIBERDORF, Nathanael Richard; Zion LC, Browns Valley, MN
CARLSON, Daniel (Roy); St Paul's LC, Milaca, MN
COOP, Gregory S (Gregg); Prince Of Peace LC, Baxter, MN
FISH, Robin D Sr; Immanuel LC, Verndale, MN
HOLLINGSEAD, Benjamin Alan; St Paul LC, Eden Valley, MN
HOUSER, Philip Gideon; Trinity LC, Lake George, MN
KLATT, Donald Michael; Immanuel LC, Holloway, MN
KONKEL, Nathaniel William; Peace LC, Finlayson, MN
MEYER, Matthew J (Matt); Beautiful Savior LC, Callaway, MN
MOMMENS, David R; St Pauls LC, Melrose, MN
MUENCH, Josef L; Trinity LC, Twin Valley, MN
PEPERKORN, Troy W; Faith LC, Silver Bay, MN
PUMPHREY, Ryan John; St Johns LC, Villard, MN
REHWALDT, Timothy J; St John LC, Sauk Rapids, MN
SOUER, Eric D; St Johns LC, Barnesville, MN
STAUTY, Donald M (Don); Gloria Dei LC, Virginia, MN
TILNEY, David M; St Luke LC, Wood Lake, MN
WALSH, David Jordan; Redeemer LC, Menahga, MN

Voting Lay

BAKER, Steven L; St Stephens LC, Braham, MN
BERGSTROM, Donna; Mount Olive LC, Duluth, MN
DIERKS, Gary; Bethlehem LC, Frazee, MN
EHNES, Kirk H; Immanuel LC, Eagle Bend, MN
GOETZ, Daniel (Dan); Redeemer LC, Saint Cloud, MN
GRUDEM, Jerry; St John LC, Park Rapids, MN
HANSEN, Clare; St Paul LC, Campbell, MN
HAUSER, David J; Trinity LC, Fergus Falls, MN
HOBBIIE, Melodie; Zion LC, Ada, MN
KURASH, Terry S; Trinity LC, Sauk Rapids, MN
MAROTZKE, Wendel K; Zion LC, Morris, MN
MUSTONEN, Dean Rudolph; Living Savior LC, Lake Shore, MN
NELSON, Craig; Redeemer LC, Deer River, MN
RATZ, Timothy Jon; St Andrew LC, West Fargo, ND
ROLF, Thomas (Tom); Trinity LC, Sandstone, MN
THALMANN, Rod; St John LC, Ottertail, MN
TIEMAN, Wayne W; Trinity LC, Bemidji, MN
WARD, Gene T; Immanuel LC, Parkers Prairie, MN

Advisory Commissioned

SAGISSOR, Emily Lynne; Our Redeemer LC, Moorhead, MN

Minnesota South District

Voting Ordained

BAKER, Jesse Cory Steven; Zion LC, Hardwick, MN
BARRY, Matthew Allen; St Johns LC, Chaska, MN
BERNAU, Wayne A; Immanuel Ev LC, Courtland, MN
BERTRAM, Anthony Thad (Tony); St Paul LC, Fairmont, MN
GEHRKE, Robert Joseph; South Shore Trinity LC, White Bear Lake, MN
GLESS, Adam Christopher; Zion LC, Mayer, MN
HAAKANA, Jon T; Mount Olive LC, Anoka, MN
HAUGEN, Peter Jacob; St Paul Ev LC, Chatfield, MN
HORTON, Christopher P; St Johns LC of Rich Valley, Rosemount, MN
JACOBSEN, Adam Edward; Trinity LC, Sioux Valley Twp, MN
LANE, Matthew D; Peace LC, Faribault, MN
LODER, Mark S; St James LC, Howard Lake, MN
MATHENY, Adam Michael; Our Savior LC, Mankato, MN
MATHEWS, Michael William; First LC, Waldorf, MN
MICHALK, Michael E; Mount Olive LC, Mound, MN
MILLER, Joshua Charles; Jehovah LC, Saint Paul, MN
MOSS, Matthew Vernon; St John's LC, Corcoran, MN
MUELLER, Herbert C III; Immanuel LC, Lewiston, MN
NELSON, Eric Matthew; St Paul Ev LC, Sherburne, MN
NIEDERSTADT, Jeffrey William; Holy Cross LC, Rochester, MN
PARRISH, Brent L; Immanuel LC, Prior Lake, MN
WEBER, Kurt A; Golden Valley LC, Golden Valley, MN
WILSON, Steven D (Steve); St John LC, Sherburne, MN
ZUCKER, Tyge C; Concordia LC, Red Wing, MN

Voting Lay

COOK, Andrew; St John LC, Norwood Young America, MN
EHLERS, Delmar W; Trinity Ev LC, Austin, MN
ERDMAN, Wesley J (Sam); Trinity Lone Oak LC, Eagan, MN
ETCHISON, John E; Cross View LC, Edina, MN
GEHLBACH, Paul; Bethlehem LC, Saint Paul, MN
HAMP, Timothy James; Immanuel LC, Fairmont, MN
HEINTZ, Ethan R; St Pauls LC, Fulda, MN
HOLTZ, Adam; Grace LC, Dodge Center, MN
KIRSCH, Martin J; Mount Calvary LC, Richfield, MN
KOOSMAN, David Rollin (Dave); Bethlehem LC, Annandale, MN
KRUSE, Gary; St John LC, Hutchinson, MN
LEASE, Chad; LC of the Good Shepherd, North Mankato, MN
LEWIS, Daniel; St Martin LC, Winona, MN
LINDH, Al; Glory Of Christ LC, Plymouth, MN
NETLAND, Dan; Good Shepherd LC, Circle Pines, MN
OLSON, Barry Dean; Trinity LC, Waseca, MN
PASCHKE, Richard R; Family Of Christ LC, Ham Lake, MN
QUAST, Steve; St John LC, Winsted, MN
ROSLANSKY, David R; St Matthew LC, Worthington, MN
ROWLANDS, David O; Trinity LC, Rochester, MN
VOTH, Wayne; Immanuel LC, Hay Creek, MN
ZUMHOFE, Jeff; Immanuel LC, Gaylord, MN

Advisory Ordained

MCCOURT, Craig Thomas; Peace LC, Arlington, MN

Advisory Commissioned

ANDERSON, Aislinn Rhea; Shepherd Of The Grove LC, Maple Grove, MN
BECKMAN, April Heather†; Redeemer LC, Rochester, MN
BOEHLKE, Jeffrey K; St Pauls LC, Watertown, MN
KRUSE, Robin Faith; St John LC, Hutchinson, MN
LANDSKROENER, Joel P; St Johns LC, Chaska, MN
LOVHAUG, Brenda Ann; Golden Valley LC, Golden Valley, MN
PETERSON, LaDonna Kay†; Immanuel LC, Lakefield, MN
SCHEELE, Dean M; First Ev LC, Glencoe, MN

Missouri District

Voting Ordained

BARTO, Gregory S; Zion LC, Hillsboro, MO
BERRY, Matthew Christopher; Concordia LC, Sikeston, MO
BOISCLAIR, David Richard; Bethesda LC, Saint Louis, MO
DEHNE, John Allen; St Andrew LC, Cape Girardeau, MO
FERGUSON, Eamonn Michael; Holy Trinity LC, Mound City, MO
FURGESON, Jon C; Peace LC, Saint Louis County, MO

GORLINE, Jeremy Dean; Child of God LC, Saint Peters, MO
 HENRICKSON, Charles M; Grace LC, De Soto, MO
 HETZEL, Brian J; Pointe of Hope LC, Blue Springs, MO
 KENNEL, Andrew C; St Johns LC, Monett, MO
 KRANZ, Mark J; Mount Calvary LC, Excelsior Springs, MO
 KRUEGER, Joel A; Faith LC, Branson, MO
 LUCAS, Frank E; Immanuel LC, Altenburg, MO
 MALONE, C Robert Sr; Amazing Grace LC, Pleasant Hill, MO
 MAUSS, Douglas E; Pathfinder LC, Ellisville, MO
 MEYER, Jonathan Vaughn; Holy Cross LC, O'Fallon, MO
 MORRIS, Timothy E (Tim); Alive In Christ LC, Columbia, MO
 MUELLER, Jacob Timothy; Holy Cross LC, Emma, MO
 PERLING, John F; Faith LC, Saint Robert, MO
 PREUS, Andrew J; Trinity LC, New Haven, MO
 RUBACK, Nathan Aaron; Grace Lutheran Chapel, Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO
 SALO, Scott A; Immanuel LC, Hannibal, MO
 SMITH, William Gerald Jr (Jerry); Trinity LC, Appleton City, MO
 STAFFELD, Timothy William; Epiphany LC, Saint Louis, MO
 THOMAS, Glen D; St Pauls LC, Des Peres, MO
 THORSON, Brian J; Grace Ev LC, Lexington, MO
 WILLIAMS, Guillaume J S Sr; Hope Lutheran Chapel, Osage Beach, MO

Voting Lay

BAUMHOEGGER, Harry R Jr; Zion LC, Owensville, MO
 BRENNER, Russell W (Russ); Trinity LC, Jefferson City, MO
 CRESPO, Wilfredo Jr; Bethlehem LC, Warrensburg, MO
 DAVIDSON, Ian; Trinity LC, Norborne, MO
 EHRHARD, Raymond A; Blessed Savior LC, Florissant, MO
 ENSOR, Stacey Kay; St Matthew LC, Sullivan, MO
 GEIS, Aaron; Good Shepherd LC, Cape Girardeau, MO
 HOPPE, Russ; Immanuel LC, Wentzville, MO
 KIEFER, Daniel H; Zion LC, Perryville, MO
 KLATT, Daniel P (Dan); Calvary LC, Kansas City, MO
 LINHARDT, Dean H (Harvey); Hope LC, Saint Ann, MO
 MAHSMAN, Phillip D (Phil); Trinity LC, Louisiana, MO
 MARQUARDT, John A; Zion LC, Rockville, MO
 MCCOIG, Larry; Trinity LC, Columbia, MO
 MEYR, Dwight; St Paul LC, Jackson, MO
 MOELLER, Deborah (Debbie); St Trinity LC, Saint Louis, MO
 MOWERY, Kevin M; King Of Kings LC, Chesterfield, MO
 PIGORS, Howard A (Carl); Holy Cross LC, Kansas City, MO
 RADTKE, David E; Ascension LC, Kansas City, MO
 ROHLFING, Dennis; Immanuel LC, Saint Charles, MO
 STEELE, John; Glendale LC, Glendale, MO
 TEBB, Casey; LC Of The Resurrection, Sunset Hills, MO
 TRIPLET, Jim; St Paul LC, Saint Joseph, MO
 TURLEY, Ken; St Paul LC, Farmington, MO
 UHLMANSIEK, Thomas E (Tom); Hope LC, High Ridge, MO
 VIETS, Doris W; St John LC, Cole Camp, MO
 WESTERN, Joseph; Trinity LC, Springfield, MO

Advisory Ordained

BRANDT, Gary Ray; Peace LC, Camdenton, MO
 HERTWIG, Frederick C; Trinity LC, Cole Camp, MO
 KAMPRATH, Stephen P (Steve); Immanuel LC, Rolla, MO
 NINKE, John Howard; Faith LC, Jefferson City, MO
 WOLLENBURG, Alan J; Zion LC, Gordonville, MO

Advisory Commissioned

BOND, Gillian Mary; Concordia LC, Maplewood, MO
 BURKEE, Jeffrey R; Salem LC, Black Jack, MO
 FIALA, David Aaron; LC of Webster Gardens, Webster Groves, MO
 FRANK, David James (Dave)†; Timothy LC, Blue Springs, MO
 GIFFORD, Charles J Sr; Trinity LC, Alma, MO
 HONOREE, Cheryl L; Concordia LC, Frohna, MO
 JANSSEN, Matthew Carl; Hope LC, Saint Louis, MO
 KAHLER, Micheal L; Holy Cross LC, O'Fallon, MO
 LOHMAN, James Harold; Zion LC, Saint Charles, MO
 MCDONNELL, Ruth Ericka; Salem LC, Saint Louis, MO
 NOWISZEWSKI, Nancy Edna†; Timothy LC, Blue Springs, MO
 NUMMELA, Thomas A; St Pauls LC, Des Peres, MO
 RICE, Denise L; Trinity LC, Saint Louis, MO
 SIMPSON, Matthew E (Matt); St Andrew LC, Cape Girardeau, MO

SPRINGER, Hans G; LC Of The Resurrection, Sunset Hills, MO
 THOMPSON, Carolyn M; Alive In Christ LC, Columbia, MO

Montana District

Voting Ordained

BEHM, David M; Concordia LC, Williston, ND
 MERZ, Daniel S; Emmaus LC, Livingston, MT
 SHUPE, Paul R; St Paul LC, Bridger, MT
 WINTER, Kyle Christopher†; The Church at Creston-Lutheran, Kalispell, MT

Voting Lay

HABENER, Steve; Hope LC, Billings, MT
 HALVORSON, Tom R; Trinity LC, Sidney, MT
 KEMPF, Joel H; Our Redeemer LC, Columbia Falls, MT
 PETRIE, Joe; Shepherd Of The Valley LC, Salmon, ID

Advisory Commissioned

KOSCHE, Thomas Paul; Trinity LC, Billings, MT

Nebraska District

Voting Ordained

ARCHER, Adam K; St John LC, Ord, NE
 AWE, Michael A; Hope LC, South Sioux City, NE
 BURMA, Cory W; Peace LC, Columbus, NE
 FELCHER, Lonnie Ray; Peace LC, McCook, NE
 FOUTS, Bart J; St John LC, Battle Creek, NE
 FRANCISCO, Benjamin Joel (Ben); Faith LC, York, NE
 GERBER, Anthony Joseph; Trinity LC, Fremont, NE
 HARTMAN, Jared Paul; St Paul LC, Wisner, NE
 HESSEL, Kenneth N; Our Redeemer LC, Springfield, NE
 JANKE, Ryan Matthew; St Peter LC, Orchard, NE
 KOHLMAYER, Marcel L; St Johns LC, Tecumseh, NE
 KRUSE, Caleb John; Lord Of Life LC, Elkhorn, NE
 KUNZE, John Raymond; Messiah LC, Lincoln, NE
 OETTING, Jonathan Wayne; Shepherd of the Hills LC, Hyannis, NE
 RASMUSSEN, John W; Holy Cross LC, Kearney, NE
 SCHAFFER, Gregory A (Greg); St Peters LC, Davenport, NE
 SCHECK, Nathan David; St John LC, Seward, NE
 SIEBERT, Benjamin R (Ben); Zion LC, Hastings, NE
 WING, Daniel S; Trinity LC, Lincoln, NE
 WRIGHT, Brian Lynn; Christ LC, Cairo, NE

Voting Lay

BOLTE, William Patrick (Bill); Emmanuel LC, York, NE
 CARPENTER, Don; Immanuel LC, Lincoln, NE
 ENDORF, David; Immanuel LC, Daykin, NE
 FOWLKES, David; St Paul LC, Tilden, NE
 FRAZIER, Sandra (Sandy); Pacific Hills LC, Omaha, NE
 FRICKEL, Garold; Immanuel LC, Atkinson, NE
 HOINS, Barbie; Peace LC, Hastings, NE
 JANKE, Phillip A (Phil); St Paul LC, Winside, NE
 KINDT, Sharon A; St Paul LC, Doniphan, NE
 KORTE, Bruce; Christ LC, Columbus, NE
 LUNNEY, Yvonne A; Zion LC, Garland, NE
 PHILLIPS, Thomas (Tom); Trinity LC, Lexington, NE
 SEIBER, Dale; First LC, Papillion, NE
 STANDIFORD, Melanie A; St John LC, Curtis, NE
 SWAN, Marvin; Zion LC, Grant, NE
 TIMM, Darrel; Grace LC, Neligh, NE
 WAGEMAN, Steve M; St John LC, Pender, NE
 WEBER, Carol; St Matthew LC, Cedar Bluffs, NE
 WEBER, Rod E†; St Paul LC, Weeping Water, NE
 WILSHUSEN, Brec; Peace LC, Waverly, NE

Advisory Commissioned

ANSON, Harlan D; Our Redeemer LC, Staplehurst, NE
 BOEKA, Cassie Denise; Trinity LC, Arapahoe, NE
 SEIFERT, Vanessa M; Calvary LC, Lincoln, NE
 WHITNEY, Steven Bryan; St John LC, Battle Creek, NE

New England District

Voting Ordained

CLOW, Mark R; Grace Ev LC, Middletown, CT
 GREGORY, Peter F; Our Savior LC, Westminster, MA
 REITZ, Jason Eric; Bethany LC, West Hartford, CT
 RUWISCH, George A V; Grace LC, Nashua, NH
 SCAMMAN, Evan Paul; First LC, Greenwich, CT

Voting Lay

DAHL, Brian; Christ LC, Niantic, CT
 DAY, Darik C; Redeemer LC, Gorham, ME
 EDMON, Paul Pretzer; First LC, Boston, MA
 KRAMPITZ, Jan A; Holy Trinity LC, Terryville, CT
 SORKNESS, Kyle; Zion Ev LC, Orange, CT

Advisory Commissioned

GIERKE, Jennifer Denise; The LC Of The Savior, Bedford, MA

New Jersey District

Voting Ordained

HODGES, Jonathan E; Christ The King LC, Ringwood, NJ
 SMALL, David C; Calvary LC, Medford, NJ
 VOSSLER, L Richard Jr; Grace LC, Livingston, NJ

Voting Lay

BERGMANN, Boyd; Redeemer LC, Westfield, NJ
 GIBNEY, Geraldine Gold; St Paul's Ev LC, Closter, NJ
 ONDER, Paul M; Holy Faith LC, Oak Ridge, NJ
 WOLFGRAH, Cassandra I (Cassie)†; Holy Cross LC, Bordentown Township, NJ

North Dakota District

Voting Ordained

BEYERSDORF, Philip John; St Mark LC, Minot, ND
 BRADEMEYER, Christopher William; St Johns LC, Oakes, ND
 CHEPULIS, Mark Andrew; Our Savior LC, Cavalier, ND
 MARCIS, Thomas R Jr; Zion LC, Bismarck, ND
 SCHULZ, Steven Michael; Immanuel LC, Fargo, ND
 TOOMAN, Matthew Marvin; Immanuel LC, Wahpeton, ND

Voting Lay

ANDERSON, Anthony J; Immanuel LC, Grand Forks, ND
 BROWNLEE, Curtis Alan; Holy Cross LC, Lidgerwood, ND
 CHRISTENSEN, Bradley J (Brad); Shepherd Of The Valley LC, Bismarck, ND
 FILIPEK, Kim; St Pauls LC, Minot, ND
 FLIETH, Randy; Concordia LC, Jamestown, ND

North Wisconsin District

Voting Ordained

BENDER, Kevin James; SS Peter and Paul LC, Houghton, MI
 ERRER, Joshua Samuel; Faith LC, Green Bay, WI
 FEHRMANN, Ryan J; Zion Ev LC, Wausau, WI
 GILLET, Stephen Paul; St Paul LC, Tomahawk, WI
 JENSEN, Scott Arthur; Luther Memorial LC, River Falls, WI
 JERABEK, Todd R†; Zion LC, Embarrass, WI
 KLINE, Steven G (Steve); Shepherd Of The Hills LC, Greenville, WI
 KNEFFELKAMP, David J; St Paul LC, Whitehall, WI
 LAHNERS, Kenneth W; Trinity LC, Glidden, WI
 MARKWORTH, Gary L; St John LC, Pittsville, WI
 MORSCHING, Samuel L; Peace LC, Park Falls, WI
 RADKE, Paul Christopher; St Matthew LC, Deerbrook, WI
 SHAFFER, Corey Allen; Trinity LC, Port Edwards, WI
 SHOREY, Ralph Chester III; Trinity LC, Medford, WI
 STOLL, Steven E (Steve); Tabor LC, Mountain, WI
 THOMAS, Brad; Zion LC, Chippewa Falls, WI
 WALTER, Jody Roger; Our Redeemer LC, Webster, WI
 ZOBEL, Andrew J; St James LC, Shawano, WI

Voting Lay

BALLERSTEIN, Roger; St John LC, Edgar, WI
 EHLERT, Larry J; Peace LC, Antigo, WI
 FAHL, Jeffrey V; Trinity LC, Prentice, WI
 FENSKE, Marie; Trinity LC, Bear Creek, WI
 MELEEM, David; Hope LC, De Pere, WI
 MEYER, James; St Paul LC, Bonduel, WI
 MILLER, Kevin D; Calvary LC, Waupaca, WI
 MOORE, Philip†; Faith United LC, Gillett, WI
 ROACH, Don; St John LC, Black River Falls, WI
 RUSSLER, Jim; Peace LC, Arbor Vitae, WI
 SALMINEN, Amy; Redeemer LC, Marquette, MI
 STRENGER, Jack; Christ LC, Marshfield, WI
 TIMM, Craig Victor; St John LC, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
 VOELKER, Randy; First LC, Rice Lake, WI
 VOIGHT, Donald Norman; St Paul LC, Merrill, WI

YARISH, Terry L; Rib Mountain LC, Wausau, WI
ZAMARRIPA, Alex; St Paul LC, Thorp, WI

Advisory Commissioned

FERG, Emily J; St Martin LC, Clintonville, WI

Northern Illinois District

Voting Ordained

ANDERSON, Steven J; Gloria Dei LC, Chicago, IL
ANTONETTI, Christopher Omero; St Pauls LC, Lockport, IL
BARTENS, Emmett Arnold; Bethany LC, Naperville, IL
BROWN, Eric J; Trinity LC, Herscher, IL
CAMPBELL, Braun Christian; Immanuel LC, Belvidere, IL
CONRAD, Matthew J (Matt); Cross LC, Yorkville, IL
EHRHARD, Jacob William; St Johns LC, Chicago, IL
FAY, Karl Richard; Prince Of Peace LC, Palatine, IL
FISCHABER, Phillip Jordan; Holy Trinity LC, Walnut, IL
GALLIGAR, Patrick Joseph; Zion LC, Marengo, IL
GALLUP, Roger B; Bethlehem LC, River Grove, IL
HATESOHL, Andrew (Andy); Trinity LC, Huntley, IL
JAMES, Christopher N; Immanuel LC, Downers Grove, IL
KEATING, David Tucker; St James LC, Chicago, IL
LAMIE, Julian A; St John LC, Beecher, IL
MILASH, Bruce Paul; St Peter LC, Dundee, IL
PETZOLD, Jonathan David; Trinity LC, Roselle, IL
SCHELLHAS, Aaron M; Immanuel LC, Mokena, IL
SQUIRES, Benjamin Charles; Bethel LC, Gurnee, IL

Voting Lay

BISHOP, Timothy E (Tim); Immanuel LC, East Dundee, IL
BROWN, David; Resurrection LC, Chicago, IL
CHILDERS, Crista; Trinity LC, Burr Ridge, IL
CROW, Brian J; Immanuel LC, Crystal Lake, IL
EDEN, Brent; St Pauls LC, Bourbonnais, IL
EVANS, Brian; Christ LC, Orland Park, IL
HELLER, Jeffrey S (Jeff); St Andrews LC, Park Ridge, IL
HENDRYX, Thomas; Christ The Rock LC, Rockford, IL
HILLMAN, Darlene; Immanuel LC, DeKalb, IL
KELLER, Erich M; River Of Life LC, Channahon, IL
KELLY, John H III; St Matthew LC, Hawthorn Woods, IL
LEISE, William George; St Paul LC, Oak Lawn, IL
LUSTREA, Robert; Trinity LC, Lombard, IL
MEYER, Pamela Ann (Pam); St Paul's Ev LC, Chicago Heights, IL
MILLER, Shane E; Christ Our Savior LC, Dixon, IL
PACYGA, Emily E; Tabor LC, Chicago, IL
SOLTWISCH, Thomas L (Tom); Zion LC, Naperville, IL
STERN, Mark O; St Paul LC, Brookfield, IL

Advisory Ordained

BUSSERT, Mark P; Trinity LC, Lisle, IL
MUELLER, Charles S Jr (Chuck); Trinity LC, Roselle, IL

Advisory Commissioned

BERG, Alan M; Immanuel LC, East Dundee, IL
BIERLEIN, Beth N; Immanuel LC, Batavia, IL
HASSELD AHL, David C; Zion LC, Marengo, IL
JENSEN, Karen E; Christ The Rock LC, Rockford, IL
LAABS, Jonathan Charles; Trinity LC, Roselle, IL
LAABS, June M; Trinity LC, Roselle, IL
OTTEN, Ruth A; St Paul LC, Brookfield, IL
PIEL, Laura M; Trinity LC, Roselle, IL
PIEL, Lianne Melissa; St John LC, Elgin, IL
PIEL, Paul F; St Peter LC, Arlington Heights, IL
URBAN, Mariann C (Catie); Immanuel LC, Elmhurst, IL

Northwest District

Voting Ordained

ATKINSON, Dustin Carl; Star Of The North LC, Kenai, AK
CAVENER, James H; Beautiful Savior LC, Reedsport, OR
DUBKE, Dallas C R; Faith LC, Monmouth, OR
GAUSE, Mark E; New Hope LC, Pacific, WA
GULLIDGE, Jason E; St Paul LC, Jerome, ID
HESS, Karl R; Emmaus Ev LC, Redmond, OR
MATTHEWS, James Allan; Grace LC, Lakewood, WA
MUELLER, Jacob Steven; Epiphany LC, Kenmore, WA
SCHROEDER, Todd Eric; Redeemer LC, Richland, WA
SHAVER, Ross Patrick; Zion LC, Nampa, ID
SHEARIER, Jeffrey Edward; Bethlehem LC, Aloha, OR
SPRENGLE, James J; Ascension LC, Portland, OR
SWAN, Jason; LC Of The Atonement, Seattle, WA
THOMAS, Eli J; Christ Community LC, Ridgefield, WA
TRIPLETT, Kirk Eugene; Faith LC, Pocatello, ID

VON BEHREN, Michael T (Mike); Holy Cross LC, Spokane, WA
WINTERSTEIN, Timothy James; Faith LC, East Wenatchee, WA
ZUCH, Aaron T; Grace LC, Blaine, WA

Voting Lay

CARTER, Branden Michael; Good Shepherd LC, Boise, ID
COLLISON, Virginia A; Redeemer LC, Gresham, OR
DENNY, Stuart; Shepherd Of The Hills LC, Rathdrum, ID
EDMON, Harry; Messiah LC, Seattle, WA
FALB, Roland; Peace LC, Chehalis, WA
FRASCH, Rich; Faith LC, La Grande, OR
HAYES, Aaron D; Grace LC, Pocatello, ID
HILLER, Bryan; Light Of Christ LC, Federal Way, WA
HORN, Kim; St Matthew LC, Washougal, WA
JANSSEN, Karen M; St Pauls LC, Grants Pass, OR
KOLTZ, Lawrence L (Larry); Hope LC, Seattle, WA
LUTKEHUS, Richard (Rich); Clover Trinity LC, Buhl, ID
MIX, Tim; Trinity LC, Mount Angel, OR
RICHARD, Jill M; St Paul LC, Sherwood, OR
SIMPSON, Jerry; Our Redeemer LC, Chugiak, AK
SYMMANK, David (Dave); Trinity LC, Mount Vernon, WA
TEILBORG, Dylan; Hope LC, Spokane Valley, WA
WESTHAFFER, Carol; Our Savior LC, Waldport, OR

Advisory Ordained

BJORNSTAD, Robert M†; Peace LC, Salem, OR
GRIESSE, Mark E; Peace LC, Selah, WA

Advisory Commissioned

BOPP, Anne E; Grace LC, Pocatello, ID
GABLE, Gary G; Zion LC, Snohomish, WA
GABLE, Kathleen A; Zion LC, Snohomish, WA
KRANICH, Jeffrey D (Jeff); Prince Of Peace LC, Portland, OR
VANDE VOORT-SCHWEIM, Amy L; Immanuel LC, Puyallup, WA

Ohio District

Voting Ordained

BURGE, Benjamin R; Royal Redeemer LC, Liberty Township, OH
HARTSOUGH, Mark Richard; New Hope LC, Newark, OH
HAUGGEN, James Allen Jr (Jim); St John LC, Strongsville, OH
HROMOWYK, Wesley; Zion Ev LC, Columbus, OH
LUTZ, Stephen H; Trinity LC, Elmore, OH
MARCIS, Peter Christian; St Paul LC, Napoleon, OH
MATZKE, Mark G; St Mark LC, Chesterland, OH
MEWS, Kurt F; St John LC, Defiance, OH
WACKER, Robert J†; Trinity Ev LC, Warren, OH
WALLACE, Michael Scott; Gethsemane Ev LC, Lakewood, OH
WILSON, Andrew James; Trinity LC, Zanesville, OH
WITTE, Keith Frederick; Bethlehem LC, Fairborn, OH
ZIELINSKI, Philip Edward; St Paul LC, Valley City, OH
ZIEMANN, Kurt R; Zion LC, Painesville, OH

Voting Lay

CHAMBERLAIN, Lewis Martin (Martin); Trinity LC, Logan, OH
ESSEL, Randall; St John LC, Cleveland, OH
GIBSON, Tim P (Tim); Shepherd Of The Valley LC, Perrysburg, OH
HORN, Shawn; Messiah LC, Greenhills, OH
JOHNSON, Paul G; Faith LC, Avon, OH
JONES, Jeffrey J; St Timothy LC, Huber Heights, OH
KRONE, Stephen Robert; St Paul LC, Westlake, OH
LAINE, Matthew; Hope LC, Condit, OH
LOCKHART, Robert; Shore Haven LC, Euclid, OH
MIELKE, Karl†; St Johns LC, Wapakoneta, OH
OLSZEWSKI, Larry; Atonement LC, Columbus, OH
ROHRS, Randall F (Randy); Zion LC, Ridgeville Corners, OH
ZIEMANN, Jeremy; St Johns LC, Geneva, OH

Advisory Commissioned

CHEADLE, Deanna Lynn; Our Savior LC, Chillicothe, OH
DOWDELL, Dorcel; St Philip LC, Toledo, OH

Oklahoma District

Voting Ordained

HALL, Christopher D (Chris); Grace LC, Tulsa, OK
HECKMANN, Joel T; St Johns LC, Okarche, OK

MOELLER, Dwight Fitzgerald; Bethlehem LC, Adair, OK
REITER, Ahren Lowell; Holy Cross LC, Lawton, OK
ROGGOW, Timothy Carl; Zion LC, Alva, OK
ROSS, Daniel Clifton; Christ LC, Mustang, OK
WACKLER, John E; Zion LC, Stillwater, OK

Voting Lay

FISCHER, Ron; Trinity LC, Norman, OK
HORN, Ronald Gene II; LC Of Our Savior, Bethany, OK
O HARA, Loren D; Trinity LC, El Reno, OK
PLUNKETT, Randy†; Immanuel LC, Garber, OK
POWELL, Dylan J; First LC, Ponca City, OK
RAU, Jerry M; Redeemer LC, Bartlesville, OK
STEITZ, Paul A; Trinity LC, Broken Arrow, OK

Advisory Ordained

WADE, Kenneth Earl; St Paul's LC, Enid, OK

Advisory Commissioned

STEVENS, Todd Corey; Immanuel LC, Broken Arrow, OK

Pacific Southwest District

Voting Ordained

AHLMAN, Timothy Paul (Tim); Christ Greenfield LC, Gilbert, AZ
BERAN, Joseph M; Bethlehem LC, Santa Clarita, CA
BLAKE, Kyle H; Bethany LC, Long Beach, CA
BLANKE, Neal R; St Pauls LC, Pomona, CA
EICHINGER, Eric Todd; Our Savior LC, Arcadia, CA
HARMAN, Vincent Ronald (Vince); Christ LC, Yuma, AZ
HENKELL, James D (Jim); St Pauls LC, San Diego, CA
HILKEN, Dennis Ray; Redeemer By The Sea LC, Carlsbad, CA
HOFF, Clinton S; Our Saviors LC, Ridgecrest, CA
JONES, Keith R; Good Shepherd LC, Goleta, CA
KAROLUS, John D; Shepherd Of The Desert LC, Scottsdale, AZ
KASTNER, Luke Wayne; St Johns LC, Hemet, CA
KLEMM, Derek S; Mountain View LC, Las Vegas, NV
KLINKENBERG, Timothy M; St Johns LC, Orange, CA
KOLL, Quincy Donald; Mt Olive LC, Poway, CA
LOOS, Bartholomew Clark (Bart); First LC, Manhattan Beach, CA
MUELLER, Steven P; St Pauls LC of Irvine CA, Irvine, CA
ROSS, Andrew Blake (Drew); Christ LC, Costa Mesa, CA
ROSSINGTON, Mark W; Epiphany LC, Chandler, AZ
SCHAUS, Nathan Eugene; Summit Community LC, Buckeye, AZ
SCHLOEMAN, Karl E; Faith LC, Cottonwood, AZ
STETSON, Adam; Christ LC, Boulder City, NV

Voting Lay

ANDREOLA, Anthony J; Good Shepherd LC, Tehachapi, CA
CASTELLANOS, Katie; Messiah LC, Downey, CA
CHOITZ, Bret A; Living Water LC, Buckeye, AZ
DUSEK, Mike; Calvary LC, Yuma, AZ
EVANS, Paul; Redeemer LC, Huntington Beach, CA
HERRMANN, Jonathan (Jon); Edgewater LC, Eastvale, CA
HITTINGER, Wayne Morse; First Ev LC, El Monte, CA
KANNEG, Gail; St Pauls LC, Orange, CA
LAMONICA, Phil; Christ LC Ministries, La Mesa, CA
LANGE, Benjamin; Peace LC, North Tustin, CA
MEEKS, Renee; Trinity LC, Prescott Valley, AZ
NARDINI, Bill; Good Shepherd LC-LCMS, Kingman, AZ
NESIUS, Pamela; (cong. unknown)
RAUSCHER, Robert (Bob); Desert Foothills LC, Scottsdale, AZ
RODRIGUEZ, Nila; First LC, Burbank, CA
SALZBERG, Joshua; First LC of Culver City & Palms, Los Angeles, CA
SMITH, Mercedes E; Grace LC, Ventura, CA
STEINBART, Paul J; Hosanna LC, Mesa, AZ
STORK, Joyce; Grace LC, Henderson, NV
WANAMAKER, Mark Andrew; Good Shepherd LC, Yucaipa, CA
WAUFLE, Victoria L; Faith LC, Vista, CA
WRIGHT, John†; Grace LC, Banning, CA

Advisory Ordained

GOMEZ, Samuel (Sam); Grace LC, Escondido, CA
HUSE, Thomas Nathan (Nathan); Peace LC, North Tustin, CA
STOTERAU, Larry Allen; St Johns LC, Orange, CA

Advisory Commissioned

ANDERSON, Anne Elizabeth (Annie); Hosanna LC, Mesa, AZ
GONG, Wesley; Peace LC, North Tustin, CA
KIM, Eun Chu; Christ LC, Costa Mesa, CA
MAXWELL, Deryl R; Mt Calvary LC, Diamond Bar, CA
MC KINNEY, Robert D (Bob); Trinity LC, Simi Valley, CA
SCOTT, Mary K; Christ LC, Costa Mesa, CA

Rocky Mountain District

Voting Ordained

BORCHER, Alan D; Holy Trinity LC, Riverton, UT
HATTEBERG, Kurt Thomas; St Pauls LC, Amherst, CO
KLETKE, Daniel (Dan); St John LC, Canon City, CO
KOONTZ, Adam Clinton; Trinity LC, Denver, CO
LANGEWISCH, David John; Bethlehem LC, Lakewood, CO
LANGNESS, Richard D (Rick); Beautiful Savior LC, Broomfield, CO
MATTHIS, Christopher Smith (Chris); Epiphany Ev LC, Castle Rock, CO
MEISSNER, Duane Paul; Resurrection in the City LC, Denver, CO
NORTON, Timothy Paul; Shepherd of the Valley LC, Navajo, NM
REDEKER, Michael James; LC of Messiah, Grand Junction, CO
REEDER, Thomas N Jr; Immanuel LC, Clovis, NM
RUSNAK, Joshua W; Rock Of Ages LC, Colorado Springs, CO
WEISS, Stephen Thomas; Gloria Christi LC, Greeley, CO

Voting Lay

ANDERSEN, Rachel N; Mount Zion LC, Denver, CO
ARVIN, Michel†; Ascension LC, Littleton, CO
BUCHLEITER, Jerry W; Peace With Christ LC, Fort Collins, CO
BURGESS, Brad; Hope LC, Montrose, CO
CHASE, Gavin; Zion LC, El Paso, TX
DIENST, Michael; Resurrection Ev LC, Colorado Springs, CO
GREER, James (Stormy); Peace LC, Arvada, CO
HAHN, Alyssa; Immanuel LC, Haxtun, CO
MC NERNEY, Harold (Hal); Trinity LC, Burlington, CO
PROFT, Donovan; Immanuel LC, Albuquerque, NM
TISCARENO, Marco; Mount Calvary LC, Fort Lupton, CO
WIEFFERINK, Mackenzie; Christ LC, Denver, CO
WINTERSTEIN, Russ; Grace LC, Sandy, UT

Advisory Ordained

MUELLER, Robert R Andrew; Grace LC, Albuquerque, NM
RHODE, Paul G†; Mount Olive LC, Loveland, CO

Advisory Commissioned

BLACK, David W; Shepherd Of The Hills LC, Centennial, CO
BOWER, Kristine; Beautiful Savior LC, Broomfield, CO
BUSACKER, William P (Bill); Immanuel LC, Loveland, CO
HOWARD, Marcus Worth; Immanuel LC, Loveland, CO

SELC District

Voting Ordained

FERNANDEZ, James Francis; Hope Viera LC, Melbourne, FL
MCLEOD, Kevin Alan; Resurrection LC, Malvern, OH
RAMIREZ, Richard Leigh; Ev LC of Dr Martin Luther, Chicago, IL
ST ONGE, Charles Patrick; Ascension LC, Montreal, QC
CANADA

Voting Lay

BAISCH, Jonathan Emil; SS Peter and Paul LC, Sharon, PA
BRANDSTROM, Peter (Pete); St John LC, Cudahy, WI
FANA, Rebekah; Holy Cross LC, Lake Mary, FL
GONZALEZ, Obed; Redeemer LC of Manchester, Manchester, NJ

South Dakota District

Voting Ordained

ANDREASEN, Jordon M; Our Savior LC, Aberdeen, SD
ASCHER, Christopher Duane (Chris); Resurrection LC, Sioux Falls, SD
BROWN, Thomas Carey; St Paul LC, Spearfish, SD
HINNERS, Gregory S; St John LC, Norris, SD

LOESLIE, Ryan Lane; Immanuel LC, Dimock, SD
NEUGEBAUER, Nathan T; St John's LC, Revillo, SD
RICHERT, Jeremy D; Holy Cross Ev LC, Dakota Dunes, SD
WELTON, Adam J; St Peter's LC, Wentworth, SD

Voting Lay

BOGENHAGEN, David E; Trinity LC, White Lake, SD
GROOMS, Michael D; Christ LC, Sioux Falls, SD
NEEMAN, Ronald G (Ron); Messiah LC, Redfield, SD
REIPRICH, Michael G; Divine Shepherd LC, Black Hawk, SD
RIECK, Donald E (Don); Trinity LC, Spencer, SD
RUTTER, Mark H; St John LC, Yankton, SD
TIMMERMAN, Steven J (Steve); Mount Calvary LC, Brookings, SD
WENDLING, Philip; Zion LC, Chamberlain, SD

Advisory Ordained

WARNIER, Paul Albert; Peace LC, Alcester, SD

Advisory Commissioned

OCKANDER, Marli M; Faith LC, Sioux Falls, SD

South Wisconsin District

Voting Ordained

BENDER, Peter; Peace LC, Sussex, WI
BERG, John M; Trinity LC, Sheboygan, WI
BERGELIN, David; Mount Calvary LC, Janesville, WI
BERGELIN, Douglas J D; St Peter LC, Lebanon, WI
BRANDT, Joel Timothy; Cross LC, Westport, WI
BUTLER, Robert W; Zion LC, La Valle, WI
CIGELSKIE, Brian Azor (Azor); Zion LC, New Holstein, WI
CONRADT, Joshua Philip Henry; St Peter LC, Waterford, WI
DAVIS, Jesse Lee; Immanuel LC, Westfield, WI
EICHERS, Jacob John; Faith LC, La Crosse, WI
ENDERLE, Phillip M; Hope LC, Fond du Lac, WI
FRISQUE, Marshal R; St John LC, Fredonia, WI
FRITSCH, Bryan L; Messiah LC, Ripon, WI
GILBERT, Jacob A (Jack); St Johns LC, Racine, WI
HARRIS, Andrew M; Christ Ev LC, Clinton, WI
HENRICHS, Michael William; Our Savior LC, Whitefish Bay, WI
KOBLE, Brandon Wayne; Trinity LC, West Allis, WI
KOCH, Aaron Anthony; Mount Zion LC, Greenfield, WI
MARKS, Paul William; Emmanuel LC, Adell, WI
NDON, Elijah Asuquo; Holy Ghost LC, Milwaukee, WI
NIEMAN, David Scott; St Johns LC, West Bend, WI
NILES, John Patrick; Bethlehem LC, Sheboygan, WI
SORENSEN, Grant A; St Paul LC, Madison, WI
ZAHNER, Douglas James; Immanuel LC, Mayville, WI
ZEMPLE, Dean D; St John LC, Sullivan, WI

Voting Lay

ANDERSON, Eric; St John LC, Edgerton, WI
BELTER, Connie Lee; Grace LC, Omro, WI
BERAN, Braden T (Brady); Trinity LC, Potter, WI
COOK, Garrett R; Messiah LC, Beloit, WI
DENKERT, Robert A; Immanuel LC, Brookfield, WI
FAIRFIELD, Robert E; St Johns LC, Portage, WI
GRUNEWALD, Steve H; St Pauls LC, Sheboygan, WI
GUGEL, Mattias; Bethlehem LC, Sun Prairie, WI
JACKSON, Richard; Grace LC, Oak Creek, WI
KABITZKE, Ronald O (Ron); Pilgrim LC, West Bend, WI
KNIGHT, Gary L; St Pauls LC, West Allis, WI
KUNTZ, William Russell (Bill); Zion LC, Burnett, WI
MARTIN, Paul; Christ The King LC, Racine, WI
MC CAULEY, Donald R (Don); St Peter LC, Reedsburg, WI
MEYER, David; St Paul LC, Oconomowoc, WI
MOLLWITZ, Fred Richard†; Trinity LC, Mequon, WI
NEUBERGER, George L; Good Shepherd LC, Watertown, WI
NIGRO, Jerry; St Paul LC, Union Grove, WI
PERKINS, Edward A (Ed); Peace LC, Neenah, WI
PFEIFER, Donald A (Don); St John Ev LC, Random Lake, WI
ROEDIGER, David; Immanuel LC, Sheboygan, WI
RUSSELL, Edgar T; Mount Calvary LC, Milwaukee, WI
SALZMAN, Clarence William Jr (Salz); Good Shepherd LC, Tomah, WI
SCOTT, Adam J; Luther Memorial Chapel, Shorewood, WI
THOMPSON, Gary R; Trinity LC, Wautoma, WI

Advisory Ordained

SCHUBERT, Jeffery Scott (Jeff); Divine Redeemer LC, Hartland, WI

Advisory Commissioned

BEVERSDORF, Melvin L; Our Father's LC, Greenfield, WI
BULT, Derek Wayne; Our Redeemer LC, Sheboygan, WI
HASSELD AHL, Cynthia L (Cindy); Trinity LC, Racine, WI
HASSELD AHL, Gregory C (Greg); Trinity LC, Racine, WI
HOVLAND, Stephenie Marie; St Johns LC, Portage, WI
JOHNSON, Stephen P; Our Father's LC, Greenfield, WI
MARSHALL, Christopher Robert (Chris); St Paul LC, Grafton, WI
MERCIER, Gary L; St Paul LC, Grafton, WI
OLDENBURG, Michael; Divine Redeemer LC, Hartland, WI

Southeastern District

Voting Ordained

BEDNASH, Eric Z; St James of Overlea LC, Overlea, MD
BREITBARTH, Marcus Allen; Living Hope LC, Stafford, VA
BROOKS, David H; Grace Ev LC, Durham, NC
BURGER, Christopher A; Holy Trinity LC, Columbia, SC
CHRISTENSEN, Jonathan Keith; Mount Pisgah LC, Hendersonville, NC
COSGROVE, Tab E; St John LC, York, PA
DAUB, James M; St Paul LC, Havelock, NC
FISHER, Alexander Robert; Christ LC, Hickory, NC
FREDERICKSEN, Wayne P; Our Savior LC, Arlington, VA
GAINES, Lloyd Douglas Sr; Peace LC, Washington, DC
GRANA, Peter D; Redeemer LC, Portsmouth, VA
HILPERT, Matthew R; Galilee LC, Pasadena, MD
HOLLAR, Eric C; Bethel LC, Claremont, NC
KUMMER, David J; Concordia LC, Wilmington, DE
LUTZ, Elliott Michael; Fountain Of Life LC, Kernersville, NC
MATON, Benjamin Orval (Ben); Immanuel LC, Charlottesville, VA
OKAI, Andrew T; Holy Nativity LC, Arbutus, MD
OLSON, Gary C; Bethlehem LC, Richmond, VA
STOTTEMYER, William K; St Paul LC, Hancock, MD
STOUT, Christopher T; Center Grove LC, Kannapolis, NC
WALLSCHLAEGER, Joel D; Hope LC, Manassas, VA

Voting Lay

BLOUNT, Kerry; Eternal Shepherd LC, Seneca, SC
COBB, Steven R; Holy Trinity LC, Statesville, NC
DANIELS, David L; Salem LC, Taylorsville, NC
DEBOLT, Leon; Living Savior LC, Fairfax Station, VA
ELGERT, Elizabeth H (Beth); King of Glory LC, Williamsburg, VA
FEGLEY, Thomas L; Messiah LC, Germantown, MD
GILLESPIE, Frank Allen Jr; Peace LC, Goldsboro, NC
HARRISON, Roger; Our Savior LC, Laurel, MD
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PRIETO, Ely; Saint Louis, MO
WILLE, John C†; Milwaukee, WI
WOHLRABE, John C Jr; Saint Francis, WI

Special Presenters

POHJOLA, Juhana (Bishop Juhana); Kirkkonummi, FINLAND
RASANEN, Paivi (MP Dr Paivi); Riihimäki, FINLAND

Translators

PARK, Thomas D (Tom); Lake Forest, CA
VOSS, Tardelli (Rev Tardelli); Saint Louis, MO

SPECIAL GUESTS

New Church Partners

Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan / Sudan

ABIA, Peter Anibati (Bishop)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine

MASCHEWSKI, Serge (Bishop)

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland

POHJOLA, Juhana (Bishop)

Lutheran Church of Uganda

BAMEKA, Charles I (Bishop)
MAGEZI, Fred

International Church Partners

Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile

LANTERNA, Juan Pablo (President)

Confessional Lutheran Church of South Africa

TSWAEDI, David (Bishop)†

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Almaty (Kazakhstan)

BURTSEV, Aleksander (Bishop)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya

OMOLO, Joseph Ochola (Archbishop)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

NZELU, Yohana

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil

SCHULER, Geraldo Waldir (President)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana

DONKOH, John Shadrack (President)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

KRAULINS, Andris (Rev)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay

FIGUR, Alceu Alton (President)

Evangelical Lutheran Church—Synod of France

SCHMIDT, Gleisson Roberto (President)

India Evangelical Lutheran Church

JESUPATHAM, Ravi

Lutheran Church Canada

TEUSCHER, Paula

Lutheran Church in Korea

KIM, Eun Seob (President)

Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

MARAGELO, S M A Modise (Bishop)

Lutheran Church of Guatemala

CUX, Ignacio Juan Chan (President)

Lutheran Church of Uruguay

MÜLLER, Andre Luiz (President)

Lutheran Church—Canada

TEUSCHER, Timothy (President)

Lutheran Synod of Mexico

CASTILLO, Isaac Guadalupe Garcia (President)

Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

STRELISOVA, Elena
STRELTSOV, Alexey (Rev)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England

SAMIEC, George (Chairman)

The India Evangelical Lutheran Church

BALASINGH, Priestly (President)

The Lutheran Church in the Philippines

REYES, Antonio del Rio (President)

National Church Body

North American Lutheran Church

WENDEL, David M (Rev)

Other Special Guests

Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia

CORONADO, Limberth Fernández (President)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya

OMOLO, Ruth†

Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Sudan/Sudan

DANGBA, Moses Gabriel

Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church (Germany)

VOIGT, Hans Jörg (Bishop)

International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg

WEBER, Wilhem (Rev Dr)

LCMS Office of International Mission

JUST, Arthur A Jr

Malagasy Lutheran Church

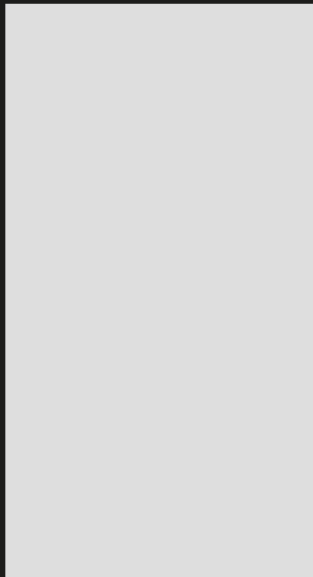
RAKOTOZAFY, Denis (Bishop)
RASAMIMANANA, Harison

TABULAR SUMMARY OF REGISTRATIONS

Synod District or <i>Other</i>	Delegates, Representatives, and Others Present						
	Voting			Advisory			
	Pastor	Lay	Total	President and BOD	Ordained	Commissioned	Total
Atlantic	9	9	18	3	1	1	5
California/Nevada/Hawaii	12	12	24	3	1	1	5
Central Illinois	15	15	30	2	1	1	4
Eastern	10	11	21	2	1	1	4
English	13	12	25	3	2	0	5
Florida-Georgia	15	14	29	3	4	3	10
Indiana	23	20	43	3	4	9	16
Iowa East	13	13	26	1	1	0	2
Iowa West	17	15	32	3	1	1	5
Kansas	16	15	31	3	1	1	5
Michigan	38	38	76	2	2	15	19
Mid-South	10	10	20	3	0	1	4
Minnesota North	18	17	35	1	0	1	2
Minnesota South	24	22	46	3	1	6	10
Missouri	27	27	54	3	5	14	22
Montana	3	4	7	1	0	1	2
Nebraska	20	19	39	3	0	4	7
New England	5	5	10	2	0	1	3
New Jersey	3	3	6	3	0	0	3
North Dakota	6	6	12	3	0	0	3
North Wisconsin	17	16	33	3	0	1	4
Northern Illinois	19	18	37	3	2	11	16
Northwest	18	18	36	2	1	5	8
Ohio	13	12	25	3	0	2	5
Oklahoma	7	6	13	3	1	1	5
Pacific Southwest	22	21	43	3	3	6	12
Rocky Mountain	13	12	25	3	1	4	8
SELC	4	4	8	2	0	0	2
South Dakota	8	8	16	3	1	1	5
South Wisconsin	25	24	49	2	1	9	12
Southeastern	21	21	42	3	3	4	10
Southern	9	8	17	1	0	0	1
Southern Illinois	10	10	20	3	0	4	7
Texas	34	33	67	3	5	8	16
Wyoming	4	4	8	2	1	1	4
<i>Boards/Commissions</i>							35
<i>Officers/Officials/Staff/Guests</i>							141
<i>Boards of Regents</i>							7
<i>Faculty Members</i>							13
<i>Missionaries/Chaplains</i>							6
<i>Ad Hoc Committee</i>							0
<i>District Youth Reps</i>							0
TOTALS	521	502	1023	89	44	118	453

Comparative Figures

Delegates Present	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2023
Voting	1,139	1,166	1,177	1,185	1,188	1,241	1,239	1,207	1,195	1,124	1,076	1,023
Advisory and Others	363	361	379	377	382	392	380	380	432	404	410	453
Total	1,502	1,527	1,556	1,562	1,570	1,633	1,619	1,581	1,627	1,459	1,486	1,476



CONVENTION FLOOR COMMITTEES

*Floor committees are appointed by the President in consultation with the Council of Presidents and Praesidium (Bylaw 3.1.7).
Appointments are made from among the voting delegates, advisory delegates, and advisory representatives (Bylaw 3.1.7 [a]).*

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

C = Chairman; **VC** = Vice Chairman; **S** = Secretary; **SVP** = Synod Vice-President; **DP** = District President; **VOM** = Voting Delegate Ordained Minister; **VL** = Voting Delegate Layperson; **AOM** = Advisory Delegate or Representative Ordained Minister; **ACM** = Advisory Delegate or Representative Commissioned Minister; **AL** = Advisory Delegate or Representative Layperson; **O** = Ordained; **C** = Commissioned; **L** = Lay

DISTRICT ABBREVIATIONS

AT = Atlantic; **CI** = Central Illinois; **CNH** = California-Nevada-Hawaii; **EA** = Eastern; **EN** = English; **FG** = Florida-Georgia; **IE** = Iowa East; **IN** = Indiana; **IW** = Iowa West; **KS** = Kansas; **MI** = Michigan; **MDS** = Mid-South; **MNN** = Minnesota North; **MNS** = Minnesota South; **MO** = Missouri; **MT** = Montana; **ND** = North Dakota; **NEB** = Nebraska; **NE** = New England; **NI** = Northern Illinois; **NJ** = New Jersey; **NOW** = Northwest; **NW** = North Wisconsin; **OH** = Ohio; **OK** = Oklahoma; **PSW** = Pacific Southwest; **RM** = Rocky Mountain; **SD** = South Dakota; **SE** = Southeastern; **SELC** = SELC; **SI** = Southern Illinois; **SO** = Southern; **SW** = South Wisconsin; **TX** = Texas; **WY** = Wyoming.

Committee 1: National Witness

C: Eric Johnson (**DP**, **SO**)
VC: David R. Nehrenz (**DP**, **OK**)
VOM: Jonathon J. Bakker (**MI**); Alan D. Borchert (**RM**); Ryan J. Fehrmann (**NW**); Sawyer A. Meyers (**MDS**); Daniel C. Ross (**OK**)
VL: Pete Duncanson (**MDS**); Laura Leistico (**EN**); Mark A. Wanamaker (**PSW**); Kristen M. Waterstram-Rich (**EA**)
AOM: Steven C. Briel (**MNS**); Samuel Gomez (**PSW**); Ken R. Schurb (**CI**); Dien A. Taylor (**DP**, **AT**)
ACM: Cheryl Honoree (**MO**)

Committee 2: International Witness

C: Robert L. (Lee) Hagan (**DP**, **MO**)
VC: Arie D. Bertsch (**DP**, **ND**)
VOM: Todd R. Jerabek (**NW**); Vue Lee (**MNS**)
VL: Obed Gonzalez (**SELC**)
AOM: Kenneth J. Bomberger (**MO**); Theodore M. R. Krey (**EN**); Eli J. S. Lietzau (**RM**); James B. Maxwell (**DP**, **RM**)
ACM: David A. Fiala (**MO**)
AL: John W. Edson (**MNS**); Jesse Yow Jr. (**CNH**)

Committee 3: Mercy

C: Brady L. Finner (**DP**, **MNN**)
VC: Waldemar R. Vinovskis (**DP**, **SELC**)
VOM: Christopher P. Asbury (**NEB**); Christopher W. Brademeyer (**ND**); Keith A. Lingsch (**FG**); Richard A. Zeile (**MI**)
VL: Caroline Ill (**SI**); Dean R. Mustonen (**MNN**); Yolonda W. Wornner Prevost (**SO**)
AOM: William A. Harmon (**DP**, **SE**)
ACM: Katherine E. Rittner (**IN**); Raquel A. Rojas (**AT**)

Committee 4: Life Together

C: Christopher S. Esget (**SVP**, **EN**)
VC: Allan R. Buss (**DP**, **NI**)
VOM: Peter Bender (**SW**); Jessten P. Heimer (**IW**); John E. Wackler (**OK**); Sean A. Willman (**MI**)
VL: Jonathan Busarow (**EN**); Mattias Gugel (**SW**); Craig V. Timm (**NW**); Stephen F. Weller (**KS**)

AOM: Philip D. Bartelt (**AT**); Paul A. Linnemann (**DP**, **NOW**); Nabil S. Nour (**SVP**, **SD**)
ACM: Thomas A. Nummela (**MO**); Amy L. Vande Voort-Schweim (**NOW**)

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

C: Brian S. Saunders (**DP**, **IE**)
VC: John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (**SVP**, **SW**)
VOM: Peter J. Brock (**IN**); Eloy S. Gonzalez (**TX**); Peter F. Gregory (**NE**); Marcel L. Kohlmeyer (**NEB**)
VL: Stevin H. Gehrke (**KS**); Mark O. Stern (**NI**)
AOM: Naomichi Masaki (**IN**); Michael W. Newman (**DP**, **TX**); Richard L. Snow (**DP**, **NEB**); Roland F. Ziegler (**IN**)
ACM: Matthew C. Janssen (**MO**)

Committee 6: Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

C: John E. Hill (**DP**, **WY**)
VC: Justin A. Panzer (**DP**, **KS**)
VOM: Lloyd D. Gaines Sr. (**SE**); Jason E. Gullidge (**NOW**); Richard L. Ramirez (**SELC**)
VL: David L. Daniels (**SE**); Leo Mackay (**EN**)
AOM: David A. Davis (**DP**, **MI**); Thomas J. Egger (**MO**); William M. Mons (**IE**); John L. Pingel (**DP**, **EA**); Cory J. Rajek (**SD**); Lawrence R. Rast Jr. (**IN**)
ACM: Ruth A. Otten (**NI**)

Committee 7: University Education

C: Scott R. Murray (**SVP**, **TX**)
VC: Jamison J. Hardy (**DP**, **EN**)
VOM: John M. Berg (**SW**); Jason J. Bredeson (**CNH**); Mark K. De Young (**TX**); Bernard J. Schey (**TX**)
VL: Robert A. Denkert (**SW**); David K. Hawk (**IN**); Gerhard H. Munding Jr. (**IN**)
AOM: Brian L. Friedrich (**MNS**); Jay A. Winters (**FG**); Lucas V. Woodford (**DP**, **MNS**)
ACM: Russell P. Dawn (**NI**)
AL: Christian A. Preus (**MNS**)

Committee 8: Finance

C: Roger C. Paavola (**DP**, **MDS**)
VC: Steven D. Turner (**DP**, **IW**)
VOM: Alan R. Stahlecker (**KS**)
VL: David Mellem (**NW**); Richard C. Robertson (**FG**)
AOM: James H. Rockey (**DP**, **FG**); Luke T. Zimmerman (**EN**)
ACM: Donald C. Schult Jr. (**NW**)
AL: Jason A. Paradis (**ND**); John L. Powers (**SW**); Rick H. Stathakis (**MI**); Tamara J. Ulland (**ND**)

Committee 9: Structure and Administration

C: Timothy J. Scharr (**DP**, **SI**)
VC: Robert D. Beinke (**DP**, **NE**)
VOM: David M. Behm (**MT**); John C. Drosendahl (**SO**); Daniel E. Grams (**EN**); Timothy J. Winterstein (**NOW**); Philip E. Zielinski (**OH**)
VL: Cindy L. Cwynar (**EA**); Michael D. Grooms (**SD**); Jan A. Krampitz (**NE**)
AOM: Paul J. Cain Jr. (**WY**); Michael W. Mohr (**DP**, **CI**)
ACM: Joel P. Landskroener (**MNS**)

Committee 10: Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

C: John C. Wille (**DP**, **SW**)
VC: Dwayne M. Lueck (**DP**, **NW**)
VOM: Kirk M. Clayton (**SI**); Roger B. Gallup (**NI**); Aaron M. Hambleton (**IE**); Richard A. Mittelstadt (**TX**); Robert J. Pase (**TX**); Adam Stetson (**PSW**); Allen K. Strawn (**WY**)
VL: Jeffrey E. Elbert (**IE**)
AOM: Mitchell W. Gowen (**CNH**); Michael R. Lange (**DP**, **CNH**); James A. Moshier (**NEB**)
ACM: Kevin H. Brockberg (**IN**)

Committee 11: Church and Culture

C: Terry R. Forke (**DP**, **MT**)
VC: Kevin A. Wilson (**DP**, **OH**)
VOM: Paul M. Clark (**MI**); Shiu M. Lau (**CNH**); Michael P. Schuermann (**CI**); Charles P. St Onge (**SELC**)
VL: Geraldine G. Gibney (**NJ**); Melanie A. Standiford (**NEB**)
AOM: David W. Loy (**PSW**); Preston A. Paul (**NW**); Max A. Phillips (**IW**); Don R. Stuckwisch Jr. (**DP**, **IN**)
ACM: Jeffrey A. Fick (**SI**)

Committee 12: Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth

C: Benjamin T. Ball (**SVP**, **SI**)
VC: Michael E. Gibson (**DP**, **PSW**)
VOM: Duane R. Bamsch (**CNH**); John M. Bussman (**SO**); Brian L. Kachelmeier (**TX**); Aaron D. Uphoff (**CI**)
VL: Wayne M. Hittinger (**PSW**); Coralie Miller (**MI**)
ACM: Deanna L. Cheadle (**OH**); Christopher B. Cody (**SW**); Eun Chu Kim (**PSW**); Jan W. Lohmeyer (**TX**); Janet J. Muth (**SI**)

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

C: Scott C. Sailer (**DP**, **SD**)
VC: Stephen A. Gewecke (**DP**, **NJ**)
VOM: Anthony J. Gerber (**NEB**); Charles M. Henrickson (**MO**); Kelly D. Todd (**MI**); L. Richard Vossler Jr. (**NJ**)
VL: Paul Lubell (**SE**)
ACM: Thomas P. Kosche (**MT**)
AL: Kimberly A. Myers (**NEB**)

Committee for Convention Nominations

**Standing Committee on Nominations (Bylaw 3.2.5)*

C: Christian A. Preus* (**AL**, **MNS**)
VC: Samuel M. Powell* (**O**, **MO**)
S: Mark O. Stern* (**VL**, **NI**)
O: Victor J. Belton (**FG**); James A. Douthwaite (**SELC**); Todd R. Jerabek (**VOM**, **NW**); Paul A. Linnemann (**AOM**, **DP**, **NOW**); Robert D. Newton (**CNH**); Jonathan R. Riggert (**IW**); Kevin M. Wendt (**SO**)
L: Mark A. Franke (**VL**, **IN**); Byron Hansen (**NEB**); Jeffrey Maltz (**AL**, **OK**); Matthew W. Putnam (**CI**); Richard G. Schaefer (**AT**); John F. Schmall (**VL**, **WY**); Steven J. Timmerman (**VL**, **SD**)



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

The 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod July 29–August 3, 2023 • Baird Center • Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Floor committee meetings were held June 9–12, 2023. 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 Baird Center, formerly known as the Wisconsin Center.

Friday—July 28, 2023

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

1:30–5:30 Floor Committees—closed meetings

Saturday—July 29, 2023

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

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

8:30–10:00 Floor Committees #1, 2, 8, 11
open hearings (1st floor)

8:30–noon Floor Committees #5, 6, 7, 9
open hearings (1st floor)

10:00 Break

10:30–noon Floor Committees #3, 4, 10, 12
open hearings (1st floor)

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 (Grand Ballroom, 1st floor)

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

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

Sunday—July 30, 2023

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

*Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
(Halls CD, 3rd floor)*

8:00 Matins—Rev. Peter K. Lange

8:25 Preparations for Opening Business Session

8:35 Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel

8:40 Electronic Voting System

9:00 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)

9:05 Special Standing Rules

9:20 Convention Schedule

9:30 President’s Report (Part 3)

10:00 Welcome and Greetings
from South Wisconsin District

10:05 Presentation of Omnibus Resolutions A, B, and C

10:30 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger
“We Preach Christ Crucified” Overview

11:00 Life Together (#4)

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray

1:50 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Announce presidential election result)

1:55 Response from newly elected president

2:00 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Voting delegate registration report)

2:05 Presentation of slate and balloting
for First Vice-President

2:15 ... for Central Region Vice-President

2:25 ... for East-Southeast Region Vice-President

2:35 ... for Great Lakes Region Vice-President

2:45 ... for Great Plains Region Vice-President

2:55 ... for West-Southwest Region Vice-President

3:05 Balloting to determine ranking of vice-presidents

3:15 Catechism—Rev. Peter Bender

3:35 Greetings—Lutheran Church Extension Fund,
Rev. Bart Day

3:40 Committee for Convention Nominations
(Nominations from the floor for Secretary of Synod and
Synod Board of Directors)

3:55 Presentation—International Missions:
From Generation to Generation

4:15 Theology and Church Relations (#5)

5:10 Mercy (#3)

5:35 Evening Prayer

6:00 Adjourn for the Day

Evening—LCEF Ice Cream Social (Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor)

Monday—July 31, 2023

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

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

8:00 Matins—Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.

8:20 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)

8:25 Greetings—Concordia Publishing House,
Jonathan Schultz

8:30 Structure and Administration (#9)

9:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Balloting for Secretary of Synod
and Synod Board of Directors)

10:10 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Abjar Bahkou
The Power of God

10:40 National Witness (#1)

11:40 Presentation—International Missions: Spread the Gospel

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Benjamin T. Ball

1:45 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)

1:50 Minutes
 1:55 Greetings—Lutheran Women’s Missionary League,
Eden Keefe
 2:00 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
 2:30 Special Recognition—International Guests
 2:45 Catechism—*Rev. Peter Bender*
 3:05 Greetings—Lutheran Hour Ministries,
Kurt Buchholz
 3:10 Finance (#8)
 3:25 Committee for Convention Nominations
(Nominations for other boards, CTCR,
boards of regents, and synodwide entities)
 4:10 Greetings—The LCMS Foundation, *David Fiedler*
 4:15 University Education (#7)
 4:45 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
 5:15 Structure and Administration (#9)
 5:50 Vespers
 6:00 Adjourn for the Day

Tuesday—August 1, 2023

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

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

8:00 Matins—*Rev. Christopher S. Esget*
 8:20 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
 8:25 Greetings—Concordia Plan Services, *James Sanft*
 8:30 University Education (#7)
 9:15 Presentation—Serving the Synod’s Mission:
 The History and Blessings of Our Two Seminaries—
Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.
and Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger
 9:45 Convention Essay—*Dr. Russell P. Dawn*
The Wisdom of God
 10:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and
synodwide entities)
 10:45 Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth (#12)
 11:30 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
 12:00 Recess
 1:30 Midday Prayer—*Rev. Nabil S. Nour*
 1:45 Minutes
 1:50 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Balloting for other boards, CTCR,
boards of regents, and synodwide entities)
 2:40 Catechism—*Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine*
 3:00 Presentation—Persecuted for Your Faith—
Päivi M. Räsänen and Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola
 3:30 International Witness (#2)
 4:20 Presentation—International Missions:
 Plant Lutheran Churches
 4:40 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
 5:05 Presentation—Military Chaplains,
Rev. Craig G. Muehler
 5:20 Mercy (#3)
 5:50 Responsive Prayer
 6:00 Adjourn for the Day

Evening—Alumni Receptions

Wednesday—August 2, 2023

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

8:00 Matins—*Rev. Dr. Ely Prieto*
 8:30 Convention Essay—*Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola*
The Redemption of the World
 9:00 University Education (#7)
 10:30 Greetings—Concordia Historical Institute,
Rev. Dr. Daniel N. Harmelink
 10:35 Church and Culture (#11)
 11:25 Special Recognition—LCMS Presidents Emeriti
 11:30 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and
synodwide entities)
 12:00 Recess
 1:30 Commemoration of the Faithful Departed—
Rev. Dr. John C. Wille
 2:10 Minutes
 2:15 Special Recognition—Newly Elected
 and Outgoing Praesidium
 2:20 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
 3:10 Catechism—*Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine*
 3:30 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
(Balloting for other boards, CTCR,
boards of regents, and synodwide entities)
 3:50 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
 4:15 Presentation—International Missions: Show Mercy
 4:35 Special Presentation—*Flame*
 5:05 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
 5:50 Responsive Prayer
 6:00 Adjourn for the Day
President-Elect’s Reception—7:30 p.m.

Thursday—August 3, 2023

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

At the start of the final session, the schedule was, with unanimous consent and consistent with Standing Rule 24, adjusted as follows:

8:00 Matins—*Rev. Josemon T. Hoem*
 8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
 8:30 Minutes
 8:35 Life Together (#4)
 9:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#13)
 10:10 Structure and Administration (#9)
 10:55 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
 11:35 Mercy (#3)
 11:55 Itinerarium
 12:00 Adjournment

MINUTES

Opening Worship Service Saturday, July 29, 2023

Opening Divine Service with Holy Communion

The opening worship service of the 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) was held in the Baird Center (formerly known as the Wisconsin Center) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, under the theme, “We Preach Christ Crucified.” Presiding was the Rev. John M. Berg, associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheboygan, Wis., which hosted the communion service; the Rev. Sean Daenzer, chaplain and director of LCMS Worship, assisted. The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, Synod President, preached on Hosea 6:1–6; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25; and Luke 24:36–49a. The Council of Presidents and various pastors of the Synod, along with presidents and bishops of LCMS partner churches, assisted with distribution of the Sacrament. Accompaniment and special music were provided by Kantor Dr. Samuel Eatherton of Trinity Lutheran Church, organist and conductor, and Richard C. Ewert of Elm Grove Lutheran Church, accompanist and assistant organist; instrumentalists David Magoon, Steven Ehrhardt, Matthew Walker, John Gohl, Michael Janke, and Johanna Anderson; the handbell choir of Trinity Lutheran Church; and a choir composed of members of nearby Synod congregations (all but one in Wisconsin): Bethlehem, Sheboygan; Mount Olive, Milwaukee; Our Savior, Whitefish Bay; St. Paul, Grafton; Trinity, Rochester, Minn.; and Trinity, Sheboygan. The Rev. Thomas Dunseth and Deaconess Heidi Sias interpreted the service for the Deaf.

[President Harrison’s sermon introduced the convention theme, “We Preach Christ Crucified.” The entire text of President Harrison’s sermon was printed in *Today’s Business* and is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Session 1 Sunday a.m., July 30, 2023

Matins

The Rev. Peter K. Lange, First Vice-President, preached on Philippians 2:1–11 in the Office of Matins, with Chaplain Sean Daenzer serving as liturgist. Kantor Matthew Machemer, associate Kantor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and instrumentalists Matthew Wolf and Nathan Wolf provided accompaniment and special music.

[The entire text of First Vice-President Lange’s sermon is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel

After the taking of a convention group photo, President Matthew C. Harrison called the assembly to order and called

on the Rev. Dr. Daniel Harmelink, executive director of Concordia Historical Institute, to present the historic gavel used, since 1911, by the chair to call Synod conventions officially to order. In presenting the gavel, Dr. Harmelink spoke of the unique history and inscriptions on the gavel, commissioned to be carved from a log from the Synod’s original log cabin seminary to celebrate the centenary of C.F.W. Walther’s birth, which is ordinarily on display at the institute’s Lutheran History Museum in the LCMS International Center. Having received the gavel, the chairman opened the 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

The chair called upon the Rev. Scott Sailer, president of the South Dakota District and chairman of Committee 13 (Registration, Credentials, and Elections), to introduce the electronic queuing and voting systems provided by Padgett Communications.

Having done so, Chairman Sailer proceeded to present the initial registration report, noting that a total of 1,042 voting delegates had pre-registered for the convention (a quorum requires one quarter of these to be present, or 261). He reported the following present for the opening of the convention:

Voting delegates	991
Advisory delegates	156
Advisory representatives	158
Special guests and others	96

A motion was introduced and carried, without discussion, to adopt the report of the committee [Yes votes: 950; No votes: 2].

The chair declared the presence of a quorum and then introduced those seated at the front with particular convention roles: the Council of Presidents, the Commissions on Handbook and Constitutional Matters, the Board of Directors, executive directors and staff, special international guests, Parliamentarian Chris Dickey, Secretary John Sias, Assistant Secretary Samuel Powell, convention timekeeper Dorothy Krans, and those assisting the chair during the convention, including First Vice-President Peter Lange, Jeffrey Hemmer, Georgia Endicott, Kim Vieker, and Barbara Below.

Special Standing Rules

The chair called attention to the proposed Special Standing Rules for the convention, printed on pages 15–17 of the pre-convention edition of *Today’s Business* (TB, 1:15–17), noting no substantive changes from those adopted as

amended during the 2019 convention. A motion to adopt the rules was introduced and seconded.

It was moved and seconded to amend Standing Rule 14 to add the sentences, “When a new queue is opened, if advisory delegates or representatives are immediately (at the discretion of the chair) in the queue, the first two advisory delegates or representatives will be moved to the top of the queue. Then the order will return to the original queue, with those who spoke being removed.” It was noted that these speakers could be identified by their presence at advisory microphones. After some debate, it was moved and seconded to close debate, which was carried by a show of hands (there being an issue in this session, after this point, with the electronic voting and queuing systems). The amendment failed by a voice and hand vote. A question of privilege was raised, that some microphones seemed to be more difficult to hear than others. A second amendment was proposed to Standing Rule 14 to strike out the words following the comma in the second sentence and replace them with the words, “queue lists from previous motions and original unamended resolutions will be retained until a completely new, not substitute or amended, resolution is considered.” The chair explained that the technology would not support this.

A delegate raised a point of order as to how Rule 18 would be enforced; the chair noted that, with “many eyes on,” the chair will do the best the chair can.

The question on the Special Standing Rules was called. In a voice vote, debate was closed. The Special Standing Rules were adopted as originally proposed by a voice vote.

Convention Schedule

The chair next called attention to the convention schedule, proposed as found in *Today's Business* issue 2B (2B:284–85) with the chair noting the changes relative to that in *Today's Business*, First Edition. The schedule was moved and seconded. Without debate, the convention schedule was adopted by a voice vote.

President's Report, Part 3

First Vice-President Lange introduced President Harrison to give the third section of his convention report.

[The entire text of Part 3 of the President's Report was printed in *Today's Business*, Issue 3, and is included in the *Convention Proceedings*.]

Welcome and Greetings from South Wisconsin District

The Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, district executive for South Wisconsin District, welcomed delegates to Milwaukee on behalf of District President John C. Wille and the congregations, schools, agencies, and individual members of the district. He noted the district's eagerness to add to the Synod's already long history of meeting in Milwaukee. He also spoke of challenges and opportunities throughout the district, identifying church plants and new school launches,

some in the city—everywhere on the “real front lines of mission and ministry.” He invited delegates to enjoy the beautiful city and state as the Synod works to get it straight, get it out, and preach Christ crucified.

Omnibus Resolutions

President Harrison introduced Omnibus A, as printed in *Today's Business*, 2B:295–97. The resolution was moved and seconded. A delegate questioned the inclusion of Overture 5-47 in Omnibus A after its previous inclusion in Floor Committee 5's resolution to decline overtures. Floor Committee 5 Chairman Brian Saunders addressed the question. A delegate raised a point of privilege and it was determined that the center section was still not able to queue.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 2-05, “To Thank God for the Synod's International Schools and Pray for God's Guidance in Furthering Their Role in the Church's Mission,” from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice vote, the removal and referral was carried.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 5-47, “To Recognize the Organization 1517 as Heterodox Tract and Mission Society,” from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice vote, the removal and referral failed. A point of order was raised that it was out of order for the delegate to speak and then make a motion, which was not upheld by the chair. By a voice vote, the motion to remove and refer failed.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 4-02–04, “To Provide Triennial Synod Emphases,” “To Prioritize ‘Living as the Baptized’ as a Mission and Ministry Focus for the 2022–2025 Triennium,” and “To Suggest Mission and Ministry Emphases for the Synod,” from the omnibus and refer them to the floor committee. In a hand and voice vote, the motion to remove and refer failed.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 5-34, “To Instruct CPH to Have *Portals of Prayer* and Other Devotionals Written by Men,” from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice and hand vote, the motion to remove and refer failed.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 5-40 from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee; which was out of order as this overture is instead included in Omnibus B.

With desire for debate exhausted, Omnibus A was adopted by voice vote as once amended, to remove Ov. 2-05 and refer it back to Floor Committee 2.

The chair next introduced Omnibus B, as printed in *Today's Business*, 2B:297–98. The resolution was moved and seconded.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 5-40, “To Reconsider Woman Suffrage in the Church,” from the

omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice and hand vote, the motion to remove and refer failed.

An advisory delegate was ruled out of order in attempting to remove Ov. L4-19 from the omnibus, as advisory delegates may not make motions.

A delegate was ruled out of order in adding Res. 11-03 to the omnibus, as resolutions may not be added to omnibuses.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. L4-19, “To Give Priority to Kingdom Work over Institutional Preservation,” from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice and hand vote, the motion failed.

Debate exhausted, Omnibus B was adopted by a voice vote as presented.

The chair next introduced Omnibus C, as printed in *Today’s Business*, 1:82. The resolution was moved and seconded.

It was moved and seconded to remove Ov. 6-45, “To Declare/Encourage Recognition of the Pastor’s Wife and Honor Her in 2025,” from the omnibus and refer it to the floor committee. In a voice vote, the motion was carried.

It was moved and seconded to cease debate. The motion was carried in a voice and hand vote. Omnibus C was adopted by voice and hand vote, as amended to remove Ov. 6-45 and refer it back to Floor Committee 6.

After a point of order regarding the queuing system, a motion to recess for fifteen minutes was ruled out of order.

Convention Essay: “We Preach Christ Crucified—Overview”

[The entire text of the essay by the Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 4: Life Together

With First Vice-President Peter Lange assuming the chair, the chair recognized Chairman Christopher S. Esget, Fifth Vice-President, to begin the report of his committee. The convention was informed that the queuing and voting system functionality had been restored.

Res. 4-01, “To Commend and Encourage Continued Use of the *Koinonia* Project and Give Thanks to God for the Sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.” (*TB*, 1:101) was read and introduced by the committee. Pastor Herbert C. Mueller III spoke to the resolution and asked that the final two stanzas of the hymn “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” (*Lutheran Service Book [LSB]* 594) might be sung upon adoption.

A delegate offered an amendment to add two *whereases* and one *resolve*, which was seconded:

“WHEREAS, Fostering consensus requires an ongoing practice of discussion between laity, pastors, seminaries, COP, CTCR, and other leaders and members of Synod; and

WHEREAS, The concept paper for the *Koinonia* Project rightly identifies an opportunity to further connect absolutely necessary in-person conversations, both to each other and to the wider Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the seminaries, Council of Presidents (COP), and Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to develop such a standing, ongoing, fully-transparent, and synodwide conversation as soon as humanly possible.”

The previous question was moved on the amendment. The motion to close debate was carried [Yes: 673; No: 229]. The amendment was carried [Yes: 460; No: 455]. Upon a question by a delegate as to the necessity of a financial outlay estimate for the resolution as amended, the Chief Financial Officer concluded that the costs of the effort proposed would involve perhaps as much as \$10–15 thousand (k) for development of resources, but that most of the cost could be expected to be absorbed into work of existing entities.

It was moved and seconded to refer the resolution as amended back to the committee. The motion was carried [Yes: 636; No: 287].

Session 2 **Sunday p.m., July 30, 2023**

Midday Prayer

First Vice-President Lange having called the assembly together, the Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray, Third Vice-President (West-Southwest Region), preached on Matthew 27:32–44 in the order of Midday Prayer, with Chaplain Daenzer serving as liturgist and Kantor Machemer accompanying. Andrew Schempf served as soloist and guitarist.

[The entire text of Vice-President Murray’s sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

After the devotion, the chair noted the *Set Apart to Serve* initiative and introduced the first of a series of church worker videos to be shown during the convention.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

First Vice-President Lange, having called the assembly to order and made some procedural comments, called upon the Rev. Scott Sailer, president of the South Dakota District and chairman of Committee 13 (Registration, Credentials, and Elections), to announce the result of the LCMS Presidential Election. President Sailer and the chair offered thanks to the Office of the Secretary; the LCMS Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services; and Yes Elections (formerly Election-America, the Synod’s election contractor) for their assistance of congregations and parishes and their voters in completing the process. He described the election process and noted the five final

candidates and the numbers of votes each received (TB, 2B:286). These results are as follow:

Benjamin T. Ball	341	6.82%
Patrick T. Ferry	1,593	31.86%
Matthew C. Harrison	2,616	52.32%
Peter K. Lange	132	2.64%
Richard Snow	318	6.36%

Total Ballots Cast	5,000
Total Registered Electorate	6,053

Chairman Sailer declared Matthew C. Harrison elected, his having received, in the first ballot, the majority of votes cast. During his response, President Harrison thanked the Synod for “quite a run,” and thanked also those who were also willing to stand as candidates for a position that is “not easy.” He thanked his colleagues on the Council of Presidents and at the International Center, “who make so much of the job a joy,” and Village Lutheran Church in Ladue, Mo., where he is a pastor in an assisting capacity. He introduced, and thanked God for, his faithful family. “Without Christ it would be impossible ... God bless you. Here we go, for another round.”

President Harrison, resuming the chair, thanked the nominees and candidates in 68 positions to be elected for offering their names for service. He next acknowledged Rev. Sailer and called for an update to the registration report, which read as follows:

Voting delegates	1,014	(497 lay and 517 pastors)
Advisory delegates	160	
Advisory representatives	161	

The report was moved and adopted without objection.

President Sailer updated the convention on aspects of the voting process and equipment, which received attention from the contractor and committee before and over the lunch recess. He reviewed the process for election of the First Vice-President of the Synod; after that election, he would do the same for the regional vice-presidents. He called upon Chaplain Daenzer to offer prayer.

Election of First Vice-President

First Vice-President (Ordained, 3-year term)

Allan R. Buss (NI)	57	
Christopher S. Esget (EN)	57	
Jamison J. Hardy (EN)	51	
Peter K. Lange (MO)	578	(declared elected)
Richard L. Snow (NEB)	243	

Election of Regional Vice-Presidents

Regional Vice-President (Ordained, Central Region, 3-year term)

Randy K. Asburry (MO)	59	
Benjamin T. (Ben) Ball (SI)	484	554 (declared elected)
Jason M. Braaten (CI)	62	
William R. Marler (MO)	14	
Lawrence R. Rast Jr. (IN)	231	291
William W. Schumacher (MO)	149	155

Regional Vice-President (Ordained, East-Southeast Region, 3-year term)

Victor J. Belton (FG)	188	
Christopher S. Esget (EN)	506	(declared elected)
Jeffrey J. Kloha (SE)	175	
Deric A. Taylor (NJ)	51	
Luke T. Zimmerman (EN)	76	

Regional Vice-President (Ordained, Great Lakes Region, 3-year term)

Peter Bender (SW)	130	139	
Steven G. (Steve) Kline (NW)	47		
David P. E. Maier (MI)	299	367	413
David P. Ramirez (SW)	123		
John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	389	490	585 (decl. el.)

Regional Vice-President (Ordained, Great Plains Region, 3-year term)

Byrene K. (Keith) Haney (IW)	177	249	
Robert R. Lessing (MNS)	168	160	
David C. Mumme (MNS)	114		
Nabil S. Nour (SD)	464	592	(declared elected)
Russell L. (Russ) Sommerfeld (NEB)	78		

Regional Vice-President (Ordained, West-Southwest Region, 3-year term)

Alfonso O. Espinosa (PSW)	124	
Timothy M. Klinkenberg (PSW)	168	
Yohannes A. Mengsteab (TX)	114	
Scott R. Murray (TX)	505	(declared elected)
Jeffery T. (Jeff) Schrank (PSW)	84	

Election to Determine Ranking of Second through Sixth Vice-Presidents

For Second Vice-President

Benjamin T. (Ben) Ball (SI)	250	351	429	498 (decl. el.)
Christopher S. Esget (EN)	153			
Scott R. Murray (TX)	220	283	325	482
Nabil S. Nour (SD)	204	212	234	
John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	160	137		

For Third Vice-President

Christopher S. Esget (EN)	151	145	
Scott R. Murray (TX)	484	605	(declared elected)
Nabil S. Nour (SD)	210	229	
John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	135		

For Fourth Vice-President

Christopher S. Esget (EN)	297	354	
Nabil S. Nour (SD)	473	622	(declared elected)
John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	212		

For Fifth Vice-President

Christopher S. Esget (EN)	535	(declared elected)
John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	446	

Sixth Vice-President

John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	(declared elected)
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Catechism—Introduction

The Rev. Peter Bender was invited to conduct a catechesis for the convention on the basis of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: CPH, 2017), of which all

delegates and representatives received a copy. Bender noted the fundamental catechism texts—Commandments, Creed, Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Forgiveness, Reception of the Supper—as the “ABCs” of the catholic faith, universal to Christians. Luther in his explanations expounds these texts as sermons on Christ, the love of God, the center of redemption, the blood of Jesus. These primary texts and Luther’s lovely secondary explanations can be learned by heart by children of the youngest ages, who love to learn by heart and whose minds are sponges. Beyond Luther’s explanation, the 2017 volume contains an abundance of material based, via a number of editions, on Heinrich Schwan’s Catechism, to resource pastors and in laity giving contemporary expression to the faith and addressing the pressing challenges of each time, including ours. Bender explained the use of the Catechism as a handbook and prayerbook of the Christian life, with the primary and secondary texts forming a foundation for a deeper exploration of the Bible and application in the rest of the book. Luther’s explanations unfold God’s good gifts and how God means to protect them. With Luther’s help, for example in unfolding the Fourth Commandment, we can hold out to the world what a marvelous thing it is to be a Christian, what a good life it is to be a man or a little girl, the goodness of marriage and family. Bender explored some “wonderful connections” in Luther’s explanations among the various primary texts and applications thereof for the life of faith, to be continued in his next presentation.

Greetings—Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod

The chair invited the Rev. Bart Day, president and chief executive officer of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), to bring his greetings to the convention on behalf of the synodwide corporate entity. After a brief video displaying ministry facilities developed, improved, and repaired using LCEF investments—work in which LCEF is “part of the Church’s proclaiming Christ,” Day highlighted Christ crucified as the “glorious message of the Gospel ... the message the world needs—the message we must ensure the Church has every opportunity to share broadly and generously.” He noted that LCEF investments support the work of thousands of rostered workers, congregations, schools, and other organizations through low-cost loans that make resources available for the Church now and into the future. Day noted an exceptional year for LCEF’s loan origination, with a strong pipeline for the future after the end of the pandemic. Thanks be to God! Day invited investment in the Church Worker Loan Pool, a new initiative for LCEF—investors will make less, but will do so intentionally to support a pool of preferred-rate loans “so that LCMS rostered church workers can have more.”

Committee 14: Convention Nominations – Floor Nominations for Secretary and Synod Board of Directors

President Harrison, noting updates to election material in the daily *Today’s Business*, called to the podium the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations,

Christian Preus, to present the slates for election of Secretary and Board of Directors and to receive floor nominations for these positions. Chairman Preus noted the Bylaw charge of his committee and that the members of his committee, elected by 17 districts this triennium, are listed in the *Convention Workbook*. He briefly explained the committee’s work and the committee’s report in the *Biographical Synopses and Statements of Nominees (BSSN)* and called attention to and presented the slate of candidates for Secretary (*BSSN*, p. 40), as determined by the committee. After further explanation from Chairman Preus, President Harrison opened the floor for nominations, none of which were offered. The chair declared nominations for Secretary closed.

Chairman Preus next called attention to and presented the slates for Board of Directors (*BSSN*, pp. 41–45) and President Harrison opened the floor for nominations.

It was moved and adopted by voice vote to add Gerhard H. Munding, Jr. (Michigan City, Ind.; Indiana District) to the slate for the lay at-large position on the Board of Directors (*BSSN*, pp. 44–45).

Interest in floor nominations for these offices having been exhausted, the chair declared nominations for Synod Board of Directors closed.

Presentation: International Missions—From Generation to Generation

After a video highlighting generational mission work of the Synod, the chair welcomed President Geraldo W. Schöler of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB), who addressed the convention in Portuguese with a running translation. He explained the beginnings of the IELB in mission work of the LCMS at the opening of the twentieth century, which has led to a mature church body sharing the same grace and walking in the same faith toward eternal life, giving hope and preaching the Gospel in 1,501 congregations. IELB also shares 70 pastors with partners abroad—including with the LCMS through the Alliance Project. In this, IELB participates in gratitude for all she received from the LCMS, especially between 1900 and 1990s, and to carry out her permanent motto: “Christ for all!” One more objective has been added to the partnership: to share with partner churches experiences from her own expansive and diverse mission field, maintaining the Lutheran confession and meeting the people’s needs. He recalled his father’s horseback trip to find a Lutheran pastor to baptize his children and the eagerness of many—even walking tens of miles—to receive the pure Gospel, the precious theology of the cross, in which our fathers have died in peace and new generations should have the same opportunity. “A church,” he commented, “is not born large but it has a great and gracious God who blesses the faithful work.” He thanked the LCMS for everything the LCMS has done and promised the LCMS could count on IELB’s partnership. He presented President Harrison with a plaque of gratitude for 175 years of

historic partnership and for the precious gift of the theology of the cross and for sending missionaries to Brazil.

Shauen Trump, regional director for the Office of International Mission, next introduced Bishop John Shadrack Donkoh of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana, who read Psalm 145:4–6, led the assembly in the Lord's Prayer, and blessed the assembly with the Aaronic Benediction.

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

The chair recognized Chairman Brian S. Saunders, president of the Iowa East District, to begin the report of his committee.

Res. 5-01, "To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan" (*TB*, 1:109–10), was read and introduced by the committee. A delegate having requested that the vote be taken by the convention's saying, "yea, yea, it shall be so," the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. The Rev. Peter Anibati Abia addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Monday's *Today's Business*.

Res. 5-02, "To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland" (*TB*, 1:111–13), was read and introduced by the committee. The resolution being put to a "yea, yea, it shall be so" voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having read a commemorative plaque, Bishop Juhana Pohjola addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Monday's *Today's Business*.

Res. 5-03, "To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Uganda" (*TB*, 1:113–15), was read and introduced by the committee. The resolution being put to a "yea, yea, it shall be so" voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having noted a plaque commemorating the fellowship being consummated by the convention today, Bishop Charles I. Bameka addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Monday's *Today's Business*.

Res. 5-04, "To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine" (*TB*, 1:115–17), was read and introduced by the committee. The resolution being put to a "yea, yea, it shall be so" voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having noted a plaque commemorating the fellowship being consummated by the convention today, Bishop Serge Maschewski addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Monday's *Today's Business*. He presented President Harrison with a helmet purchased, along with others and with flak jackets, for the pastors of his church by the LCMS Office of International Mission, a helmet that

saved his life in a rocket attack and then that of a colleague, as well.

Res. 5-05A, "To Recognize the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka as a Self-Governing Partner Church" (*TB*, 2B:304–6), was read and introduced by the committee. The resolution being put to a "yea, yea, it shall be so" voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. Bishop A. Arulchelvan, who could not be present, was represented by Pastor Steven Mahlburg, LCMS Office of International Mission Missionary to Sri Lanka, in the reading of the bishop's remarks to the assembly, the remarks included in Monday's *Today's Business*.

Committee 3: Mercy

The chair recognized Chairman Brady L. Finner, president of the Minnesota North District, to begin the report of his committee. After a lighthearted moment with the chair, he did so, noting the man who cried out, "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me," the *Kyrie*: "Lord, have mercy," and other biblical texts mentioning the divine mercy, which the Synod seeks to carry out throughout the world. He noted the Synod's Million-Dollar Life Match, noting the Lord's call to be merciful means we take action to have mercy in His name. Deaconess Dr. Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry, was invited to share statistics regarding this mercy project. She invited forward representatives of two Wisconsin congregations and related organizations to present them with their phase 4 Life Match grants and to give thanks to God for their work.

Res. 3-01, "To Encourage and Support More Fervent Teaching, Proclamation, and Efforts to Promote Culture of Life among God's People" (*TB*, 1:96), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution by adding a *resolve* as follows: "That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for His unending mercies, especially in overturning *Roe v. Wade*, thus preserving the lives of many unborn children." The amendment was adopted by a show of hands.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution to insert as a second-last *resolve*, "That the Synod expand its definition of life ministry to include a whole life approach to include support for gun violence prevention initiatives, abolition of the death penalty, advocacy for proper health care provided to all people, etc." It was moved and seconded to close debate on the amendment; this was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed by voice vote.

Noting the orders of the day, and without objection, the chair put Res. 3-01 as once amended to voice vote; the resolution was adopted. Deaconess Manor again addressed the assembly regarding LCMS Life Ministry.

Evening Prayer

Chaplain Sean Daenzer led the convention in the Order of Evening Prayer, with the text, Isaiah 53:4–12; the Rev. Dr. Peter Anibati Abia, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan/Sudan, served as lector. Kantor Machemer and soloist/guitarist Andrew Schempf provided accompaniment and special music; members of the Council of Presidents also served as a choir.

Session 3 Monday a.m., July 31, 2023

Matins

The Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe, Second Vice-President (Great Lakes Region), preached on Romans 1:8–17 in the Office of Matins, with Chaplain Sean Daenzer serving as liturgist. Kantor Matthew Machemer provided accompaniment; soloist Jonathan Busarow and guitarist Andrew Schempf provided special music.

[The entire text of Vice-President Wohlrabe's sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

President Harrison opened the session, introducing a series of 175th anniversary video greetings from leaders of church partners. He called upon the Rev. Scott Sailer, chairman of Committee 13 (Registration, Credentials, and Elections), to update to the registration report, which read as follows:

Voting delegates	1018
Advisory delegates	160
Advisory representatives	161

The report was moved and adopted without discussion, by voice vote.

Greetings—Concordia Publishing House

The chair invited Jonathan Schultz, president of Concordia Publishing House (CPH), to bring greetings to the convention from the Synod's publishing house. After a brief video, Schultz explained that CPH knows that the "Word of the Lord endures forever" and strives daily to supply congregations, schools, and families with materials that help them grow, stand firm in the faith, and share the faith with others. He noted expanding collaboration across the Synod and the recent addition of the Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine as vice-president of publishing. He noted four of CPH's foci for the coming triennium, in print and in the latest technologies: foundational, trusted theological and academic resources, including the Concordia Commentary series, the completion of which is being accelerated; translation and distribution of resources globally in 150 languages to advance the Lutheran confession; resources necessary to restore biblical literacy and life-long faith formation; and resources to counter increasingly anti-Christian cultural forces. CPH's mission remains the same as when dedicated by C.F.W. Walther over 150 years ago: to

serve God alone, Christ alone, the Word of God alone, the Church of Christ alone, the Truth alone.

Committee 9: Structure and Administration

President Harrison reminded delegates of Standing Rule 30. A delegate proposed an amendment to the Special Standing Rules, namely that "candidates will have the opportunity to address the convention for up to three minutes prior to balloting." The motion, which would require a two-thirds vote, failed on a voice and hand vote.

The chair recognized Committee 9 Chairman Timothy Scharr, president of the Southern Illinois District, to begin the report of his committee. He made introductory remarks.

Res. 9-01, "To Amend Bylaws to Provide Clarity for Cross-Circuit and Cross-District Multi-Congregation Parishes" (*TB*, 1:169–71), was read and introduced by the committee. After discussion by the assembly, a delegate moved closure of debate, which was carried. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 9-02, "To Amend Various Bylaws to Provide Clarity or to Address Practical Considerations" (*TB*, 1:171–79), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to divide Section A from the main question for separate handling; this motion failed by voice and hand vote. It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution to strike the bylaw addition on ll. 3–4 on page 179. Dr. George Gude explained for the Commission on Constitutional Matters that modifications to bylaw amendments need to be approved by the commission before presentation to the floor. After some clarification, this being the only change in Section I, the chair ruled this, in effect, a motion to divide Section I from the main question. The motion to divide the question failed by voice vote. Without objection, the chair put the main question to the body and Res. 9-02 was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 9-03, "To Clarify Bylaws Regarding Appointment of a Synodwide Corporate Entity Chief Executive" (*TB*, 1:179–80), was read and introduced by the committee. After discussion by the assembly, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 9-04, "To Establish Mission Board Responsibilities Regarding Mission Office Strategic Plan and Annual Budget Proposal" (*TB*, 1:180–81), was read and introduced by the committee. Without discussion, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 9-05A, "To Simplify Circuit Elections" (*TB*, 3:374–76), was read and introduced by the committee. After discussion by the assembly, the chair asked and received consent to proceed to a vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

*Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections –
Balloting for Secretary and Synod Board of Directors*

With the President relinquishing the chair to Fifth Vice-President Christopher Esget, the chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to conduct the elections of the Secretary and members of the Synod Board of Directors. First, Chairman Sailer noted no change in the number of voting delegates. The committee proceeded to conduct the elections of the Secretary and members of the Board of Directors, with Chaplain Daenzer offering an opening prayer:

Secretary (Ordained, 3-year term)

Derek Klemm (PSW)	218		
John W. Sias (MO)	750		(declared elected)

Board of Directors (Ordained, At-Large, elect 2, 6-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Phillip L. Brandt (NOW)	82		
John M. Bussman (SO)	147		
Roger B. Gallup (NI)	196	192	155
Josemon T. Hoem (IN)	215	399	514
Derek Klemm (PSW)	188	239	324
Brent D. Smith (NEB)	164	164	

(decl. el.)

Position 2 of 2:

Phillip L. Brandt (NOW)	40		
John M. Bussman (SO)	157	129	
Roger B. Gallup (NI)	337	421	553
Derek Klemm (PSW)	308	336	441
Brent D. Smith (NEB)	154	111	

(decl. el.)

Board of Directors (Lay, East-Southeast Region, 6-year term)

Jon D. Allen (EA)	282		
Michael F. Killian (NE)	73		
Leo S. MacKay Jr. (EN)	631		(declared elected)

Board of Directors (Lay, Great Lakes Region, 6-year term)

John W. (Jack) Kidwell (MI)	346		
Rick H. Stathakis (MI)	626		(declared elected)

Board of Directors (Lay, Great Plains Region, 6-year term)

Larry W. Harrington (WY)	533		(declared elected)
Glenn E. Van Velson (NEB)	451		

Board of Directors (Lay, At-Large, 6-year term)

Jason Burk (TX)	147		
Ryan P. Ermeling (PSW)	256	384	
Gerhard H. Mundinger, Jr. (IN)	133		
Paul Techau (SE)	80		
K. Allan Voss (SW)	370	603	(declared elected)

Convention Essay: “We Preach Christ Crucified—The Power of God on the Cross”

[The entire text of the essay by Dr. Abjar Bahkou, associate professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 1: National Witness

President Harrison, after introducing a video featuring work of the Office of National Mission, recognized Vice-Chairman David R. Nehrenz, president of the Oklahoma District, to begin the report of his committee.

Res. 1-01A, “To Stimulate Training for Witness” (*TB*, 3:368), was read and introduced by the committee.

A delegate rose to a point of information, questioning the chair’s use of voice votes. The chair explained that the speed of the electronic vote system in this venue renders the voice vote more efficient and that no votes have been difficult to call.

It was moved and seconded to amend Res. 1-01A by adding at line 34, after “Jesus,” the appositive “Christ crucified for sinners,” which was accepted with consent. The chair suggested a closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. Res. 1-01A was adopted as amended by voice vote.

Res. 1-02A, “To Aid Small Congregations and Multi-Congregation Pastors and Parishes” (*TB*, 3:369), was read and introduced by the committee. After discussion by the assembly, the resolution was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

Res. 1-03A, “To Plant More Churches” (*TB*, 3:369–70), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair suggested an immediate closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. Res. 1-03A was adopted by hand and voice vote.

Res. 1-04A, “To Continue to Address Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues” (*TB*, 3:370–72), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to strike the word “consider” on p. 372, line 5. Chief Financial Officer Haak noted, upon a question of the committee, that the cost estimate includes this work. This amendment was accepted without objection. Two other amendments were proposed, to add “*A Chaste and Decent Life* (adopted December 2022)” to the list of resources on p. 371, ll. 41–46, and to add “one CTCR member or staff” to the task force membership on p. 372, ll. 1–4. These further amendments were accepted as a series by general consent.

The chair suggested a closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. Res. 1-04A was adopted as thus thrice amended by hand and voice vote.

Res. 1-05A, “To Increase Mission Efforts to Immigrants and Various Cultural Groups in North America” (*TB*, 3:372–73), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to insert a *resolve* wherever appropriate, to read:

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct its seminaries to ensure that students enrolled in ethnic immigrant or multicultural programs leading to ordination, for example the Ethnic Immigrant

Institute of Theology or Center for Hispanic Studies, or any other similar program, receive financial aid that covers a percentage of tuition equal to that received by M.Div. students. This should be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible without depriving the M.Div. or other pastoral formation programs of current financial aid resources.

After the floor committee suggested changing “direct” to “encourage,” the amendment was adopted by consent. The chair suggested a closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. Res. 1-05A was adopted as amended by voice vote.

Res. 1-06A, “To Direct Districts and Council of Presidents to Provide Strategic Plan for Addressing Wellness of Church Workers” (TB, 3:373), was read and introduced by the committee. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 1-07, “To Address Mental Health among Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers” (TB, 1:89–90), was read, with “provides” on p. 89, l. 46, replaced with “seek to,” and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution to add a *resolve*: “That the Synod establish a perpetual resource pool from which local congregations and districts can request financial support and grants for church worker sabbaticals, the Synod to establish a process as to how local congregations and districts can request these funds.” CFO Haak estimated the cost of a two- or three-month sabbatical as at least \$6,000; for even 100 pastors, the annual cost would require a substantial endowment that does not today exist. The chair suggested a closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. The amendment failed [Yes: 337; No: 524]. Res. 1-07 was adopted as read [Yes: 846; No: 33].

The chair reminded the body that under Standing Rule 6, significant amendments should be presented for publication in *Today’s Business* before presentation to the convention. A delegate also rose to a point of privilege, questioning whether the electronic voting system is receiving votes well in some sections.

Res. 1-08A, “To Promote and Commend the Synod’s Digital and Online Resources” (TB, 3:374), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair suggested an immediate closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

The committee’s work being completed, the chair dismissed it with thanks.

Presentation: International Missions—Spread the Gospel

The chair welcomed the Rev. Dr. Cory Rajek, Eurasia regional director for the Office of International Mission. Rajek shared a video featuring a family that may, it is prayed, be the first Lutheran congregation near Thessaloniki, Greece, in the same field as St. Paul.

Next welcomed was the Rev. Dr. Christian Tiews, an LCMS missionary who has spent half his life in Germany and is now serving, as one of four LCMS missionaries in Germany, in Hamburg. His tasks are three: spreading the Gospel through Word and Sacrament, mainly to Persian immigrants, in which he cooperates with the Synod’s German partner church, the SELK; second, serving on the faculty of Riga Luther Academy, a mixed-format seminary for the Eurasia region, operated in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (“the Livonian Project”); and third, coordinating Persian ministry across northern and eastern Germany, working closely with the “godfather” of this mission effort, Rev. Dr. Gottfried Martens in Berlin. There are three other LCMS missionaries in-country: Kim Bueltmann, Rachel Krause, and Mark Winterstein. Persian ministry involves a great deal of mercy work, including assisting Persian refugees prepare for asylum interviews with the German government. Tiews noted that less than 5 percent of Germans have an active faith in Jesus Christ, but that among Persian immigrants, 37 percent indicate Christian faith. He also shared a video featuring a student at the Riga seminary.

Rev. Charles Ferry, regional director for the Asia Region, for the Office of International Mission. Rev. Steven Mahlburg, a missionary who currently serves in Sri Lanka and partners with Bishop Arulchelvan and the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka, was invited to deliver a word of prayer in the Tamil language of our partner church, as Bishop Arulchelvan was unable to travel to the convention. Rev. Mahlburg read Psalm 96:2–3 and said the Lord’s Prayer and Benediction in Tamil.

Session 4 Monday p.m., July 31, 2023

Midday Prayer

The Rev. Dr. Benjamin T. Ball, Sixth Vice-President (Central Region), preached on Philippians 3:4b–11 in the order of Midday Prayer, with Chaplain Daenzer serving as liturgist and Kantor Machemer and trumpeter Jon Rusnak accompanying.

[The entire text of Vice-President Ball’s sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Minutes

President Harrison, having called the convention back to order, recognized the *Today’s Business* team, drawn principally from International Center staff in various departments, with one “on loan” from LCEF, who serve largely in addition to their regular duties, for their service to the convention and the Synod. President Harrison introduced the review of the minutes from Sunday’s morning and afternoon sessions, as prepared by the Secretary and distributed along with *Today’s Business*. The minutes were accepted as presented.

Greetings—Lutheran Women’s Missionary League

The chair called upon Eden Keefe, president of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML), to offer greetings. She commented that the partnership of LWML with the Synod goes “well beyond the dollars and the prayers” to “hearts and hands for service.” She noted attendance of 3,500 at the auxiliary’s recent (40th biennial) convention, also in Milwaukee and attendees’ participation in several related servant events. In the new biennium, “the Time is Now to be *purposeful* (“to do”) and *purpose-filled* (“to be ... Christ-centered, Christ-dedicated, and Christ-empowered”). Before closing with the words of Ephesians 3:20–21, she noted the LWML relies on God’s promise and faithful provision and supports the Synod in its mission to preach Christ crucified, with the hope that “all that we are and all that we do be to the glory of God.”

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

Having called the convention back to order, he called upon the Rev. Scott Sailer, chairman of Committee 13 (Registration, Credentials, and Elections), to update to the registration report, which read as follows:

Voting delegates	1022
Advisory delegates	160
Advisory representatives	162

The report was moved and adopted without discussion by voice vote.

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

President Harrison recognized Chairman Brian S. Saunders to resume the report of his committee. A delegate rose to a point of privilege, requesting additional features in the *Today’s Business* publications, including highlighting updates and adding an index of the location of latest editions of resolutions.

Res. 5-06, “To Clarify and Simplify Bylaws regarding Routes to Altar and Pulpit Fellowship” (*TB*, 1:118–19), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair suggested an immediate closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 5-07, “To Recognize That the Synod Is Not in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Japan Lutheran Church” (*TB*, 1:119–21), was read in its entirety, due to its weighty nature, and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution to amend the *whereas* on p. 121, line 15, to add the following: “into, nor carry out the public functions of, the pastoral office (1 Tim. 2:12, 1 Cor. 14:34),” and to insert as a first *resolve*: “That the LCMS affirm the inerrancy, inspiration, clarity, and authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:19–21).” This amendment was adopted by consent.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution, on page 121, line 31, to delete “especially early on in its relationship with the JLC.” The chair judged the amendment

to have been carried in a voice vote; however, upon a call for division, in a counted vote, the amendment failed [Yes: 296; No: 678]. Orders impending, the chair suggested closure of debate, which was accepted by a voice vote. Res. 5-07 was adopted as amended [Yes: 944; No: 55]. Committee Chairman Saunders offered prayer.

Special Recognition—International Guests

The President and his Church Relations assistants led the convention in warmly welcoming international guests, as follow:

Newly Established Altar and Pulpit Fellowship: Rev. Peter Anibati Abia, Bishop and Moses Dangba, Vicar, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan; Rev. Charles I. Bameka, Bishop and Mr. Fred Magezi, Guest, Lutheran Church of Uganda; Rev. Serge Maschewski, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine; Rev. Arumanayagam Arulchelvan, Bishop, Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church (not present); Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola, Bishop, Dr. Päivi Räsänen, Minister of Parliament, Dr. Niilo Räsänen, Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland.

Church Partners: Rev. Geraldo Walmir Schüler, President, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil; Rev. Timothy Teuscher, President, Lutheran Church-Canada; Rev. Juan Pablo Lanterna, President, Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile; Right Rev. George Samiec, Chairman, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England; Rev. Dr. Gleisson Roberto Schmidt, President, Evangelical Lutheran Church—Synod of France; Rev. Hans-Jörg Voigt, Bishop, Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church (SELK); Rev. John Shadrack Donkoh, President/Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana; Rev. Ignacio Juan Chan Cux, President, Lutheran Church of Guatemala; Right Rev. Dr. Priestly Balasingh, President/Bishop and Mr. Ravi Jesupathan, Guest, The India Evangelical Lutheran Church; Rev. Aleksander Burtsev, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Almaty; Rev. Dr. Joseph Ochola Omolo, Archbishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya; Rev. Eun Seob Kim, President, Lutheran Church in Korea; Rev. Andris Krauliņš, Secretary of International Affairs, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia; Rev. Isaac Guadalupe Garcia Castillo, President, Lutheran Synod of Mexico; Rev. Alceu Alton Figur, President, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay; Rev. Antonio del Rio Reyes, President, The Lutheran Church in the Philippines; Rev. Dr. Alexey Streltsov, Rector of Theological Seminary, Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church; Rev. S.M.A. Modise Maragelo, Bishop, Lutheran Church in Southern Africa; Rev. Andre Luiz Müller, President, Lutheran Church of Uruguay; Rev. Dr. Carey Larson, Presiding Pastor, The American Association of Lutheran Churches.

Invited Guests: Rev. Limberth Fernández Coronado, President, Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia; Rev. Dr. Denis Rakotozafy, Bishop and Dr. Harison Rasamimanana, Guest, Malagasy Lutheran Church; Rev. Dr. Yohana Ernest Nzelu, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church

of Tanzania—South East of Lake Victoria Diocese; Rev. Dr. Bill Tackmier, Dean of Academics, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod; Rev. Dr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism, North American Lutheran Church.

Catechism—Learning by Heart

With President Harrison relinquishing the chair to the Rev. Dien Ashley Taylor, president of the Atlantic District, the Rev. Peter Bender continued his catechesis on the basis of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. He likened learning the catechism by heart, not to memorizing several facts, but to learning *by heart* of those people and things we love, as an organic whole—and at the center our Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us by his precious blood, to be his own. We love Jesus because he first loved us—and he comes through words, and at the center is the forgiveness of sins. Bender traced this thought through the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. He explained how behind all the positive exhortations of the Commandments is the nature of the work our Lord Jesus Himself does for us. They also display in the most beautiful terms what is to be the Christian life. The Creed and the Lord's Prayer and Luther's explanation thereof round out with the Gospel and the work of the Spirit the whole of what we learn *by heart*. Learning by heart is one thing; learning what it *means* goes on and on. The synodical explanation unfolds Luther's concentrated explanations—and is accompanied by the Catechism's instruction on daily prayer.

Greetings—Lutheran Hour Ministries

Kurt Buchholz, president of Lutheran Hour Ministries, offered the auxiliary's greetings to the convention. He spoke of the organization's joy to be one of the two auxiliaries of the Synod, to work with the Synod and its members and ministries around the world, especially in its media ministries, through which millions of people ask to know more about Jesus Christ; hundreds of thousands are connected with ministries; others are equipped to share their faith. He shared a video, inviting a visit to www.lhm.org to join in a journey of learning and faith. He thanked the Synod for partnership in the Gospel, in bringing Christ to the nations—and the nations to the Church.

Committee 8: Finance

With the President resuming the chair, the chair recognized Chairman Roger C. Paavola, president of the Mid-South District, to begin the report of his committee.

Res. 8-01, "To Respectfully Decline Overtures" (*TB*, 1:168), was read and introduced by the committee, with Chairman Paavola separately offering an explanation of the two overtures being declined. The overtures were therefore handled severally: As to Ov. 8-01, after debate, the declination of the overture was approved in a voice vote. As to the Ov. 8-02, without debate, the declination of the overture was approved in a voice vote.

The committee was dismissed with thanks as to its resolution work, the chair noting the role of the committee (Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]), with the Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting staff, to review and attach to each recommended resolution accompanying information on estimated cost.

The chair introduced another commemorative church partner greeting video.

Committee 14: Convention Nominations – Presentation of Report and Floor Nominations for Other Boards and Commissions

The chair called on Mr. Christian Preus, chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations, to present the slate for the remaining positions to be elected and to prepare the delegates to present floor nominations for such according to the procedure of Standing Rule 26. Preus noted the printed report of his committee in the *Biographical Synopses and Statements of Nominees* and updates thereto in *Today's Business* Issues 2B and 3 (*TB*, 2B:345; 3:406). As Chairman Preus did so, the President relinquished the chair to Fifth Vice-President Esget. Preus presented the up-to-date slate in *Today's Business*, 3:397–405, reiterated the instructions for submission of floor nominations, and reminded delegates to review Tuesday's *Today's Business* for information on such floor nominees as may issue. The chair declared floor nominations in order for all boards and commissions other than the Board of Directors.

It was moved to add David Bahn, Cypress, Texas, TX District, to the slate for the LCEF Board of Directors, Ordained. The floor nomination was carried [Yes: 653; No: 194].

It was moved to add Janis McDaniels, Greensboro, N.C., SE District, to the slate for the Concordia Seminary Board of Regents, Lay. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Gregory N. Heidorn, Homer, Alaska, NOW District, to the slate for the Board for International Mission, West-Southwest Region, Ordained. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to open the floor to nominations beyond the pool for the Concordia Seminary Board of Regents, Ordained. The chair judged the motion to have failed by voice vote. Upon a call for division, the motion failed [Yes: 276; No: 642].

It was moved to add Brian T. Yamabe, Campbell, Calif., CNH District, to the slate for the Concordia University, Irvine, Board of Regents, Lay. It was confirmed that he had been found qualified for Concordia University System (CUS) board of regents service. The motion was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Travis Scholl, University City, Mo., MO District, to the slate for the Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors, Ordained. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Steven Schumacher, Fort Wayne, Ind., IN District, to the slate for the Board for International Mission, Central Region, Ordained. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add David M. Buchs, Fairhaven, Minn., MNN District, to the slate for the Concordia University, St. Paul, Board of Regents, Ordained. It was confirmed that he had been found qualified for CUS board of regents service. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Scott Diekmann, Puyallup, Wash., NOW District, to the slate for the Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors, Lay. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Linda Stoterau, Orange, Calif., PSW District, to the slate for the Concordia University System Board of Directors. It was confirmed that she has been found qualified for CUS board service. The dais believed it had not received required documentation and the floor nomination was not immediately accepted; however, this was later corrected. With later consent of the body, as noted below, the floor nomination was accepted.

It was moved and seconded to close nominations early. The motion failed [Yes: 577; No: 329].

It was moved to add Paul Naumann, Portage, Mich., MI District, to the slate for the Concordia University Wisconsin Board of Regents. It was confirmed that he had been found qualified for CUS board of regents service. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

It was moved to add Linda Kurtz, Las Vegas, Nev., PSW District, to the slate for the Board for National Mission, West-Southwest Region, Lay. The floor nomination was carried by voice and hand vote.

Seeing no further delegates offering floor nominations, the chair declared floor nominations closed.

Greetings—The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation

David Fiedler, president of the LCMS Foundation, greeted the convention on behalf of his synodwide corporate entity. He emphasized two things it does: first, to help LCMS members to create “wonderful estate gifts that take care of their families and leave marvelous gifts to ministry;” second, to provide investment management of these gifts when received, along with other assets of the Church. He shared a video of a gentleman for whom the Foundation has created a “wonderful gift plan.” He closed by summarizing “the heart” of the Foundation’s work: “serving donors who love Jesus and their church and want to support it after they’ve been called to heaven.”

Committee 7: University Education

The President recognized Chairman Scott R. Murray, Third Vice-President, to begin the report of his committee.

Res. 7-01A, “To Recognize and Give Thanks for Work at Concordia College—New York” (TB, 2B:309), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved to amend the resolution by inserting, at TB 2B:309, after line 28, the additional *resolve*:

Resolved, That a study be performed regarding the closures of Concordia College Alabama; Concordia College—New York; and Concordia University, Portland, by an independent investigative source that is approved by the Council of Presidents, and include a determination of the causes of closure for these institutions, analyze commonalities, and make recommendations for changes that will help prevent the future closures of our other Concordia universities; and be it finally

The chair ruled the amendment not to be germane and therefore out of order. It was moved and seconded to appeal from the decision of the chair [Yes: 733, No: 250]. It was moved and seconded to close debate; this was carried in a hand and voice vote. Res. 7-01A was adopted in a hand and voice vote.

Res. 7-02A, “To Honor and Give Thanks for Ministry of Concordia University, Portland” (TB, 2B:309–10), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution to add a second-last *resolve*: “That the Synod establish a memorial fund to offer scholarships to incoming Concordia University students in memory of the Concordia colleges and universities that have recently closed.” At the request of the committee, CFO Haak noted no cost to establishing an endowment other than the funds to be added; he noted that funds have devolved to the Concordia University System that are used for such purposes. The chair put to the body close of debate on the amendment; this was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed [Yes: 402; No: 584]. The chair put to the body close of debate on the resolution; this was carried by voice vote. Res. 7-02A was adopted by a voice vote.

After a video in “fond remembrance” of Concordia University, Portland, and Concordia College—New York, the chair asked for and received unanimous consent to correct an error earlier in the process of receiving floor nominations, the effect of which is described above.

Committee 10: Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

The President recognized Vice-Chairman Dwayne Lueck, president of the North Wisconsin District, to begin the report of his committee, requesting prayers for Chairman John C. Wille, who is unable to be with the convention.

Res. 10-01, “To Amend Dispute Resolution and Expulsion Bylaws to Address Practical Considerations and Clarity” (TB, 1:194–97), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately put to the body the close

of debate, which was carried. The resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

Res. 10-02, “To Amend Bylaws to Clarify Application of Pre-Call Consultation and *Call and Be Served By* (Bylaws 2.5.2–3) beyond Member Congregations” (*TB*, 1:198–200), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately put to the body the close of debate, which was carried by a voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 926; No: 40].

Res. 10-03A, “To Provide Application of Standards of Accountability to Members of Synod” (*TB*, 3:381–82), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately put to the body the close of debate, which was carried by a voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 10-04A, “To Direct Revision of Council of Presidents Policy regarding Placement” (*TB*, 3:382), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately put to the body the close of debate, which was carried by a voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 10-05A, “To Speak to Spiritual Care of Victims of Sexual Misconduct by Individual Members of the Synod” (*TB*, 3:382–83), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately put to the body the close of debate, which was carried by a voice vote. The resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

Committee 9: Structure and Administration

The President, after introducing a *Set Apart to Serve* video, recognized Chairman Timothy J. Scharr to resume the report of his committee. Chairman Scharr clarified regarding Res. 9-02, adopted in Session 3, and the election of the circuit visitor that the district president may suggest names up to the day prior to the forum; the forum itself decides when it gathers whether it will add such names to the slate.

Res. 9-06A, “To Appoint Task Force to Evaluate Current Electoral Circuit Parameters” (*TB*, 3:376–80), was read and introduced by the committee. Upon the chair’s immediate proposal to close debate, a delegate raised a point of order, questioning whether the chair can under Standing Rule 22 put the close of debate before the assembly when no debate has occurred. The chair instead opened debate on the resolution. After debate, a delegate called the question. Closure of debate was carried. The resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

Res. 9-07, “To Provide for Continuity of Service in Regional Positions” (*TB*, 1:187), was read and introduced by the committee. After some debate, a delegate called the question, which was carried. The resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

Res. 9-08A, “To Strengthen Nonvoting Advisory Delegate Participation at Conventions” (*TB*, 3:380–81), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend by replacing “holds the hearing office” with “hears what is preached” on page 380, line 48. There being an objection to handling the amendment by consent, debate ensued. The question on the amendment was called; this was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed [Yes: 348; No: 579].

It was moved and seconded to strike the sentence, “Recent efforts have included polling advisory delegates prior to delegate voting, but in addition to violating the established rules of order (*Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* [12th ed.] 45:72), such polling reduces the advice and counsel given to a single word—either ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ The counsel these advisors can bring is much more nuanced and valuable than merely a single word.” in lines 34–38. On a point of order, a new queue was formed for the amendment. A delegate immediately called the question, which motion was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed by voice vote. Twenty minutes of debate on the resolution and its subsidiary motions having elapsed, the chair called for a vote to close debate, which was carried by voice and hand vote. Res. 9-08A was adopted by hand and voice vote.

Vespers

The Rev. Charles I. Bameka, bishop of the Lutheran Church of Uganda, read Isaiah 43:1–3a and Chaplain Daenzer led the convention in a closing collect, the orders of the day having been exceeded in session.

**Session 5
Tuesday a.m., August 1, 2023**

Matins

The Rev. Christopher S. Esget, LCMS Fifth Vice-President (East-Southeast Region), preached on Acts 26:1b, 12–32, in the Office of Matins; the Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, served as lector and Chaplain Daenzer as liturgist. Kantor Matthew Machemer provided accompaniment.

[The entire text of Vice-President Esget’s sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections

President Harrison opened the session, calling upon the Rev. Scott Sailer, chairman of Committee 13 (Registration, Credentials, and Elections), to update to the registration report, which read as follows:

Voting delegates	1023
Advisory delegates	160
Advisory representatives	162
Special guests and others	150

The report was moved and adopted without discussion by voice vote.

Greetings—Concordia Plan Services

After a video featuring the history of the worker benefit plans, James Sanft, president and chief executive officer of

Concordia Plan Services, greeted the assembly, explaining the service of his synodwide trust entity as comprehended within the example of the Church's delegation of care in Acts 6 and as a proof that as a Synod, we are stronger together. For 60 years and into the future, the Plans serve ministries and workers, aiming not only to reimburse claims and provide retirement benefits but to improve the physical and financial well-being of workers—both during service and in retirement—and thereby to enhance their service to the Church.

Greetings—Lutheran Bible Translators

The Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowski, executive director and chief executive officer of Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT), addressed the convention. He began by sharing about the recent translation work done for the Komba language community of Ghana, West Africa. The only book in their language is the New Testament, and LBT is working on a translation of the full Bible. He shared photos showing that their Bibles are well used and told the assembly that their joy at having God's Word is indescribable. The desire of LBT is that all language communities experience the hope of God's Word in this generation. He shared that the goal is that in the next 10 years, God's Word will be available in every language.

Committee 7: University Education

The President recognized Chairman Scott R. Murray to resume the report of his committee. As the committee approached, a delegate pointed out an error on *TB* 4:456, where Rev. Schumacher served as a parish pastor for 20 years rather than 2. This was noted.

Res. 7-03, "To Call Concordia University Texas Leadership to Repentance" (*TB*, 1:139–41), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved to divide the question, to remove the final two resolves to another resolution under the current title of Res. 7-03, with the remainder to be a new resolution, titled, "To Call Concordia University Texas to Honor Their Responsibility to the Bylaws of the Synod and Their Own Bylaws." The chair ruled this out of order as non-substantive.

It was moved to amend the resolution in *TB*, 1:140, line 45, to introduce the word "all forementioned appropriate actions." The chair ruled this non-substantive and therefore out of order.

The substitute motion in *TB*, 3:395, was offered. The Secretary was called upon to explain that this substitute could not be introduced due to Opinion 23-3012 (H) of the Commission on Constitutional Matters. He summarized this opinion, to be published in the minutes of the commission, for the assembly.

It was moved and seconded to amend line 45 on *TB*, 1:140, to replace the word "address" with "seek reconciliation in" and to delete the following three resolves (p. 141, ll. 1–8).

With twenty minutes of debate elapsed, the chair acted under Standing Rule 22 to call the question on the amendment. This failed [Yes: 604; No: 366]. Debate on the amendment continued.

It was moved and seconded to suspend the rules to allow Concordia University Texas President Don Christian to address the convention for two minutes. This was carried [Yes: 697; No: 291] and President Christian was allowed to address the convention. Thereafter, with twenty minutes of debate again elapsed, the chair called the question on the amendment. This was carried [Yes: 780; No: 206]. The amendment failed [Yes: 336; No: 615]. The chair then called the question on the resolution; the chair ruled debate closed in a hand and voice vote; in a counted vote, closure of debate was carried [Yes: 681; No: 316]. Res. 7-03 was adopted [Yes: 716; No: 283].

A delegate rose to request the right to record votes on Res. 7-03 in the minutes under Standing Rule 29. The motion was granted by the assembly. Votes asked to be recorded are as follow:

Yes:

Lay Delegates: Jonathan Baisch (SELC); Keith D'Atrio (MDS); Darik Day (NE); Harry Edmon (NOW); Paul Edmon (NE); Delmar Ehlers (MNS); Paul Gehlbach (MNS); Stephen Hernandez (TX); Matthew Laine (OH); Robert Lustrea (NI); Joshua Mize (SE); Caleb Smith (IN); Steven Timmerman (SD); Philip Vigas (MI);

Pastoral Delegates: Christopher Antonetti (NI); Emmett Bartens (NI); Eric Bednash (SE); Anthony Bertram (MNS); Christopher Brademeyer (ND); Christopher Burger (SE); Joshua Conradt (SW); Theodore Cook Sr. (KS); Jesse Davis (SW); Mark De Young (TX); K. C. Dehning (IN); Phillip Fischhaber (NI); Marshal Frisque (SW); Aaron Hambleton (IE); Peter Haugen (MNS); Andrew Herzberg (CI); Jonathan Hodges (NJ); Christopher Horton (MNS); Philip Houser (MNN); Kevin Johnson (IW); Andrew Kennell (MO); David Knefelkamp (NW); Nathaniel Konkel (MNN); John Koopman (IW); Alan Kornacki (SI); Mark Kranz (MO); Ralph Laufer (SI); Joshua Leigeber (MDS); Gary Markworth (NW); Adam Matheny (MNS); Adam McDowell (IN); Seth Mierow (IN); Matthew Moss (MNS); M. Joshua Osbun (IN); Daniel Redhage (IE); Daniel Ross (OK); Evan Scamman (NE); Michael Schmidt (KS); Michael Schuermann (CI); Christian Schultz (KS); Benjamin Siebert (NEB); Brad Thomas (NW); David Vandercook (MDS); Robert Wacker (OH); David Walsh (MNN); Jody Walter (NNW); Donald Welmer (MDS); Adam Welton (SD); Philip Zielinski (OH);

No:

Pastoral Delegates: John Davis (TX); Alex Hoffmeyer (MI); Derek Klemm (PSW); Joshua Knippa (TX).

Presentation: "Serving the Synod's Mission: The History and Blessings of Our Two Seminaries"

With President Harrison relinquishing the chair to Sixth Vice-President Benjamin Ball, the Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., and Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger, presidents, respectively, of

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, addressed the convention.

Dr. Rast spoke on the biblical and reformation heritage of LCMS pastoral formation. Using Luther’s own words, he noted the reformer’s unswerving advocacy for Christian education, and that the Lutheran Reformation itself was born out of the university. He recounted the development of our Synod’s two seminaries and the adaptation that took place in the case of both institutions. While adaptation has been constant, some things remained the same, especially the necessity for a considerable length of time for formation and a residency requirement. He concluded by saying, “God has richly blessed the LCMS with two excellent and faithful seminaries. Are they perfect? No—we live in the church militant. Is there room for improvement? Yes—and both are committed to the pursuit of excellence. Will there be frustrations and joys as we move forward? Yes, and yes. It has always been that way, and it always will be—until our Lord returns. May it be soon. ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!’ (Rev. 22:20)”

Dr. Egger explained why we continue to invest in and emphasize the value of full-time residential study at our seminaries as the optimal way to form pastors for a lifetime of “preaching Christ crucified,” for deep formation and worldwide impact. The Church always faces new challenges, encounters new possibilities, and develops new approaches; yet, “we must remind ourselves of the enormous blessings that have come to us from our Missouri Synod heritage of deep scriptural and theological preparation for ministry. And we must recommit ourselves, continually, to build upon and never to forfeit this commitment.” While it is currently popular in education circles to reduce the time needed for formation, Egger noted that time is necessary in the learning and growth needed for shaping a person for the task of proclaiming God’s Word. This time investment includes daily chapel, the community established at the seminaries, and regular interactions between students and faculty members. Dr. Egger addressed the generosity needed to continue with our two seminaries and gave thanks for the generosity of the Synod in allowing both seminaries to guarantee free tuition for residential ministerial formation students and to continue to resource the Church at home and abroad. He concluded: “For these reasons, in-person seminary formation should continue to be the centerpiece of our church’s shared work in forming pastors for a lifetime of Gospel ministry. Both seminaries thank you, the people of the LCMS, for your strong support of this endeavor. Your convictions regarding the ministry and the Word of God have provided us the time, the place, and the experienced faculty for this joyous work of preparing pastors, missionaries, and deaconesses. For the sake of the church’s confession and mission, here and throughout the world. In the Lord’s name, thank you. God bless you.”

Convention Essay: “We Preach Christ Crucified—The Wisdom of God”

[The entire text of the essay by the Rev. Dr. Russell P. Dawn, president of Concordia University Chicago, is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

With President Harrison resuming the chair, the chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to conduct the next elections in the prescribed order. Chairman Sailer continued with the order of elections. During the elections, the President relinquished the chair to First Vice-President Peter K. Lange and then resumed it.

Board for National Mission (Ordained/Commissioned, East-Southeast Region, 6-year term)

Adolfo Borges (FG)	357		
Timothy J. Droegemueller (FG)	481		(declared elected)

Board for National Mission (Ordained/Commissioned, Great Plains Region, 6-year term)

Richard Boring (NEB)	183		
Mark E. Moss (MNS)	164		
Craig K. Niemeier (NEB)	543		(declared elected)

Board for National Mission (Lay, Central Region, 6-year term)

Seth Hinz (MO)	287	382	
Shirley A. Jackson (MO)	230		
Stephen Weller (KS)	396	523	(declared elected)

Board for National Mission (Lay, Great Lakes Region, 6-year term)

David R. Meissner (SW)	191		
Crysten Sanchez (IE)	740		(declared elected)

Board for National Mission (Lay, West-Southwest Region, 6-year term)

Carol A. Hack-Broome (CNH)	433	547	(declared elected)
Linda Kurtz (PSW)	307	391	
Noreen L. Linke (RM)	196		

Board for International Mission (Ordained/Commissioned, Central Region, 6-year term)

Peter J. Brock (IN)	239	249	
James D. Gier Jr. (IN)	306	371	469 (decl. el.)
Wilfred L. Karsten (CI)	133		
Steven R. Schumacher (IN)	276	334	466

Board for International Mission (Ordained/Commissioned, Great Lakes Region, 6-year term)

David P. Stechholz (EN)	482		
Scott Yakimow (MI)	486		(declared elected)

Board for International Mission (Ordained/Commissioned, West-Southwest Region, 6-year term)

James D. Bauer (RM)	388	468	
Terrence Chan (CNH)	351	498	(declared elected)
Glen Fluegge (PSW)	115		
Gregory N. Heidorn (NOW)	114		

Board for International Mission (Lay, East-Southeast Region, 6-year term)

Michael P. (Mike) Wind (SO)	456	
James S. (Jim) Wolf (EN)	514	(declared elected)

Board for International Mission (Lay, Great Plains Region, 6-year term)

Jan Bruick (NEB)	460	
John W. Edson (MNS)	511	(declared elected)

Committee 12: Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth

The chair recognized Chairman Benjamin T. Ball, Sixth Vice-President (Central Region), to begin the report of his committee.

The chair put before the body a suggested amendment of Standing Rule 22, to allow the chair to call for a vote to close debate on less-controversial resolutions without hearing any debate. The amendment was adopted [Yes: 695; No: 255].

Res. 12-01A, “To Produce Uniform Set of Lutheran Academic Standards for Our Schools” (*TB*, 3:387–88), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 12-02A, “To Confess Authority God Gave to Fathers and Mothers” (*TB*, 3:388–89), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. A delegate subsequently moved to refer, which the chair ruled out of order. After a delegate raised a point of order relating to the immediate closing of debate, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 12-03A, “To Address Commissioned Minister—Teacher Student Debt” (*TB*, 3:390–91), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 12-04A, “To Commend and Give Thanks for Lutheran Schools” (*TB*, 3:391–92), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 12-05A, “To Encourage Family Devotions, Lutheran Fathers, and Young Men” (*TB*, 3:392), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 12-06, “To Encourage Use of Current Research and Resources for Ministry to Youth” (*TB*, 1:214), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

President Harrison recognized Chairman Brian S. Saunders to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 5-08A, “To Affirm In-Person Communion” (*TB*, 2B:306–7), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to amend by striking the final *resolve*. The question on the amendment was called; this was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed [Yes: 182; No: 780]. The chair called the question, which was carried by voice vote. After a voice vote, the result of which was not declared, Res. 5-08A was adopted [Yes: 842; No: 140]. The chair called upon Pacific Southwest District President Michael Gibson, who addressed the convention to request patience for the district presidents as they continue to work with perhaps a dozen churches remaining in the practice of online communion.

Session 6

Tuesday p.m., August 1, 2023

Midday Prayer

President Harrison having called the convention back to order, the Rev. Nabil Nour, Fourth Vice-President (Great Plains Region), preached on 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 in the order of Midday Prayer, with Chaplain Daenzer serving as liturgist, Kantor Machemer accompanying, and vocalist Jonathan Busarow and guitarist Andrew Schempf providing special music.

[The entire text of Vice-President Nour’s sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Minutes

Taking the chair, President Harrison introduced review of the minutes from Monday’s Sessions 3 and 4. These were adopted by voice vote with two minor corrections.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

The chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to conduct the next elections in the prescribed order; during elections the President relinquished the chair to Second Vice-President John Wohlrabe and then resumed it.

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

Kevin Austin (PSW)	164	161	
Jacob Bobby (NEB)	135		
David H. Petersen (EN)	372	473	(declared elected)
Timothy Seals (PSW)	209	266	

Commission on Theology and Church Relations (Commissioned, parish teacher, 6-year term)

Joseph J. (Joe) Gerth (SI)	543	(declared elected)
Timothy Leech (FG)	367	

Commission on Theology and Church Relations (Lay, 6-year term)

Jack D. Kilcrease III (MI)	365	501	(declared elected)	
Brian L. Peterson (SW)	297	426		
Glenn E. Van Velson (NEB)	279			

Concordia Publishing House (Ordained, 6-year term)

Mark Birkholz (NI)	463	623	(declared elected)	
Karl F. Fabrizio (SW)	210			
Travis Scholl (MO)	282	320		

Concordia Publishing House (Commissioned, 6-year term)

Jennifer L. Knox (SW)	243			
Pamela J. Nielsen (MO)	329	503	(declared elected)	
Jonathan Wessler (NE)	365	445		

Concordia Publishing House (Lay, elect 3, 6-year term)

Position 1 of 3:

Kurt A. Battles (MNN)	182	214	287	367	478
Scott Diekmann (NOW)	146	121			
Scott D. W. Gercken (NI)	159	145	130		
Elaine Graff (RM)	184	205	207	210	
Jill Johnson (NEB)	188	266	321	375	480 (d.e.)
Kent M. Warneke (NEB)	75				
Stephen Weller (KS)	22				

Position 2 of 3:

Kurt A. Battles (MNN)	466	610	(declared elected)		
Scott Diekmann (NOW)	67				
Scott D. W. Gercken (NI)	100				
Elaine Graff (RM)	224	351			
Kent M. Warneke (NEB)	94				
Stephen Weller (KS)	11				

Position 3 of 3:

Scott Diekmann (NOW)	113	
Scott D. W. Gercken (NI)	224	
Elaine Graff (RM)	508	(declared elected)
Kent M. Warneke (NEB)	108	
Stephen Weller (KS)	12	

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (Ordained/Commissioned, 3-year term)

David L. Bahn (TX)	235	
Jason M. Braaten (CI)	494	(declared elected)
Blaise C. Sedney (SE)	223	

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Julie Johnson (SI)	249	265			
Jonathan H. Kramer (MO)	350	482	(declared elected)		
Jason A. Paradis (ND)	135				
Jaime Peters (MO)	232	206			

Position 2 of 2:

Julie Johnson (SI)	365	517	(declared elected)		
Jason A. Paradis (ND)	288				
Jaime Peters (MO)	313	422			

Catechism—Means of Grace

President Harrison introduced the Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine to begin catechesis on the basis of the Catechism sections on Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. He showed from the words of the Catechism texts how Baptism includes simple water and more importantly the word and promise of God; how it is *Christ's* Baptism, which makes us

children of God; and how Luther ties it (Mark 16:16) up with faith, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Baptism bestows a faith to be returned to through all of life. This Baptism saves—this truth stands and comforts against all doubt. Baptism says, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name. You are mine.” Baptism indicates you are daily to be put to death in repentance and to rise again to new life, to be found in absolution, at the cross. During the presentation, President Harrison relinquished the chair to Fourth Vice-President Nabil S. Nour and then resumed it.

Presentation: “Persecuted for Your Faith”

President Harrison welcomed Päivi M. Räsänen, a long-time member of the Finnish parliament, charged criminally for tweeting a picture of Romans 1:24–27, to ask the Finnish state church leadership how the church's doctrine can be compatible with an ideology that elevates what the Bible calls sin and shame to a matter of pride. She has for four years faced criminal “ethnic agitation” charges for this and for a pamphlet she had written in 2004, which took a stand on sexuality and marriage from a classical Christian perspective (Bishop Juhana Pohjola was also prosecuted for publishing the pamphlet). She faced proceedings that targeted the core doctrine of Christianity—which the judge described as “love the sinner, hate the sin”—as “insulting and defaming” because the identity of a person cannot be distinguished from his or her action. But this denies that human dignity comes from God, that God loved *all people* that He gave His only Son to die for all of us on account of our sins. In recent days, “incitement laws” in Finland have gone even farther. Räsänen spoke of numerous complaints filed for her speaking at a Lutheran event about Christian values, abortion, and marriage—and the courage to act contrary to public opinion and norms and even the law if these contradict the Word of God. “If you believe,” she quoted Luther, “you speak. If you speak, you must suffer. For faith, confession, and cross belong together and are part of a true Christian.” She thanked those who have prayed for and supported her defense and, introducing her husband, her supportive family. She wished the convention “courage and blessing.”

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese Bishop Juhana Pohjola also addressed the convention, noting that when the 2004 pamphlet “Male and Female He Made Them—Homosexual relationships challenge the Christian concept of humanity” was published with the support of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, no one knew “how fast our society would change for Christians from neutral to negative and hostile.” He noted the irony that the pamphlet does not deny human dignity but grounds it in the image of God—the basis for equality and inherent dignity. The battle is a spiritual one, deeper than marriage, getting to what is a human being and who is God. “Not only every individual human being, body and soul united, is an image of God but marriage reflects the equal and complementary loving union of the Holy Trinity.” The Gospel is at stake. In the face

of a tidal wave of deep deception “wiping over Christendom,” he—not as victim or hero but as “fellow servant in Christ”—called the LCMS to “be ready to pay the price joyfully ... [to] stand firm in Christ and His word!” He expressed thanks for encouragement full of Scripture and for President Harrison’s “unwavering support.” “Fear is the first enemy in this fight,” he concluded, “and silencing the truth the first casualty. Dear brothers and sisters: why should we be fearful? What should we be afraid of? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31) So let us all boldly and joyfully, in love and truth, keep on confessing Christ crucified! The Lord be with you all!”

[The entire text of these presentations is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 2: International Witness

The chair recognized Chairman R. Lee Hagan, president of the Missouri District, to begin the report of his committee. After a video, Hagan offered introductory remarks, noting that resolutions to be presented reflect and are intended to increase collaborative efforts to bring the preaching of Christ crucified, repentance, and the forgiveness of sins, to all nations.

Res. 2-01, “To Commend, Strengthen, and Give Thanks for Alliance Missionary Program” (*TB*, 1:91), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 2-02A, “To Promote and Collaborate with the Office of International Mission” (*TB*, 2B:298–99), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 2-03, “To Strengthen Pastoral Care of Missionaries and Clarify Ecclesiastical Supervision” (*TB*, 1:92–93), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by show of hands. The resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Res. 2-04A, “To Commend Synod Seminaries for Work in International Witness” (*TB*, 2B:299–300), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 2-05, “To Provide Resources for Discerning Validity of Requests to Support International Mission Work” (*TB*, 1:94), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 2-06A, “To Study Synod Relationships with Independent Lutheran Congregations in Foreign Mission Areas” (*TB*, 2B:300), was read and introduced by the committee. After explanation by the chair, the chair

immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 2-07A, “To Commend Use and Attendance of FOROs” (*TB*, 2B:300–301), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Noting one additional resolution coming in the next day’s *Today’s Business*, the committee yielded back the remainder of its time.

Recognition of outgoing Synod Board of Directors members

The chair recognized term-limited and outgoing Chairman Michael Kumm and his wife, Janet, and Ed Everts, who “have provided the most outstanding leadership in the most challenging of circumstances ... with cheer, determination and skill.” Keith Frndak, who has served with similar distinction, is also leaving the board but was not able to attend the convention.

Presentation: “International Missions: Plant Lutheran Churches”

The chair called upon Rev. Charles Ferry, Asia regional director for the Office of International Mission, to introduce a video featuring the Rev. Dr. Michael Paul, who serves in the Synod’s mission in Taiwan. After the video, the Rev. Dr. David Preus presented on planting Lutheran churches. Dr. Preus himself is part of what he called a “big idea,” as one of those who entered the mission field as part of the push to double the number of career missionaries abroad during the 2013–16 triennium. He noted the difficulties and complexities of such mission work. He noted that church planters must preach, must be patient, must be present, and must pray. The true and full confession is the fulcrum on which we will move the world. He concluded by saying, “So we ask you to think big. Bigger than the structure and polity of the LCMS. Bigger than the health policies, the pension plan, and the entire administration. Bigger even than the fundraising and strategic planning. Think of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ‘He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world’ (1 John 2:2). Think of the one and only thing that unites us as a synod and promises the future of our mission. Think of these things, and together we will find our place to stand.” Bishop Peter Anibati Abia of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan blessed the convention. During the presentation, the President relinquished the chair to Fourth Vice-President Nabil Nour.

Committee 6: Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

With President Harrison resuming the chair, the chair recognized Chairman John E. Hill, president of the Wyoming District, after an introductory *Set Apart to Serve* video, to begin the report of his committee. Before the presentation a delegate attempted to offer an amendment to the Special Standing Rules. Hill offered opening remarks, noting all the

routes to ordained ministry presently authorized by the Synod, various and disparate changes requested in overtures received, and the principle that the Synod reserves to itself the right to authorize routes to ordained ministry, with regard to which decisions purity of doctrine, unity, pastoral care, outreach, missions, etc. are at stake.

Res. 6-01, “To Affirm and Strengthen *Set Apart to Serve* in Word and Action” (TB, 1:129–30), was, after introductory words by LCMS Office of Pastoral Education Executive Director James Baneck, read and introduced by the committee. The chair, noting he has heard no opposition to the initiative, and without objection, called for an immediate voice vote; the resolution was adopted.

Res. 6-02A, “To Encourage Proper Pastoral Formation through Our Synod’s Seminaries” (TB, 4:413–14), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to add a *resolve*, “That the seminaries and Pastoral Formation Committee work to research and create additional paths to pastoral formation.” The chair suggested that this be added instead to Res. 6-03A, and the amendment was not pursued.

It was moved and seconded to amend at TB 4:414, line 17, to strike the word “strongly” and to add an additional *resolve* as the fourth, “That district presidents and seminaries be strongly encouraged to direct men to any proper Synod-approved route to ordination that is appropriate for the individual and their context.” The committee noted the strike would be from a quotation of 2019 Res. 6-02, which could only awkwardly be accommodated. After some debate the question was called on the amendment; this was carried by voice vote. The amendment failed [Yes: 369; No: 573]. With twenty minutes of debate elapsed, the chair called the question; this was carried by voice vote. Res. 6-02A was adopted by voice vote.

Presentation: Military Chaplains

The chair invited the Rev. Craig G. Muehler, executive director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, to bring greetings to the Synod from all her chaplains. Muehler expressed thanks for congregational prayers and congregations sending more pastors to serve as chaplains. He noted that our chaplains have the blessing and confidence of knowing that they have the entire Synod who supports them, prays for them, and defends their rights to be free to be faithful. He encouraged congregations to provide names and contact information for all LCMS men and women who serve in the armed forces to the Ministry to the Armed Forces Office so that they can be connected with Lutheran spiritual care and support that they need and deserve. Chaplain Muehler then introduced three chaplain representatives to the convention: Army Chaplain Bobby Niemtschk, Navy Chaplain Kenneth Bomberger, and Chaplain Keith Witte.

Retired Army Chaplain Steven Hokana spoke about the Silver St. Martin of Tours Medal, which he then presented to

Retired Chaplain, Rear Admiral Daniel Gard, USN, retired. Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, Chief of Chaplains of the United States Navy, read the St. Martin of Tours Citation and addressed the assembly.

Committee 3: Mercy

The chair recognized Chairman Brady L. Finnern to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 3-02A, “To Increase Awareness among Synod Congregations of Human Trafficking” (TB, 2B:301), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Res. 3-03A, “To Continue the Synod’s Efforts to Address Mental Health and Mental Illness” (TB, 2B:302–4), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, but allowed an amendment that was moved and seconded, namely to insert before TB 2B:303, line 9, a *whereas*, “Persons seeking help for mental health issues face stigma and bias against them,” and before line 35, a *resolve*: “That the Synod discourage its members and congregations from attaching stigma to or being biased against persons seeking help for mental health issues.” With the committee favorable and no objection from the body, the amendment was adopted. Res. 3-03A was then adopted as amended by an immediate and unanimous voice vote.

Res. 3-04A, “To Commend and Give Thanks for Synod Work regarding Disaster Response” (TB, 2B:304), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question, which was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Responsive Prayer I

Chaplain Sean Daenzer led the convention in the Order of Responsive Prayer, with the text, Proverbs 8:22–31; Kantor Machemer and guitarist Schempf provided accompaniment.

Session 7

Wednesday a.m., August 2, 2023

Matins

The Rev. Dr. Ely Prieto, associate dean for Urban and Cross-Cultural Ministry, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, preached on Romans 3:21–26 in the Office of Matins; Chaplain Daenzer served as liturgist; Kantor Machemer, as accompanist; and the presidents of Latin America partner churches, LCMS missionaries to Spanish-speaking areas, and other guests, as the choir.

[The entire text of Dr. Prieto’s sermon is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Greetings—Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz addressed the assembly to share the work of his organization, strengthening Lutherans to proclaim freely the full Word of God to a world possessed of utopian notions of governmental benevolence—and one

tending toward determining what lives are worth being allowed to be lived. The Center provides input, education, advice, and advocacy in the areas of life, marriage, and religious liberty, for the sake of our churches, schools, universities, and seminaries.

Convention Essay: “We Preach Christ Crucified—The Redemption of the World”

During the essay, President Harrison relinquished the chair to Minnesota South District President Lucas Woodford.

[The entire text of the essay by Dr. Juhana Pohjola, bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, is printed in the 2023 *Convention Proceedings*.]

Committee 7: University Education

The President, resuming the chair, recognized Chairman Scott R. Murray to resume the report of his committee. Murray acknowledged and thanked five Concordia University presidents: Michael Thomas (Irvine), Bernard Bull (Seward), Erik Ankerberg (Mequon/Ann Arbor), Russell Dawn (Chicago), and Brian Friedrich (St. Paul), whom he described as strongly desiring their schools to excel in faithfulness and connection to the Synod, for their faithful service. He expressed the Synod’s love for these “fine leaders” and the Synod’s determination to “defend them to the nth” for the sake of a clear confession of Christ in their universities. Murray noted their “wonderful input” and unanimous support for Res. 7-04B.

Res. 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod” (TB, 4:417–42), was explained by committee member and 2019 Res. 7-03 Committee Chairman Christian Preus and introduced by the committee.

It was moved to call the question, which motion was withdrawn before being seconded. A delegate asked whether the question could be divided; the Secretary offered the explanation that due to the complex interrelation of bylaw changes across the sections, division of this question would be out of order.

With twenty minutes debate elapsed, the chair called the question under the rule; this motion failed [Yes: 638; No: 326]. After further debate, the previous question was moved; this was carried [Yes: 803; No: 180]. Res. 7-04B was adopted [Yes: 882; No: 120].

It was moved that the convention expressly direct that Bylaw 7.1.2 be invoked so that the Synod Board of Directors may in an exceptional circumstance amend the bylaws with respect to Res. 7-04B “if they run into any conflicts in implementing the direction of the convention.” The Secretary clarified that, in Bylaw 7.1.2, the “express direction” contemplates that the convention, the delegates of the congregations assembled, would give specific instruction for bylaws to be developed and that a blanket grant of authority to make undetermined changes would be

inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, which require the convention to amend the Synod’s Bylaws. The delegate withdrew the motion.

Res. 7-05A, “To Bring Accountability to Concordia Boards of Regents and to Improve Doctrinal Fidelity and Amenability to Ecclesiastical Supervision” (TB, 2B:335–36), was read and introduced by the committee.

Moved and seconded was the amendment on TB 5:476, to amend at TB 2B:335, lines 47–48, by replacing the inserted language (“Members appointed by the board of regents may not vote on the appointment of members of the board.”) with the language adopted in Res. 7-04B, TB 4:434, ll. 6–7, namely, “An appointed member shall not vote on his or her reappointment.” Debate ensued. After twenty minutes, the chair called the question under the rule; this was carried [Yes: 883; No: 93]. The amendment failed [Yes: 348; No: 626]. The chair, again under the rule, called the question on the resolution; this was carried [Yes: 832; No: 139]. Two points of information were called for, to which the committee responded. Res. 7-05A was adopted [Yes: 824; No: 143].

Res. 7-06B, “To Support Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System” (TB, 4:442–43), was read and introduced by the committee. With the chair sensing no need for debate, he put the question by an immediate hand and voice vote; the resolution was adopted unanimously.

Greetings—Concordia Historical Institute

The chair welcomed the Rev. Dr. Daniel Harmelink, executive director of Concordia Historical Institute (CHI), to bring greetings to the Synod. Its mission is to “treasure and trumpet the redeeming work of Christ in the work of the Missouri Synod.” The institute resources congregations, families, districts, and Synod, in preserving historical touchstones of the Synod’s history and proclaiming the Lord’s grace evidenced in them. Dr. Harmelink noted to the convention the institute’s publications, including its *CHI Quarterly* and its growing monograph series. During the greeting, President Harrison relinquished the chair to First Vice-President Lange.

Committee 11: Church and Culture

The President, resuming the chair, recognized Chairman Terry R. Forke, president of the Montana District, to begin the report of his committee. He opened with the words of our Lord in John 15:18, noting both challenges and opportunities in our addressing the culture around us—both of which are evidenced in the resolutions to be offered by the committee. He noted difficulty saying everything exactly the right way but asserted that Christians *do have the answer*; therefore, on a topic like racism, there is both something to reject and something to rejoice that we know—that the answer is in Christ and that God is working in the Church to overcome racism. He concluded: “In the love of Christ let us join our hearts and voices to say to each other and to the world, ‘Within the incomprehensible variety of gifts given to mankind; gifts of color and culture

and courage; God has created one humanity. He loves us all and sent His Son for all.”

Res. 11-01A, “To Encourage Appropriate Use of Social Media” (TB, 3:383–84), was read and introduced by the committee. The question was called; after an indecisive voice vote, the motion failed [Yes: 412; No: 426]. After further debate, the question was called; this was carried in a voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 853; No: 31].

Res. 11-02A, “To Reject All Forms of Racism and Affirm Our Witness to All People” (TB, 3:384–85), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the whereases on TB 3:385, ll. 11–14 as follows:

WHEREAS, BLM, DEI, and CRT are multifaceted and ~~include some proponents endorse~~ controversial aspects and theories as well as some explicitly unbiblical tenets; and

WHEREAS, Elements of the BLM organizational philosophy, certain DEI policies, and some proponents of CRT ~~often sinfully divide people on the basis of race and may therefore promote another form of racism;~~ and

The chair called the question on the amendment, which was carried. After a voice vote, the result of which was not announced, the amendment failed [Yes: 239; No: 704].

It was moved and seconded to amend at TB 3:385, line 34, to delete the words “implore her congregations and ministries to.” There being no objection, this was accepted by consent.

It was moved to amend at TB 3:385, line 32, to insert, prior to the words “in our confession of the Word” the words “in our common humanity and” and at l. 38 to add “traumas” to the list “movements, methodologies, and ideologies.” The question on the amendment was immediately called; a division of the house was called for after a voice vote; the closure of debate was carried [Yes: 689; No: 238]. The amendment failed [Yes: 281; No: 640].

With twenty minutes of debate having elapsed, the question was called under the rule; this was carried [Yes: 789; No: 150]. Res. 11-02A was adopted as amended [Yes: 875; No: 84].

Res. 11-03A, “To Love and Disciple Peoples of All Ethnicities, Languages, and Skin Colors” (TB, 3:385–86), was read and introduced by the committee. With President Harrison resuming the chair, the chair called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 882; No: 69].

Res. 11-06A, “To Oppose Mandatory Registration of Women into the Draft” (TB, 3:386–87), was briefly explained and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

Res. 11-04, “To Address Abortion and Use of Fetal Tissue in Vaccines” (TB, 1:206–7), was read and introduced by the

committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

Res. 11-05, “To Address the Relationship between Church and State in an Increasingly Hostile Environment” (TB, 1:207–8), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

With the committee’s resolutions fully processed, the chair dismissed the committee with thanks.

Special Recognition: LCMS President Emeritus

President Harrison welcomed President Emeritus Gerald Kieschnick and his wife, Terri, who were warmly received by the convention. President Emeritus Kieschnick addressed the assembly, concluding that “God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us” and with the words of Jesus that “You are the light of the world ...” and “On this rock I will build my church and even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” President Harrison also acknowledged President Emeritus Robert Kuhn, who served from March to August 2001, after the passing of President Barry; he resides in Oviedo, Fla., and was not able to be with the convention. “God bless you, Dr. Kuhn.”

At this point, the resolution on TB 5:475–6, “To Create a Task Force to Explore Term Limits for Synod Officers,” was moved. The chair put to the body whether it wished to consider the motion from the floor. The body declined to consider the resolution [Yes: 462; No: 469].

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

The chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to update the credential report and conduct the next elections in the prescribed order. The registration report indicates 1,019 delegates presently checked in. Chairman Sailer then continued with the order of elections, with the chair relinquished to Fifth Vice-President Esget.

Concordia University System (Ordained, 6-year term)

Mark P. Braden (EN)	583	(declared elected)
Timothy D. (Tim) Runtsch (RM)	363	

Concordia University System (Commissioned, 6-year term)

Steven (Steve) Buuck (PSW)	256	
Jonathon Giordano (SI)	561	(declared elected)
Phillip L. Johnson (MNS)	132	

Concordia University System (Lay, elect 2, 6-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Jonathan Busarow (EN)	208	217	
Ellen R. Lange (EN)	436	610	(declared elected)
James J. Munden (SI)	45		
Linda Stoterau (PSW)	107		
Gary R. Thompson (SW)	155	140	

Position 2 of 2:

James J. Munden (SI)	144
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Linda Stoterau (PSW)	212	
Gary R. Thompson (SW)	568	(declared elected)
<i>Board of Regents, Fort Wayne (Ordained, 6-year term)</i>		
Steven C. Briel (MNS)	217	
Joshua C. (Josh) Miller (MNS)	198	
Matthew W. Rueger (IE)	518	(declared elected)

Session 8

Wednesday p.m., August 2, 2023

Commemoration of the Faithful Departed

Standing in for the Rev. Dr. John C. Wille, president of the South Wisconsin District, the Rev. Nathan Meador preached on 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed; Chaplain Daenzer served as liturgist and Cantor Philip Magness as organist and pianist. Jon Rusnak, Eric Carlson, and Julie Rusnak, instrumentalists; Erika Flowers, vocalist; and a choir provided special music.

[The entire text of President Wille’s sermon is printed in the 2023 Convention Proceedings.]

Minutes

With First Vice-President Lange taking the chair, the minutes of Tuesday’s Sessions 5 and 6 were presented and approved by consent.

It was moved and seconded to alter the order of the day to remove the catechism section to allow for further business. The motion failed.

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

The chair recognized Chairman Brian S. Saunders to resume the report of his committee. He noted that the committee would be proceeding out of order to prefer resolutions other than affirmations of previously treated material. President Harrison resumed the chair.

Res. 5-13A, “To Address Uses of Online Technology” (*TB*, 2B:307–8), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 5-09, “To Review Guidance on Admission to the Lord’s Supper” (*TB*, 1:122–24), was read and introduced by the committee. After a word of explanation, the chair, without debate, called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 842; No: 105].

Res. 5-15, “To Uphold Proper Elements and Reverential Administration of the Lord’s Supper” (*TB*, 1:127–28), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 761; No: 193].

Res. 5-10, “To Articulate Theology and Philosophy of Lutheran Education” (*TB*, 1:124–25), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 901; No: 66].

Res. 5-11, “To Reaffirm Synod’s Biblical Positions on Marriage and Sexuality” (*TB*, 1:125), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 934; No: 34].

Res. 5-12, “To Address Lutheran Theological Principles of Mission and Ministry in Post-Christian Context” (*TB*, 1:126), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 910; No: 48].

Noting that for a variety of reasons the committee decided to withdraw Res. 5-14, Chairman Saunders indicated the work of the committee was complete. Subsequently, with time remaining before the orders of the day, it was moved and seconded by a delegate to put before the body whether to consider Res. 5-14; the body determined not to consider it [Yes: 416; No: 479].

Catechism—The Sacrament of the Altar

The chair welcomed the Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine to the stage to continue his catechesis, focusing on the Sacrament of the Altar. Dr. Corzine began by focusing on the *who* and *what*: It is Christ who *gives* the Sacrament and it is Christ who *is* the Sacrament. He then focused on the benefits of “such eating and drinking” the Sacrament and noted that three times in this part of Luther’s explanation we see the words, “the forgiveness of sins,” all grounded in Christ’s Words of Institution. We know that in the Sacrament are the body and blood of Christ. We know that to know Christ is to know His benefits. We are then reverent and joyful, not just because Christ is present in the Sacrament, but because He forgives sins in the Sacrament. Dr. Corzine continued by addressing the question of how bodily eating and drinking do such great things. He emphasized that, just like with Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar depends on Christ’s word, not your act of faith. Finally, he spoke to the question of “who receives this sacrament worthily.” He emphasized that acts of preparation are not condemned and can certainly be helpful for the Christian as he or she comes to the Sacrament. It is faith that makes us worthy, and without faith, we still receive Christ, but on the wrong terms.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

With First Vice-President Peter Lange taking the chair, the chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to conduct the next elections in the prescribed order. Chairman Sailer then continued with the order of elections:

Board of Regents, Fort Wayne (Lay, elect 2, 6-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Kaibo Feng (NE)	213	286	
Michael D. Lange (EN)	129	78	
Troy N. Prehar (TX)	126		
Beverly K. Yahnke (SW)	351	498	(declared elected)

Position 2 of 2:
Kaibo Feng (NE) 537 (declared elected)
 Michael D. Lange (EN) 210
 Troy N. Prehar (TX) 147

Board of Regents, St. Louis (Ordained, 6-year term)

Tyler C. Arnold (MO) 282 327 420
 Jon C. Furgeson (MO) 77
 Warren W. Graff (RM) 63
Adam C. Koontz (RM) 346 439 497 (decl. el.)
 Jeffrey E. Skopak (SE) 145 153

Board of Regents, St. Louis (Lay, elect 2, 6-year term)

Position 1 of 2:
Paul P. Edmon (NE) 519 (declared elected)
 Bill A. Frerking (TX) 85
 Henry Hardt (IW) 79
 Matthew R. Kenitzer (IE) 76
 Janis G. Mc Daniels (SE) 155

Position 2 of 2:
 Bill A. Frerking (TX) 155 128
 Henry Hardt (IW) 113
Matthew R. Kenitzer (IE) 339 495 (declared elected)
 Janis G. McDaniels (SE) 313 316

Board of Regents, River Forest (Ordained, 3-year term)

Eric R. Andrae (EN) 395 483 (declared elected)
 Paul Dare (IW) 171
 David P. Ramirez (SW) 363 451

Board of Regents, River Forest (Commissioned, 3-year term)

Carol R. Johnson (NJ) 273
Jennifer (Jen) Siukola (EN) 657 (declared elected)

Board of Regents, River Forest (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:
 Jeffrey E. Elbert (IE) 209 220
John Thoele (TX) 413 530 (declared elected)
 Alison C. Witte (OH) 206 185
 Mark D. Wolfrum (NI) 102

Position 2 of 2:
 Jeffrey E. Elbert (IE) 292 390
Alison C. Witte (OH) 391 535 (declared elected)

Mark D. Wolfrum (NI) 242

Board of Regents, Irvine (Ordained, 3-year term)

Scott C. Klemsz (CNH) 597 (declared elected)
 Nathan E. Schaus (PSW) 338

Board of Regents, Irvine (Commissioned, 3-year term)

Jeffrey S. Beavers (PSW) 636 (declared elected)
 Kate E. Thoele (TX) 301

Board of Regents, Irvine (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:
 Mark L. Biermann (IN) 152 141
Laura G. Hemminger (NOW) 345 481 (declared elected)
 Michael C. McThrow (CNH) 248 313
 Linda Stoterau (PSW) 88
 Brian Yamabe (CNH) 99

Position 2 of 2:
 Mark L. Biermann (IN) 216
Michael C. McThrow (CNH) 470 (declared elected)

Linda Stoterau (PSW) 141
 Brian Yamabe (CNH) 98

Board of Regents, Seward (Ordained, 3-year term)

Brad E. Birtell (NEB) 500 (declared elected)
 Kenneth Mars (WY) 437

Board of Regents, Seward (Commissioned, 3-year term)

Craig A. Ernstmeyer (MO) 389 538 (declared elected)
 Wendy L. McCarty (NEB) 202
 David J. Pratt (PSW) 334 388

Board of Regents, Seward (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:
 Jason Burk (TX) 242 176
 Joseph L. Cook (WY) 99
Timothy Hu (WY) 370 565 (declared elected)
 Douglas Tewes (NEB) 234 200

Position 2 of 2:
 Jason Burk (TX) 401 392
 Joseph L. Cook (WY) 80
Douglas Tewes (NEB) 466 541 (declared elected)

The chair invoked the orders of the day, elections to be resumed at a later time.

Committee 10: Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

The President recognized Vice-Chairman Dwayne Lueck to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 10-06, "To Amend Bylaw 2.11.2.2 regarding Candidate Status" (TB, 1:202), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to amend as indicated in TB, 3:394, namely, to replace, at TB 1:202, lines 19–22, with the following:

(a) A candidate may be continued on the roster for a period not to exceed ten years by act of the president of the district through which the person holds membership. A candidate may be further continued on the roster for a period not to exceed five additional years upon recommendation of the applicant's district president and approval of three fourths (75%) of the Council of Presidents.

The chair called the question on the amendment; this was carried. On a voice vote on the amendment, a division was called for. The amendment failed [Yes: 383; No: 533]. The chair proceeded to a voice vote on Res. 10-06, which was adopted.

Presentation: "International Missions: Show Mercy"

James Krikava, associate executive director of the Office of International Mission and formerly OIM's Eurasia regional director, and Ted Krey, regional director for the OIM Latin America and Caribbean region, addressed the convention on mercy and outreach work among Ukrainian war refugees. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine Bishop Maschewski blessed the assembly in Ukrainian. A choir joined the convention to sing "A Mighty Fortress" in Spanish, Ukrainian, German, and English.

President Harrison welcomed Christian rap artist and LCMS congregation member Marcus “Flame” Gray, author of *Extra Nos: Discovering Grace outside Myself* (St. Louis: CPH, 2023), whose lyrics President Harrison considers to be the “most intensely Lutheran lyrics since the great chorales of the 16th and 17th centuries—they just happen to be accompanied with rap.” With First Vice-President Lange taking the chair, Flame shared some of his art and spoke of his youthful discovery of the form’s value as a medium for “edutainment.” He described also his journey from an interest in “Christian rap” as a means of obtaining God’s favor, of obtaining assurance that God was for him—a struggle for internal assurance that led from a Pentecostal fervor through the “I could if I would” of Calvinism, to a master’s program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to justification by faith, to the Baptism “that saves you,” to the theology of the cross, to light and hope and Good News, the pure Gospel—to, that is, his present Lutheran faith and to a new practice of his art form that is full of that faith, handing on what has been handed down to him in the Lutheran confession of the faith. He thanked the convention for “enduring meetings like this for people like me,” for preserving the preaching and teaching of the pure Gospel in the midst of many less-than-pure and less-than-hope-filled alternatives.

Committee 6: Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

The President recognized Chairman John E. Hill to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 6-03A, “To Affirm and Strengthen the Synod’s Commitment to Well-Formed Clergy for the Sake of the Gospel” (*TB*, 4:414–16), was read, with some background information provided, and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution, on *TB*, 4:415, line 24, to strike the word “strongly” and to strike ll. 36–37 and in place of those to insert instead “2. the SMP route and all Synod-approved routes to ordination be understood as necessary for the Synod and for the preparation and ordination of her pastors.” The question was called, with the rule’s twenty minutes elapsing. Closure of debate was carried [Yes: 848; No: 93]. The amendment failed [Yes: 325; No: 617]. The question being called under the rule, it was carried by voice vote. Res. 6-03A was adopted [Yes: 856; No: 92].

Responsive Prayer I

Chaplain Daenzer led the convention in Responsive Prayer (I), with the text, Exodus 34:5–9; Kantor Machemer provided accompaniment.

Session 9

Thursday a.m., August 3, 2023

Matins

The Rev. Josemon Hoem, pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., and member of the Board of Directors, preached on 1 Timothy 2:1–7 in the Office of Matins; Chaplain Daenzer served as liturgist and Kantor Machemer provided accompaniment, with a choir providing special music.

[The entire text of Rev. Hoem’s sermon is printed in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.]

With President Harrison taking the chair, the chair called the body’s attention to Standing Rule 24 and announced the “Proposed Schedule to Act on Necessary Business” printed on the front page of *TB* 6. Without objection, the body agreed to proceed on this schedule.

It was moved and seconded to suspend the rules to bring the resolution on *TB* 2:340–41, “To Address Release and Use of *Luther’s Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications*,” for consideration. The motion failed of adoption by voice and hand vote.

The resolution, “To Call for Repentance and Forgiveness by All Parties to the Concordia Texas Conflict” (*TB*, 6:493–94), was moved and seconded. The President briefly addressed the convention. The chair called the question, hearing an affirmative vote; a division was called for and the motion to close debate was carried [Yes: 629; No: 204]. The resolution failed of adoption [Yes: 393; No: 460].

The President recognized Dr. George Gude, 13-year member and 10-year chairman of the Commission on Constitutional Matters for his tireless and churchmanly service to the Synod.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

The chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to the podium to update the credential report, which read as follows:

Voting delegates	1006
Advisory delegates	155
Advisory representatives	156

The report was accepted by voice vote.

Minutes

The chair called the body’s attention to the minutes of Wednesday’s Sessions 7 and 8. A delegate raised a question regarding an attempted incidental motion not recorded, which question was not acted upon by the body. The minutes were adopted by consent.

Committee 4: Life Together

The chair recognized Chairman Christopher S. Esget to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 4-01A, “To Commend and Encourage Continued Use of the *Koinonia* Project and Give Thanks to God for the Sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.” (*TB*, 5:473), was read. The committee asked the consent of the body to consider this resolution in place of Res. 4-01 as referred in Session 1 (having therein been amended); this was accepted without objection. By consent, the resolution was corrected to list stanzas 4 and 5, the “final two verses,” as requested in Session 1. The chair called the question; closure of debate was carried by voice vote. Res. 4-01A as thus amended (corrected) was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 4-04, “To Give Thanks for Spanish Language Hymnal *Himnario Luterano* and Commend Its Use” (*TB*, 1:104), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair called the question; closure of debate was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 871; No: 4].

Res. 4-02, “To Affirm and Continue *Making Disciples for Life as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–26 Triennium*” (*TB*, 1:101–2), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair called the question; closure of debate was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 4-03, “To Affirm and Continue Mission Priorities for 2023–26 Triennium” (*TB*, 1:102–4), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair called the question; closure of debate was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

With a number of points of information arising, the chair put to the body whether he should have greater discretion in dispensing with interruptions; this motion, which was determined to be of the character of a change to the Special Standing Rules, failed of the required two-thirds [Yes: 517; No: 343].

Res. 4-07, “To Give Thanks for Preservation of the Gospel in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” (*TB*, 1:106–7), was read and introduced by the committee. It was moved and seconded to add a *resolve*, “That the assembly sing, upon adoption, the first stanza of “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word.” This was adopted by consent. The question was called; closure of debate was carried. Res. 4-07 was adopted as amended by a voice and hand vote.

Res. 4-06, “To Encourage In-Person Corporate Worship” (*TB*, 1:105–6), was read and introduced by the committee, Chairman Esget noting that as the study will be distributed electronically, the cost indicated in the estimate is not expected to be borne. It was moved and seconded to amend to strike the first *resolve* on *TB* 1:106, 12–13. The question was called; closure of debate was carried. The amendment failed by a voice vote. It was then moved and seconded to amend by adding a *resolve*: “That the LCMS in convention repent for having forsaken gathering together in corporate worship during 2020 and not taking a strong stand of encouraging congregations to physically gather.” The question on the amendment was called; closure of debate was carried [Yes:

774; No: 69]. The amendment failed [Yes: 287; No: 574]. The chair called the question on the resolution; closure of debate was carried. Res. 4-06 was adopted [Yes: 790; No: 72].

The chair dismissed Floor Committee 4 with thanks.

Committee 13: Registration, Credentials, and Elections – Balloting for Other Boards and Commissions

The chair called Committee 13 Chairman Scott Sailer to complete elections in the prescribed order. He did so, with the chair relinquished to Iowa West District President Steven Turner until resumed by President Harrison near the end of the elections.

Board of Regents, St. Paul (Ordained, 3-year term)

David M. Buchs (MNN)	101		
Jeffrey P. Cloeter (MO)	232	248	
Donald J. Fondow (MNN)	358	488	(declared elected)
Brent L. Parrish (MNS)	135	93	

Board of Regents, St. Paul (Commissioned, 3-year term)

John Chilman (PSW)	226		
Mark J. L’Heureux (NEB)	591		(declared elected)

Board of Regents, St. Paul (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Karl J. Abbott (SE)	288	362	
Paul C. Hinz (MNS)	371	484	(declared elected)
Richard Liedtke (KS)	108		
Robert P. Wurl (ND)	73		

Position 2 of 2:

Karl J. Abbott (SE)	484		(declared elected)
Richard Liedtke (KS)	261		
Robert P. Wurl (ND)	83		

Board of Regents, Austin (Ordained, 3-year term)

Michael P. Dorn (TX)	162		
Nathaniel W. Hill (TX)	521		(declared elected)
Yohannes A. Mengsteab (TX)	163		

Board of Regents, Austin (Commissioned, 3-year term)

Mary Beth Gaertner (TX)	216		
Miguel A. Ruiz (TX)	612		(declared elected)

Board of Regents, Austin (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Michelle H. Abrego (TX)	139	137	
William (Bill) Brandt (TX)	282	163	
Kristy M. Carr (TX)	91		
Bob Ssekyanzi (TX)	345	544	(declared elected)

Position 2 of 2:

Michelle H. Abrego (TX)	185		
William (Bill) Brandt (TX)	596		(declared elected)
Kristy M. Carr (TX)	61		

Board of Regents, Mequon (Ordained, 3-year term)

David C. Fleming (MI)	492		(declared elected)
David P. E. Maier (MI)	273		
Paul R. Naumann (MI)	25		
Mark Nuckols (SW)	53		

Board of Regents, Mequon (Commissioned, 3-year term)

Jonathan D. Eifert (MI)	129	
Jennifer L. Knox (SW)	426	(declared elected)
Gary W. Petersen (SW)	222	

Board of Regents, Mequon (Lay, elect 2, 3-year term)

Position 1 of 2:

Michael Bartel (NW)	131	72	
Leah Broman (OH)	133	113	
Ronald Harmeyer (SW)	97		
David Lambert (EN)	187	154	
Stephen Saunders (SW)	277	493	(declared elected)

Position 2 of 2:

Michael Bartel (NW)	71		
Leah Broman (OH)	200		
Ronald Harmeyer (SW)	84		
David Lambert (EN)	485		(declared elected)

Committee 9: Structure and Administration

The chair recognized Chairman Timothy J. Scharr to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 9-10A, “To Amend Bylaws 3.6.4 and 3.6.4.4.1 to Clarify Use of Lutheran Church Extension Fund Financial Resources and Related Services” (*TB*, 2B:337–39), was introduced by the committee, with Chief Mission Officer Kevin Robson strongly encouraging adoption. The chair called the question; closure of debate was carried by voice vote. The resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Res. 9-09A, “To Appoint a Task Force to Prepare the 2026 Convention to Consider Implementing a Four-Year Convention Cycle” (*TB*, 3:381), was read and introduced by the committee, with “three district secretaries” added to the task force at lines 22–23. The question was called; closure of debate was carried [Yes: 672; No: 76]. Res. 9-09A as read failed of adoption [Yes: 309; No: 486].

Res. 9-12, “To Amend Bylaw 3.12.2.4 to Change How Subsequent Ballots Are Determined in Election of Synod President” (*TB*, 1:191–92), was read and introduced by the committee. After debate, the question was called; closure of debate was carried [Yes: 708; No: 90]. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 535; No: 249].

The committee was dismissed with thanks.

Committee 6: Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

The chair recognized Chairman John E. Hill to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 6-04, “To Affirm and Provide Guidance for the Service of Laity” (*TB*, 1:133–34), was read and introduced by the committee.

It was moved and seconded to amend at *TB* 1:134, line 25, to strike the words “private Confession and Absolution.” The committee, at the request of the chair, confirmed that these words mean the rite carried out by pastors, and that it is not by them denied that any Christian may forgive sin and speak Christ to sinners. After some debate, the chair ruled the amendment non-substantive and, therefore, out of

order. Debate continued on the main motion. It was moved and seconded to amend at line 20 to strike “commissioned workers” from the list of laity. The chairman ruled the amendment out of order. The ruling of the chair was appealed from, upon which the chair allowed consideration. After one speaker, the question was called; closure of debate was carried. The amendment failed on a voice and hand vote. The chair put closure of debate to the assembly; this was carried in a voice and hand vote. Res. 6-04 was adopted by voice and hand vote.

Res. 6-05, “To Affirm and Clarify Bylaw 3.10.2.4 by Amending” (*TB*, 1:134–35), was read and introduced by the committee. A point of order was raised, suggesting on the basis of a permissive reading of the word “may” that the resolution was contrary to the Bylaws; the Secretary explained from the history of the provision (referencing an associated report of the 2013 Res. 5-14A committee’s report, 2016 *Proceedings*, p. 287) that the provision is restrictive rather than permissive. The chair put closure of debate to the assembly; this was carried in a voice vote. Res. 6-05 was adopted [Yes: 623; No: 127].

Res. 6-07A, “To Recommend and Implement Rigorous Program of Study in Circuit *Winkels*” (*TB*, 4:416–17), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair put closure of debate to the assembly; this was carried in a voice vote. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

Res. 6-09, “To Recognize and Honor the Pastor’s Wife” (*TB*, 4:444), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair put closure of debate to the assembly; this was carried in a voice vote. The resolution was adopted in a unanimous voice vote.

Res. 6-06A, “To Support and Participate in Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support and *Preach the Word*” (*TB*, 4:416), was read and introduced by the committee. After some discussion, the question was called; this was carried in a voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted in a unanimous voice vote.

The committee was dismissed with thanks.

Committee 3: Mercy

The chair recognized Chairman Brady L. Finnern to resume the report of his committee.

Res. 3-05, “To Recognize and Thank the Synod for Mercy Shown to God’s People through COVID-19 Pandemic” (*TB*, 1:100), was read and introduced by the committee. The chair immediately called the question; this was carried in a voice and hand vote. The resolution was adopted in a unanimous voice vote.

As the committee departed, the resolution on *TB* 6:494, “To Establish a Standing, Synodwide Process for Ongoing Exchange and Conflict Resolution,” was moved and seconded with the word “direct” on line 31 replaced with “request that.” After some discussion, the question was

called; this was carried [Yes: 645; No: 21]. The resolution failed of adoption [Yes: 180; No: 520].

The chair thanked Barb Below and Lynne Marvin; assistants Kim Vieker, Georgia Endicott, and Jeffrey Hemmer; Chief Mission Officer Robson and “all the great people of the LCMS”; those who provided services or volunteered to serve the convention, the floor committees, and the convention for “making decisions that mattered in the future of the Church body.” He expressed the “great desire” that the delegates would come away refreshed, “knowing that the Missouri Synod is an amazing thing, despite our weaknesses.” He blessed the assembly with the apostolic benediction.

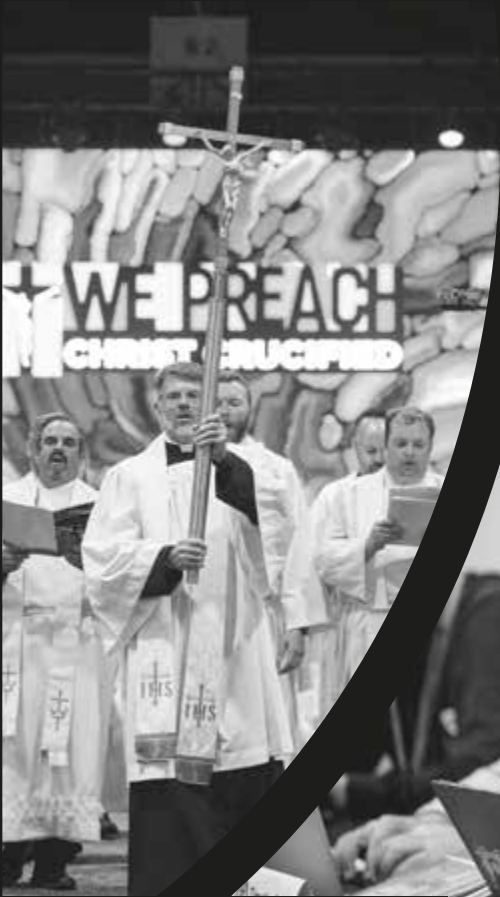
Itinerarium

Chaplain Sean Daenzer led the convention in the Itinerarium, with the text, Luke 1:68–79; Kantor Machemer provided accompaniment.

Adjournment

President Harrison declared the 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod closed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to which the delegation responded, “Amen.”

John W. Sias, *Secretary*



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1 COR. 1:18-25



SLATE OF CANDIDATES AND ELECTION RESULTS

The 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (2023)

Office / Candidate	1 st Ballot	2 nd Ballot	3 rd Ballot	4 th Ballot
First Vice-President of the Synod				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 986			
1. Allan R. Buss (NI)	5.78% 57			
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)	5.78% 57			
3. Jamison J. Hardy (EN)	5.17% 51			
4. Peter K. Lange (MO)	58.62% 578			
5. Richard L. Snow (NEB)	24.65% 243			
Regional Vice-President				
Central Region				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 999	Total 1,000		
1. Randy K. Asbury (MO)	5.91% 59			
2. Benjamin T. (Ben) Ball (SI)	48.45% 484	55.40% 554		
3. Jason M. Braaten (CI)	6.21% 62			
4. William R. Marler (MO)	1.40% 14			
5. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. (IN)	23.12% 231	29.10% 291		
6. William W. Schumacher (MO)	14.91% 149	15.50% 155		
East-Southeast Region				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 996			
1. Victor J. Belton (FG)	18.88% 188			
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)	50.80% 506			
3. Jeffrey J. Kloha (SE)	17.57% 175			
4. Deric A. Taylor (NJ)	5.12% 51			
5. Luke T. Zimmerman (EN)	7.63% 76			
Great Lakes Region				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 988	Total 996	Total 998	
1. Peter C. Bender (SW)	13.16% 130	13.96% 139		
2. Steven G. Kline (NW)	4.76% 47			
3. David P. E. Maier (MI)	30.26% 299	36.85% 367	41.38% 413	
4. David P. Ramirez (SW)	12.45% 123			
5. John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)	39.37% 389	49.20% 490	58.62% 585	
Great Plains Region				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 1,001	Total 1,001		
1. Byrene K. (Keith) Haney (IW)	17.68% 177	24.88% 249		
2. Robert R. Lessing (MNS)	16.78% 168	15.98% 160		
3. David C. Mumme (MNS)	11.39% 114			
4. Nabil S. Nour (SD)	46.35% 464	59.14% 592		
5. Russell L. (Russ) Sommerfeld (NEB)	7.79% 78			
West-Southwest Region				
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total 995			
1. Alfonso O. Espinosa (PSW)	12.46% 124			
2. Timothy (Tim) Klinkenberg (PSW)	16.88% 168			
3. Yohannes A. Mengsteab (TX)	11.46% 114			
4. Scott R. Murray (TX)	50.75% 505			
5. Jeffrey T. (Jeff) Schrank (PSW)	8.44% 84			

Regional Vice-President Rankings									
2nd Vice-President									
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>		Total	987	Total	983	Total	988	Total	980
1. Benjamin T. (Ben) Ball (SI)		25.33%	250	35.71%	351	43.42%	429	50.82%	498
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)		15.50%	153						
3. Scott R. Murray (TX)		22.29%	220	28.79%	283	32.89%	325	49.18%	482
4. Nabil S. Nour (SD)		20.67%	204	21.57%	212	23.68%	234		
5. John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)		16.21%	160	13.94%	137				
3rd Vice-President									
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>		Total	980	Total	979				
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)		15.41%	151	14.81%	145				
3. Scott R. Murray (TX)		49.39%	484	61.80%	605				
4. Nabil S. Nour (SD)		21.43%	210	23.39%	229				
5. John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)		13.78%	135						
4th Vice-President									
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>		Total	982	Total	976				
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)		30.24%	297	36.27%	354				
4. Nabil S. Nour (SD)		48.17%	473	63.73%	622				
5. John C. Wohlrabe Jr. (SW)		21.59%	212						
5th Vice-President and 6th Vice-President*									
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>		Total	981						
2. Christopher S. Esget (EN)		54.54%	535						
5. John C. Wohlrabe Jr.* (SW)		45.46%	446						
Secretary of the Synod									
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 1, 3-year term)</i>		Total	968						
1. Derek Klemm (PSW)		22.52%	218						
2. John W. Sias (MO)		77.48%	750						
LCMS Board of Directors									
At-Large		A	992	A	994	A	993		
<i>Ordained Minister (elect 2, 6-year term)</i>		B	996	B	997	B	994		
1. Phillip L. Brandt (NOW)		A	8.27% 82						
		B	4.02% 40						
2. John M. Bussman (SO)		A	14.82% 147						
		B	15.76% 157	12.94% 129					
3. Roger B. Gallup (NI)		A	19.76% 196	19.32% 192	15.61% 155				
		B	33.84% 337	42.23% 421	55.63% 553				
4. Josemon T. Hoem (IN)		A	21.67% 215	40.14% 399	51.76% 514				
		B							
5. Derek Klemm (PSW)		A	18.95% 188	24.04% 239	32.63% 324				
		B	30.92% 308	33.70% 336	44.37% 441				
6. Brent D. Smith (NEB)		A	16.53% 164	16.50% 164					
		B	15.46% 154	11.13% 111					
East-Southeast Region									
<i>Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)</i>		Total	986						
1. Jon D. Allen (EA)		28.60%	282						
2. Michael F. Killian (NE)		7.40%	73						
3. Leo S. MacKay Jr. (EN)		64.00%	631						
Great Lakes Region									
<i>Layperson (elect 1, 6-year term)</i>		Total	972						
1. John W. (Jack) Kidwell (MI)		35.60%	346						
2. Rick H. Stathakis (MI)		64.40%	626						

LCMS Board of Directors (cont.)						
Great Plains Region						
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	984			
1. Larry W. Harrington (WY)		54.17%	533			
2. Glenn E. Van Velson (NEB)		45.83%	451			
At-Large						
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	986	Total	987	
1. Jason Burk (TX)		14.91%	147			
2. Ryan P. Ermeling (PSW)		25.96%	256	38.91%	384	
3. Gerhard H. Munding, Jr. (IN)		13.49%	133			
4. Paul Techau (SE)		8.11%	80			
5. K. Allan Voss (SW)		37.53%	370	61.09%	603	
Board for National Mission						
East-Southeast Region						
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	838			
1. Adolfo Borges (FG)		42.60%	357			
2. Timothy J. Droegemueller (FG)		57.40%	481			
Great Plains Region						
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	890			
1. Richard Boring (NEB)		20.56%	183			
2. Mark E. Moss (MNS)		18.43%	164			
3. Craig K. Niemeier (NEB)		61.01%	543			
Central Region						
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	913	Total	905	
1. Seth Hinz (MO)		31.43	287	42.21%	382	
2. Shirley A. Jackson (MO)		25.19%	230			
3. Stephen Weller (KS)		43.37%	396	57.79%	523	
Great Lakes Region						
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	931			
1. David R. Meissner (SW)		20.52%	191			
2. Crysten Sanchez (IE)		79.48%	740			
West-Southwest Region						
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	936	Total	938	
1. Carol A. Hack-Broome (CNH)		46.26%	433	58.32%	547	
2. Linda M. Kurtz (PSW)		32.80%	307	41.68%	391	
3. Noreen L. Linke (RM)		20.94%	196			
Board for International Mission						
Central Region						
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	954	Total	954	Total 935
1. Peter J. Brock (IN)		25.05%	239	26.10%	249	
2. James D. Gier Jr. (IN)		32.08%	306	38.89%	371	50.16% 469
3. Wilfred L. Karsten (CI)		13.94%	133			
4. Steven R. Schumacher (IN)		28.93%	276	35.01%	334	49.84% 466
Great Lakes Region						
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 6-year term)</i>	Total	968			
1. David P. Stechholz (EN)		49.79%	482			
2. Scott Yakimow (MI)		50.21%	486			

Board for International Mission (cont.)					
West-Southwest Region					
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	968	Total	966	
1. James D. Bauer (RM)	40.08%	388	48.45%	468	
2. Terrence Chan (CNH)	36.26%	351	51.55%	498	
3. Glen Fluegge (PSW)	11.88%	115			
4. Gregory N. Heidorn (NOW)	11.78%	114			
East-Southeast Region					
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	970			
1. Michael P. (Mike) Wind (SO)	47.01%	456			
2. James S. (Jim) Wolf (EN)	52.99%	514			
Great Plains Region					
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	971			
1. Jan Bruick (NEB)	47.37%	460			
2. John W. Edson (MNS)	52.63%	511			
Commission on Theology and Church Relations					
<i>Ordained Minister (parish pastor)</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	880	Total	900	
1. Kevin Austin (PSW)	18.64%	164	17.89%	161	
2. Jacob Bobby (NEB)	15.34%	135			
3. David H. Petersen (EN)	42.27%	372	52.56%	473	
4. Timothy Seals (PSW)	23.75%	209	29.56%	266	
<i>Commissioned Minister (parish teacher)</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	910			
1. Joseph J. (Joe) Gerth (SI)	59.67%	543			
2. Timothy Leech (FG)	40.33%	367			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	941	Total	927	
1. Jack D. Kilcrease III (MI)	38.79%	365	54.05%	501	
2. Brian L. Peterson (SW)	31.56%	297	45.95%	426	
3. Glenn E. Van Velson (NEB)	29.65%	279			
Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	955	Total	943	
1. Mark Birkholz (NI)	48.48%	463	66.07%	623	
2. Karl F. Fabrizio (SW)	21.99%	210			
3. Travis J. Scholl (MO)	29.53%	282	33.93%	320	
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	937	Total	948	
1. Jennifer L. Knox (SW)	25.93%	243			
2. Pamela J. Nielsen (MO)	35.11%	329	53.06%	503	
3. Jonathan Wessler (NE)	38.95%	365	46.94%	445	

Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors (cont.)									
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 3, 6-year term)	A	956	A	951	A	945	A4	952	
	B	962	B	961			↘		
	C	965					A5	958	
1. Kurt A. Battles (MNN)	A	19.04% 182	22.50% 214	30.37% 287	38.55% 367		↘		
	B	48.44% 466	63.48% 610						
	C				49.90% 478				
2. Scott L. Diekmann (NOW)	A	15.27% 146	12.72% 121						
	B	6.96% 67							
	C	11.71% 113							
3. Scott D. W. Gercken (NI)	A	16.63% 159	12.25% 145	13.76% 130					
	B	10.40% 100							
	C	23.21% 224							
4. Elaine Graff (RM)	A	19.25% 184	21.56% 205	21.90% 207	22.06% 210				
	B	23.28% 224	36.52% 351						
	C	52.64% 508							
5. Jill Johnson (NEB)	A	19.67% 188	27.97% 266	33.97% 321	39.39% 375		↘		
	B								
	C				50.10% 480				
6. Kent M. Warneke (NEB)	A	7.85% 75							
	B	9.77% 94							
	C	11.19% 108							
7. Stephen Weller (KS)	A	2.30% 22							
	B	1.14% 11							
	C	1.24% 12							
The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod Board of Directors									
<i>Ordained or Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	952							
1. David L. Bahn (TX)	24.68%	235							
2. Jason M. Braaten (CI)	51.89%	494							
3. Blaise C. Sedney (SE)	23.42%	223							
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	966	A	953					
	B	966	B	939					
1. Julie Johnson (SI)	A	25.78% 249	27.81% 265						
	B	37.78% 365	55.06% 517						
2. Jonathan H. Kramer (MO)	A	36.23% 350	50.58% 482						
	B								
3. Jason A. Paradis (ND)	A	13.98% 135							
	B	29.81% 288							
4. Jaime Peters (MO)	A	24.02% 232	21.62% 206						
	B	32.40% 313	44.94% 422						
Concordia University System Board of Directors									
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	946							
1. Mark P. Braden (EN)	61.63%	583							
2. Timothy D. (Tim) Runtsch (RM)	38.37%	363							
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)	Total	949							
1. Steven (Steve) Buuck (PSW)	26.98%	256							
2. Jonathon Giordano (SI)	59.11%	561							
3. Phillip L. Johnson (MNS)	13.91%	132							

Concordia University System Board of Directors (cont.)						
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 6-year term)		A	951	A	967	
		B	924	B		
1. Jonathan Busarow (EN)	A	21.87%	208	22.44%	217	
		B				
2. Ellen R. Lange (EN)	A	45.85%	436	63.08%	610	
		B				
3. James J. Munden (SI)	A	4.73%	45			
		B	15.58%	144		
4. Linda Stoterau (PSW)	A	11.25%	107			
		B	22.94%	212		
5. Gary R. Thompson (SW)	A	16.30%	155	14.48%	140	
		B	61.47%	568		
Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne, Ind.) Board of Regents						
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)		Total	933			
1. Steven C. Briel (MNS)		23.26%	217			
2. Joshua C. (Josh) Miller (MNS)		21.22%	198			
3. Matthew W. Rueger (IE)		55.52%	518			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 6-year term)		A	819	A	862	
		B	894	B		
1. Kaibo Feng (NE)	A	26.01%	213	33.18%	286	
		B	60.07%	537		
2. Michael D. Lange (EN)	A	15.75%	129	9.05%	78	
		B	23.49%	210		
3. Troy N. Prehar (TX)	A	15.38%	126			
		B	16.44%	147		
4. Beverly K. Yahnke (SW)	A	42.86%	351	57.77%	498	
		B				
Concordia Seminary (St. Louis, Mo.) Board of Regents						
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 6-year term)		Total	913	Total	919	Total 917
1. Tyler C. Arnold (MO)		30.89%	282	35.58%	327	45.80% 420
2. Jon C. Furgeson (MO)		8.43%	77			
3. Warren W. Graff (RM)		6.90%	63			
4. Adam C. Koontz (RM)		37.90%	346	47.77%	439	54.20% 497
5. Jeffrey E. Skopak (SE)		15.88%	145	16.65%	153	
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 6-year term)		A	914	A		
		B	920	B	939	
1. Paul P. Edmon (NE)	A	56.78%	519			
		B				
2. Bill A. Frerking (TX)	A	9.30%	85			
		B	16.85%	155	13.63%	128
3. Henry Hardt (IW)	A	8.64%	79			
		B	12.28%	113		
4. Matthew R. Kenitzer (IE)	A	8.32%	76			
		B	36.85%	339	52.72%	495
5. Janis McDaniels (SE)	A	16.96%	155			
		B	34.02%	313	33.65%	316

Concordia University Chicago (River Forest, Ill.) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	929	Total	934	
1. Eric R. Andrae (EN)	42.52%	395	51.71%	483	
2. Paul Dare (IW)	18.41%	171			
3. David P. Ramirez (SW)	39.07%	363	48.29%	451	
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	930			
1. Carol R. Johnson (NJ)	29.35%	273			
2. Jennifer (Jen) Siukola (IN)	70.65%	657			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	930	A	935	
	B	925	B	925	
1. Jeffrey E. Elbert (IE)	A	22.47%	209	23.53%	220
	B	31.57%	292	42.16%	390
2. John Thaelke (TX)	A	44.41%	413	56.68%	530
	B				
3. Alison C. Witte (OH)	A	22.15%	206	19.79%	185
	B	42.27%	391	57.84%	535
4. Mark D. Wolfrum (NI)	A	10.97%	102		
	B	26.16%	242		
Concordia University, Irvine (Calif.) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	935			
1. Scott C. Klemsz (CNH)	63.85%	597			
2. Nathan E. Schaus (PSW)	36.15%	338			
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	937			
1. Jeffrey S. Beavers (PSW)	67.88%	636			
2. Kate E. Thaelke (TX)	32.12%	301			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	932	A	935	
	B	925	B		
1. Mark L. Biermann (IN)	A	16.31%	152	15.08%	141
	B	23.35%	216		
2. Laura G. Hemminger (NOW)	A	37.02%	345	51.44%	481
	B				
3. Michael C. McThrow (CNH)	A	26.61%	248	33.48%	313
	B	50.81%	470		
4. Linda Stoterau (PSW)	A	9.44%	88		
	B	15.24%	141		
5. Brian T. Yamabe (CNH)	A	10.62%	99		
	B	10.59%	98		
Concordia University, Nebraska (Seward, Neb.) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	937			
1. Brad E. Birtell (NEB)	53.36%	500			
2. Kenneth Mars (WY)	46.64%	437			
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	925	Total	926	
1. Craig A. Ernstmeier (MO)	42.05%	389	58.10%	538	
2. Wendy L. McCarty (NEB)	21.84%	202			
3. David J. Pratt (PSW)	36.11%	334	41.90%	388	

Concordia University, Nebraska (Seward, Neb.) Board of Regents					
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	945	A	941	
	B	947	B	933	
1. Jason Burk (TX)	A	25.61% 242	18.70% 176		
	B	42.34% 401	42.02% 392		
2. Joseph L. Cook (WY)	A	10.48% 99			
	B	8.45% 80			
3. Timothy Hu (WY)	A	39.15% 370	60.04% 565		
	B				
4. Douglas Tewes (NEB)	A	24.76% 234	21.25% 200		
	B	49.21% 466	57.98% 541		
Concordia University, St. Paul (Minn.) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	826	Total	829	
1. David M. Buchs (MNN)	12.23%	101			
2. Jeffrey P. Cloeter (MO)	28.09%	232	29.92%	248	
3. Donald J. Fondow (MNN)	43.34%	358	58.87%	488	
4. Brent L. Parrish (MNS)	16.34%	135	11.22%	93	
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	817			
1. John Chilman (PSW)	27.66%	226			
2. Mark J. L'Heureux (NEB)	72.34%	591			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	840	A	846	
	B	828	B		
1. Karl J. Abbott (SE)	A	34.29% 288	42.79% 362		
	B	54.85% 484			
2. Paul C. Hinz (MNS)	A	44.17% 371	57.21% 484		
	B				
3. Richard Liedtke (KS)	A	12.86% 108			
	B	31.52% 261			
4. Robert P. Wurl (ND)	A	8.69% 73			
	B	10.02% 83			
Concordia University Texas (Austin, Texas) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	846			
1. Michael P. Dorn (TX)	19.15%	162			
2. Nathaniel W. Hill (TX)	61.58%	521			
3. Yohannes A. Mengsteab (TX)	19.27%	163			
<i>Commissioned Minister</i> (elect 1, 3-year term)	Total	828			
1. Mary Beth Gaertner (TX)	26.09%	216			
2. Miguel A. Ruiz (TX)	73.91%	612			
<i>Layperson</i> (elect 2, 3-year term)	A	857	A	844	
	B	842	B		
1. Michelle H. Abrego (TX)	A	16.22% 139	16.23% 137		
	B	21.97% 185			
2. William (Bill) Brandt (TX)	A	32.91% 282	19.31% 163		
	B	70.78% 596			
3. Kristy M. Carr (TX)	A	10.62% 91			
	B	7.24% 61			
4. Bob Ssekyanzi (TX)	A	40.26% 345	64.45% 544		
	B				

Concordia University Wisconsin (Mequon, Wis.) Board of Regents					
<i>Ordained Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total	843		
1. David C. Fleming (MI)		58.36%	492		
2. David P. E. Maier (MI)		32.38%	273		
3. Paul R. Naumann (MI)		2.97%	25		
4. Mark Nuckols (SW)		6.29%	53		
<i>Commissioned Minister</i>	<i>(elect 1, 3-year term)</i>	Total	777		
1. Jonathan D. Eifert (MI)		16.60%	129		
2. Jennifer L. Knox (SW)		54.83%	426		
3. Gary W. Petersen (SW)		28.57%	222		
<i>Layperson</i>	<i>(elect 2, 3-year term)</i>	A	825	A	832
		B	840	B	
1. Michael Bartel (NW)	A	15.88%	131	8.65%	72
	B	8.45%	71		
2. Leah Broman (OH)	A	16.12%	133	13.58%	113
	B	23.81%	200		
3. Ronald Harmeyer (SW)	A	11.76%	97		
	B	10.00%	84		
4. David Lambert (EN)	A	22.67%	187	18.51%	154
	B	57.74%	485		
5. Stephen Saunders (SW)	A	33.58%	277	59.25%	493
	B				



**Committee for Convention Nominations Chairman
Christian A. Preus**



**Committee 13 (Credentials and Elections) Chairman
Scott C. Sailer**



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25



SPECIAL STANDING RULES

Minutes

1. Minutes shall be distributed every next morning for consideration and adoption. The first item of business of the afternoon session shall be the formal approval of these minutes, with the exception of the final day's minutes, which shall be approved by the Board of Directors at its first meeting following the convention. Only *substantive corrections* to the minutes (impacting the meaning or effect of convention actions) shall be offered from the floor for consideration. Editorial corrections or *non-substantive* changes to the minutes (misspellings, numbering errors, faulty references, incorrect titles, punctuation, grammar, etc.) should be provided in writing to the Secretary for incorporation into the final version of the minutes published in the *2023 Convention Proceedings*.

Resolutions

2. Resolutions shall be prioritized by floor committees and normally shall be presented to the convention in numerical sequence. However, resolutions that impact nominations or elections may be given earlier consideration at the discretion of the chair, in consultation with the floor committee chairman and the chairmen of the floor committees on nominations and elections.
3. The preface, preamble, rationale, and whereas sections shall be regarded as integral parts of resolutions and therefore subject to the same consideration and adoption.
4. It shall be the discretion of the chairman or presenting member of the floor committee to read the preface, preamble, rationale, and whereas sections of resolutions from floor committees that are printed in *Today's Business*. In addition, the chair of the convention is not required to read each resolution as he states the questions and then as he calls for the vote.
5. The convention chairman, in consultation with floor committee chairmen, may identify resolutions to which up to 1 ½ hours of continuous consideration should be allotted, as follows:

15 minutes (if needed)	Floor committee presentation
30 minutes (if needed)	Debate on the main motion, excluding amendments and other subsidiary motions
45 minutes (if needed)	Presentation of and debate on amendments, substitute motions, main motion, or main motion as amended.
6. Whenever possible, substitute resolutions and amendments to proposed resolutions shall be submitted to *Today's Business* for publication prior to convention consideration of the resolutions to which they pertain. When this is not possible, as in the course of discussion, one written copy of the proposed amendment shall be provided to the Secretary immediately after it is offered from the floor.
7. Only *substantive* amendments to a resolution shall be offered from the floor (those impacting its purpose or effect). Any editorial corrections or *non-substantive* changes to introduced resolutions should instead be shared in writing with the Secretary. Until a resolution is presented to the delegates, any such changes should be suggested directly to the floor committee chair.
8. The delegates will consider omnibus resolutions as part of regular scheduled business. Omnibus A includes overtures referred to a board, commission, or other group of Synod to consider and take action deemed appropriate. Omnibus B includes overtures with respect to which the action taken by a previous convention is to be affirmed. Omnibus C acknowledges overtures of thanks or recognition. Each floor committee's Omnibus D (if any) dispenses formally with overtures declined by that floor committee. During consideration of a given omnibus, a majority vote is required to remove an overture from the omnibus resolution and have it referred to the appropriate floor committee for action.
9. If any resolution is not acted upon by the convention before adjournment, it dies and the subject matter may be reintroduced for possible consideration by an overture to the next convention.

Process

10. Unless covered by these Special Standing Rules, parliamentary procedure shall be governed by the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
11. The chair shall see that the agenda is followed as closely as possible. The chair may deviate from the printed program when necessary or expedient.
12. All nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives may participate in debate, but may not nominate candidates, make motions, or vote.

13. Registered delegates and advisory representatives wishing to address the convention, once recognized by the chair, shall state their name, the name of the district (or other entity of the Synod that they represent), and whether they are a voting delegate, advisory delegate, or advisory representative. Delegates and representatives shall normally address the convention from their assigned microphones.
14. A microphone queue list will be enacted for every debatable motion considered by the assembly. Each time a debatable motion is considered by the assembly, a new microphone queue list will be created and the queue list from any previous motion will be cleared.
15. The pro-con method of debate may be used at the discretion of the chair or by adoption of the assembly. When a member of the floor committee speaks in favor of a resolution, it shall be recognized as a “pro” speech and will be followed by a “con” speech.
16. Delegates and representatives wishing to enter the microphone queue for any reason (debate, make an amendment, call the question, request information or any other action) must always identify themselves, as pro or con speakers, by pressing either 1 (pro) or 2 (con) on their queue keypad even if the assembly is not in a pro-con mode. This queue identification is necessary so delegates and representatives are appropriately reflected in the queue should the chair choose to move to a pro-con method of debate. All queue entrants will be addressed as they appear in the queue order. When called upon by the chair delegates and representatives must identify themselves and state the desired action. The microphone queue shall be displayed so that delegates can see their position in the queue.
17. Ordinarily, questions of privilege (or point of personal privilege) shall be addressed in writing to the chair or his appointee.
18. No delegate or representative may speak in debate any longer than two (2) minutes per speech. No delegate or representative may speak more than twice on the same motion on the same day and may not speak a second time until all delegates and representatives desiring to speak the first time have had the opportunity. The chair shall have discretion to make exceptions to this rule. When a floor committee is called on to answer a question or to give information, this rule shall not apply.
19. A delegate who speaks on an issue may not move to call the question at the close of his or her speech.
20. If a substitute motion is offered and seconded, the presenter shall be offered two (2) minutes to provide the rationale for offering it and a member of the floor committee shall be offered two (2) minutes to present rationale for why the committee believes the original motion is to be preferred. The convention shall decide by majority vote without further debate whether or not to consider the substitute motion. If the decision is in the affirmative and if the substitute motion is subsequently adopted, the original motion dies. If the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or adopt, the original motion is again considered.
21. A motion to close debate (“call the question”) shall apply only to the immediately pending question.
22. While any voting delegate may move to close debate (call the question) at any time that it is his or her turn to speak, a vote on closing debate (two-thirds vote required) on the main motion shall be put by the chair after every twenty (20) minutes of debate (except those to which Standing Rule 5 pertains). The chair may also call for a vote on closing debate (two-thirds vote required) when in his judgment the assembly has heard sufficient speaking from both sides of the issue. The chair may call for a vote to close debate on less controversial resolutions without hearing any debate.*
23. Amendments of non-contiguous words may be made to a pending question so long as the consequence of such non-contiguous words does not constitute in effect a substitute motion.
24. During the last two days of the convention, the President shall have the privilege of calling up for action those resolutions that in his judgment must be acted upon before adjournment.
25. No motion to reconsider or rescind shall be made or called up during the last day of the convention.

Floor Nominations

26. No floor nominations will be accepted for the First Vice-President or regional vice-presidents (Bylaws 3.12.2.1; 3.12.2.7 [d]). In the case of election of the Secretary and board and commission members, floor nominations are allowed, to take place at the time of the report of the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [a–b]). “Such floor nominations may only be made from the list of names which have previously been offered to the Committee for Convention Nominations prior to the final deadline for the submission of nominations, unless the convention shall otherwise order by a simple majority vote” (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [c]). Floor nominations are not debatable and shall be brought individually before the convention for approval, being voted on immediately, before being added to the ballot (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [a–b]).

Allowable floor nominations for all positions of boards and commissions shall be opened for a period of forty (40) minutes, unless ceased earlier by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. At the end of forty (40) minutes, a vote to cease nominations shall be called by the convention chairman. If a two-thirds vote to cease nominations is not received, the period for floor nominations shall be extended an additional twenty (20) minutes. This cycle shall continue in twenty (20) minute intervals until a two-thirds vote for nominations to cease is received from the assembly.

Voting

27. An electronic response system shall ordinarily be used to register votes. If the system is not available, or at the discretion of the chair, the chair may take votes by voice, by show of hands, or by a rising vote. The chair may order a count if any voice, show of hands, or rising vote seems inconclusive. When possible, vote tallies shall be recorded in the minutes.
28. An invalid vote is defined as a vote entered on the keypad with a number not offered as a selection or entered before voting is opened or after voting is closed. Invalid votes are not counted in the total number of votes cast.
29. The privilege of granting delegates the right to record their votes in the minutes with respect to a particular resolution shall be granted by the assembly by a majority vote without debate. If such privilege is granted, the votes of record shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod within 15 minutes after the close of the day's business on which such privilege was granted.

Use of Voice, Print, and Electronic Devices

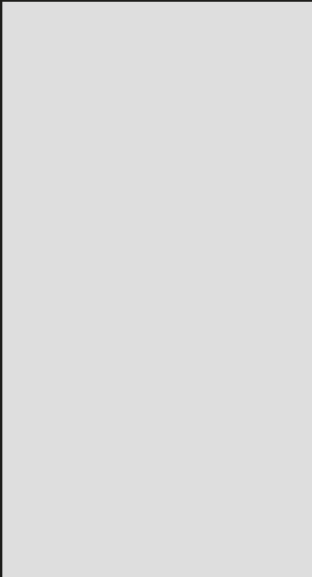
30. In order to promote an orderly and non-distracting convention atmosphere, the following shall apply to the use, and area of use, of all printers and electronic equipment, including wired and wireless communication devices, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, pagers, laser pointers, PDAs, PEDs, or other similar electronic devices. In all cases where use is permitted, the sound-producing capabilities of such devices shall not be used. Except as approved by convention staff, personal extension cords shall not be allowed in Hall AB.

	Type of Usage Permitted in Designated Area			
	Voice	Printers	Electronic Communications including email, text, and social media messaging, e.g., laptops, tablets, pagers, laser pointers, PEDs, smart phones, wearable technology including smart watches, activity trackers, and like devices.	Laptop computers, tablets WITH communications disabled (e.g., Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Cellular, and Infrared communications turned off or in airplane mode.)
Voting and Advisory Delegates & Representatives Areas	No	No	No	Yes
COP, BOD, CCM, COH, CTCR, Press, Special Guests Areas	No	No	Yes	n/a
Visitors, Back Seating Area	No	No	Yes	n/a
Convention Staff, All Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a

Action: Adopted (1); subsequently amended (5)

In Session 1, the Special Standing Rules were introduced as printed in TB, 1:15–17, the chair noting no substantive changes from those adopted as amended during the 2019 convention. An attempt to amend Standing Rule 14 to add the sentences, “When a new queue is opened, if advisory delegates or representatives are immediately (at the discretion of the chair) in the queue, the first two advisory delegates or representatives will be moved to the top of the queue. Then the order will return to the original queue, with those who spoke being removed.” failed. A second amendment was proposed to Standing Rule 14 to strike out the words following the comma in the second sentence and replace them with the words, “queue lists from previous motions and original unamended resolutions will be retained until a completely new, not substitute or amended, resolution is considered.” The chair explained that the technology would not support this. The standing rules were adopted as originally presented by a voice vote. (See also Sessions 3, 4, 6, and 9.)

** In Session 5, President Harrison proposed an amendment of Standing Rule 22, to allow the chair to call for a vote to close debate on less controversial resolutions without hearing any debate. The amendment was adopted [Yes: 695; No: 255].*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT, PART 3

We Preach Christ Crucified

Milwaukee, Wisconsin • July 30, 2023

Matthew C. Harrison, President

“Hier stehe Ich. Ich kann nicht anders.” “Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise,” responded Luther in 1521 when the greatest authority of his political and religious world tried to force him to recant of his teaching. This response has become so famous that we joke about it, we make “Here I stand” socks. Some even use it for self-deprecating humor, suggesting that we say “Here we stand,” instead of “Here we go!” But we cannot stand on the Gospel without going with the Gospel.

The Diet of Worms continues to have great significance for the church. Luther had been told that the emperor wanted to hear one word and one word only from this troublesome German monk: *Revoco!* “I recant.” Luther stood by a pile of his books and was questioned. “Are these yours?” “Do you recant?” Luther asked for time to think about the matter overnight. When he was brought to the same hall, he spoke the words we all remember.

Unless I am convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons ... I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be either safe or honest for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.

Luther has been blamed for most every Western philosophical, political, or religious movement since. But he’s no advocate of the rejection of the Bible for “reason,” or radical individuality. His reason and conscience were captive to the Word of God. And because “the word of the Lord remains forever” (1 Peter 1:25), this Word and faith is confessed before the judgment seat of God.

The Formula of Concord quotes Luther’s great 1544 confession, made when Melancthon and others in Wittenberg were wobbling on the true presence of Christ in the Sacrament.

I am not drunk or irresponsible. I know what I’m saying, and I well realize what this will mean for me before the Last Judgment at the coming of the Lord Christ. Let no one make this out to be a joke or idle talk; I am in dead earnest, since by the grace of God I have learned to know a great deal about Satan. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII 30–31)

The confessors of our Book of Concord have the same spirit. And we have made it our own.

This Confession also, by the help of God, we will retain to our last breath, when we shall go forth from this life to the heavenly fatherland, to appear with joyful and undaunted mind and with a *pure conscience* before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ (Preface to the Book of Concord 16).

Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter responded for them all, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Christ asks this question to each of us. For

most of us, our confession began when we were infants. Our sponsors and the congregation confessed the faith which we were given in Baptism. In confirmation we confessed before God and man that we will never forsake the Christian faith as confessed in Luther’s Small Catechism. In ordination we stand before God and man and confess that we shall die before forsaking this Christian and Lutheran faith. As Christians in this world, we must stand and profess. “You are the Christ.” “Here I stand. I can do no other.”

Every pastor, teacher, deaconess, church musician, elder, congregational officer, Sunday school teacher, individual congregation, new member, district, district president, parochial school, Concordia (named for this confession!) has, does, and continues to confess before God and at His judgment seat on the Last Day: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” “I make this biblical/Lutheran confession my own.” We all individually, and together with this whole convention are bound to Article II of the Synod’s constitution.

Article II Confession

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice.
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

The necessity of both confession and action form the first two of the objectives of the Synod: “1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy.” **HERE I STAND!** And then the second objective defines the apostolic compulsion of Christianity (1 Cor. 9:16). The Synod exists to “2. Strengthen congregations and their members *in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world.*” **HERE WE GO!**

This “bold witness” was a conscience issue for St. Paul and the other apostles. Paul put it this way, “For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16) Paul was created to preach the Gospel, prepared to preach the

Gospel, called to preach the Gospel, sent to preach the Gospel, lived to preach the Gospel, died preaching the Gospel!

In Acts 4 we read that Peter and John got in trouble for healing a disabled man, that is, for “giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God.”

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:18–20)

And here’s what they spoke,

And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Act 4:7–12)

In Acts 5 the apostles are called before the officials yet again.

“We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” (Act 5:28–29)

Now notice how this compulsion to preach Jesus, the burden of the apostolic conscience, is the compulsion to preach the clear, specific Gospel.

The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. (Acts 5:30–32)

The Synod’s constitution says our objective is to “*Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world.*” This is as biblical and clear as the word and work of Jesus, and the word and works of His apostles in Acts 4 and 5.

The Question of Christian Conscience

It seems to me that the question of the Christian conscience is one of the greatest issues of our times. This is important because we stand in the face of the denial of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as Creator, and therefore Redeemer and

Sanctifier, the rejection of Christ’s own sacred teaching in Matthew 19:4, “Male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27).

Questions of conscience arise ever more intensely in our lives. Knowing the truth of Christ as Savior, and consequently, the truth of His Word (the inerrant Scriptures), frees our conscience from guilt, and frees us for confession and action. I recently was told of a pious Christian high school teacher in Illinois. The state brought in “experts” to talk to the students about how one can turn female genitalia into male surgically. Members of our own families are being overcome by the delusions of our time. Many face hostility at work or school for holding to the Sacred Word of God, and the words of our Savior. We say with St. Peter, “Lord to whom shall we go. You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:66).

Questions of conscience plague us. Should I stay in a position or a job, quietly doing good and witnessing as I can, or am I compromising my biblical convictions by being silent? What shall I do? I need the money to care for my family. Do I speak my views kindly and openly to my in-laws or grandchildren? Do I risk being cut off with no opportunity for influence?

Can I in good conscience be a part of a community that participates in the most ridiculous, sexualized trans activities directed at children in public libraries? Can I receive treatment by doctors and hospitals whose actions are diametrically opposed to natural law, life, and Christian ethics? Can I live with my conscience intact in these scenarios? Can I invest my money in compromised institutions? Are there any that are not? Can I support my sports team even though they celebrate and promote actions diametrically opposed to natural law, the Ten Commandments, the Word of God? Shall our congregation and school keep a low profile so we can escape political, legal, or state scrutiny and entanglements? Do we go silent or compromise on the sexuality issues so that we can reach out to more diverse people?

Some answers are clear. Some are less clear. How active should the congregation, school, district, or Synod be when the government attacks the religious freedom of a Lutheran school, violating the First Amendment regarding the “free exercise of religion”? Does the government have the right to legislate what happens within the sanctuary, or more precisely, the specific sacred acts within the sanctuary? (I say no.) There are more “Here I stand” moments coming.

We Lutherans know something about conscience and confession. In fact, the entire Reformation was about conscience, the value and place of divinely given Law and reason (including left hand kingdom things like family and government), and the authority of the Bible. Luther had a horribly tortured conscience. The Law tortured him and damned him. The law of merit crucified him. The mixing of church and government confounded him. His conscience terrified him. He knew what the Law demanded of him, thought, word, and deed. And he knew his own sinful reality. The Gospel of Christ eluded him.

The Lord brought him gradually to the truth. He stopped on the way at Augustinianism, at mysticism, at the Medieval theology of mercy. He knew that, despite it all, the Lord is merciful. Finally, the full measure of the biblical truth of the justification

of the sinner before God, by grace alone, received through faith alone, based on Christ's merits alone, grabbed him, shook him, transformed him, and threw him further into a public fray which he did not seek. In questioning indulgences, he struck the Medieval Roman Church at its core, money. And in the struggle that followed he was given clarity in the Gospel.

Romans 1:16–17 says that “the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” This truth struck Luther like an anvil one day in the spring of 1518. The Gospel grabbed him, and he realized fully and clearly that the justification of the sinner before God is a completely legal, forensic act of God. It's God's power. God's action. God's forgiving. God's justifying. God's reckoning righteous for the sake of Jesus alone. Augsburg Confession Article IV was completely his as he himself declared from the Coburg Castle where he waited the outcome of the Augsburg Diet in 1530.

Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4). (AC IV)

Jesus Christ was “delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). “For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). The sinner is justified, declared not guilty. Christ did it all. Faith grabs hold of all Jesus did, does, and has. The conscience, the bad conscience, tormented by sins, tormented by works righteousness, is freed, and forgiven! JOY!

Our Book of Concord is from beginning to the end a manual for “Here we stand!” and “Here we go!” It's all about the conscience freed from sin, guilt, and death. Listen to the mission statement in the preface to the Book of Concord.

We understand that we owe our subjects this ... that we should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and to our utmost ability, to attend to those matters which promote the extension of God's name and glory, the propagation of His Word, (from which alone we hope for salvation), the peace and tranquility of churches and schools, and the instruction and consolation of disturbed consciences. (Preface to the Book of Concord, 22)

Melanchthon's Preface to the Apology summarizes the content of the Augsburg Confession: That is, matters “pertaining to religion and the instruction of consciences” (par. 4).

Melanchthon wrote in the Apology:

But since in this controversy the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated, which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ [which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible],

and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences. (Ap IV 2)

On the conscience and repentance, the Apology states:

Christ, in the last chapter of Luke (24:47) commands that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name. For the Gospel convicts all men that they are under sin, that they all are subject to eternal wrath and death, and offers, for Christ's sake, remission of sin and justification, which is received by faith. The preaching of repentance, which accuses us, terrifies consciences with true and grave terrors. [For the preaching of repentance, or this declaration of the Gospel: Amend your lives! Repent! When it truly penetrates the heart, terrifies the conscience, and is no jest, but a great terror, in which the conscience feels its misery and sin, and the wrath of God.] In these, hearts ought again to receive consolation. This happens if they believe the promise of Christ, that for His sake we have remission of sins. (Ap IV 62)

At every turn in our Confessions the truth of the Gospel and the teaching of the Bible are held forth to console consciences. Repentance. Confession. Baptism. The Keys. Supper. The doctrine of good works. Customs and ceremonies. Vocation. Marriage. Men and women. Sex. In all these matters tormented consciences are set at ease!

The entire Catechism, indeed, the entire Book of Concord is a manual on conscience.

On human nature and sex in the context of celibacy, which tortured monks and pastors and priests, the Smalcald Articles state,

Now, as little as we or they have been given the power to make a woman out of a man or a man out of a woman, or to nullify either sex, so little have they had the power to [sunder and] separate such creatures of God, or to forbid them from living [and cohabiting] honestly in marriage with one another. (SA III XI 2)

Why All the Falderal?

I have a theory on why the world is coming at us so intensely with the sexuality issues. The conscience and natural knowledge of God, not to mention divine revelation and thus the teaching of the historic church, must be opposed with the greatest intensity. The world believes that all must be made to affirm what the conscience knows is false. Paul tells us the truth is written on every heart (Rom. 2:15). Thus, we understand the most outrageous actions of those seeking to deny what God has put on their heart. They think the government must be forced to deny natural law. The schools must be forced to deny God's eternal truth. The church must be made to reject the clear teaching of the Bible. The conscience, natural law, and the Bible must be attacked and denied with everything the devil, world, and flesh can muster. But this effort is all in vain.

Those who reject the truth demonstrate in the most radical way that the doctrine of justification is the most fundamental and pervasively significant thing in all human existence.

Oswald Bayer writes:

Those who justify themselves are under compulsion to do so. There is no escape. We cannot reject the question that others put to us: Why have you done this? What were you thinking about? Might you not have done something else? In the other's view of us, and in our own view, we always find ourselves to be the ones who are already being questioned and who have to answer. Complaints are made against us. We are forced to justify ourselves, and as we do so, we usually want to be right. ...

There is no escaping the questions and evaluations of others. If one accepts and welcomes the other or not, if one greets the other or not, if one acknowledges the other—either through praise or reproach, affirmation or negation—or if one does not acknowledge the other and regards the other as worthless, a decision is made concerning our being or non-being. Only a being that is recognized and acknowledged is a being that is alive. If no one were to call and greet me by name, if no one were ready to speak to me and look at me, then I would be socially nonexistent. I would even be physically non-existent, I would have no life at all, if my parents had not acknowledged me and respected my life even before my birth. I would no longer have any life if after my birth my parents had not smiled at me and talked to me, thus opening a space for community, accepting and acknowledging me. An unwanted child is aware of this rejection. The denial of unconditional and anticipated recognition, the denial of love, shows how necessary recognition is. Its denial is a painful and especially impressive indication of its necessity, its necessity for life. ...

As social beings we live by the word given and heard. This word either grants or denies us recognition and justification. (Oswald Bayer, *Living By Faith: Justification and Sanctification* [Lutheran Quarterly / Eerdmans, 2003], 1–2)

There is no such thing as an autocratic individual, totally independent of the surrounding world and its recognition. The individual is always socially formed. ... Striving to find approval in the eyes of others, being noticed and not being dismissed as nothing by others, demonstrates that I cannot relate to myself without relating to the world. It applies to our social birth as well as our physical birth. I constantly vacillate, even to the very end of life, between the judgments others make about me and my own judgment of myself. I am constantly trying to ascertain other's judgment about me and my own judgment of myself I arrive at some point of calm, and then become unsure of myself again. My identity is a floating one. Who am I? Asked D. Bonhoeffer. Am I what others say about me? Am I what I know about myself? Am I balanced between these different evaluations? ... What I am, I am in my judgment about myself, intertwined with the judgment made of Me by others. Person is a "forensic" term. (Bayer, 4)

"All reality is involved in the justification debate" (Bayer, 9).

We live in an era of mass delusion. People are confused. Young people are hurting, angry, and disappointed. Families are torn apart and divided. Our culture, social, and political life are abysmal. Social media is vile. And it's all about "justification." How do we respond? HERE WE STAND. HERE WE GO.

Jesus is the answer. Justification is the answer.

The third article of the Augsburg Confession describes the gift obtained by Christ. "There is one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, died and was buried. *He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind*" (AC III). This reminds us of Luther's wonderful description of the atonement, of redemption obtained, then doled out. "The work of redemption is done and accomplished. ('It is finished' [John 19:30].) Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, and so on. But if the word remained concealed so that no one knew about it, then it would be useless and lost. So that this treasure might not stay buried but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word He has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore, sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good, which we could not get ourselves" (LC II 38).

Again, "Although the work is done and the forgiveness of sins is secured by the cross, it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How would we know about it otherwise?" (LC V 31). "We preach Christ crucified!"

Christ is the High Priest (Heb. 8:1; 10:11) who sacrificed Himself once, for the sins of the world. "He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27). "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). "Behold the Lamb of God [the sacrifice! the *pascha*] who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Christ gave Himself as "a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). "He is the propitiation [*hilasmos*; means to appease wrath!] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). "Christ sacrificed himself by (a) offering up His holy life, offering Himself 'without spot' (Heb. 9:14; 7:26), and (b) by offering His suffering and death for us." (Pieper 2:343)

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11–12). He bought back all! Paid the price of all!

His death was "vicarious," "for us," and that means "for all." Indeed, "no one is righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). "God has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). "He himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). All in our stead!

The texts are magnificent! “One act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18). “While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Rom. 5:10). (See Pieper 2:347f.) The substitutionary death of Christ is an objective fact. The price is paid. The gift obtained. The reconciliation acquired. Indeed, even the justification was secured outside us in His resurrection. “He was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

Luther: “Christ became the greatest of all sinners, for He took the place of all sinners and thus became guilty of all the sins of the whole world although He was holy and innocent” (LW 26: 280–81). This means that the gift is completed, before us, outside us. It is *extra nos*. It depends not a whit upon anything in you.

Eduard Preuss said, “If the king issues an amnesty and does not send his messengers, men or letters, to publish it, it will profit no one. Therefore, God has sent His apostles, and the words of St. Paul spoken at Antioch, “That through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”” (Acts 13:38) (E. Preuss, 29) HERE WE STAND. HERE WE GO.

The individual receives the objective gift by faith alone. “Abraham believed God and it was counted [reckoned, imputed] to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). The Greek word δικαίωω, “to justify,” is found 38 times in the New Testament and means “to declare” or “regard” as righteous.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (Rom. 8:33). “And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification” (Rom. 5:16). Or Matthew 12:37, “By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

We see in Paul that the justification of the sinner before God is a free, legal/forensic, act, an accounting righteous, a free gracious acquittal on account of Christ. “God makes us righteous in the same way He makes Christ a sinner.” It’s Luther’s “fröhlich Wechsel” or “happy exchange” (WA 7.25.34; 33.289.19).

That’s our answer to a world plagued by bad consciences. That’s also the answer to a world plagued by racists and race tensions. It’s the answer to injustice, to mental illness, to addiction, to all that ails us. It’s our answer to the abused and confused. Repent and believe the Gospel. You, YOU, my friend, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, have been reckoned as valuable as the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses you from all your sins. That is the key to outreach.

Luther said, “Faith does nothing but accept such gifts.” (Luther, StL XI:1103; Pieper 2:350)

Cyprian of Carthage

I’ve been thinking about St. Cyprian a lot these days. He’s quoted favorably many times in our Book of Concord. He was born around A.D. 200, became a lawyer, and was chosen bishop of the North African City of Carthage during a tumultuous time for the church and the world. Persecution by the Romans

wrecked the church and divided it. What to do with those who compromised with the state religion and burned incense to Caesar as a god? The rigorists said, “No return to the church!” Cyprian took a middle road insisting upon serious repentance and re-admission. Cyprian was martyred on Holy Cross Day, September 14, A.D. 258 during the persecution of Christians by Valerian. The Roman official Galerius commanded Cyprian to “conform to the Roman rites,” i.e. Roman state religion. Cyprian refused.

Galerius talked to his legal counsel and then pronounced the sentence.

You have long lived an irreligious life, and have drawn together a number of men bound by an unlawful association, and professed yourself an open enemy to the gods and the religion of Rome; and the pious, most sacred and august Emperors ... have endeavored in vain to bring you back to conformity with their religious observances; whereas therefore you have been apprehended as principal and ringleader in these infamous crimes, you shall be made an example to those whom you have wickedly associated with you; the authority of law shall be ratified in your blood.” He then read the sentence of the court from a written tablet: “It is the sentence of this court that Thascius Cyprianus be executed with the sword.”

Cyprian replied, “Thanks be to God.”

That was the ultimate “Here I stand” moment for Cyprian and his church. But Cyprian was not all “stand” and no “go.” About A.D. 250 a terrible plague swept through the Mediterranean world. Corpses were piling up everywhere. Cyprian called upon his Christians to bury the dead, even the dead non-Christians. He said that their bodies, too, were formed of the dust of the ground by God Almighty and deserved the greatest reverence. He urged his Christians to care for the needy Christians and non-Christians. These acts of love won a tremendous following, and many came to Christ and the church.

My friends, our world is suffering numerous plagues: confusion, disillusionment, deception, pain, physical need, addiction, disappointment, racial tension, anger. False gods abound. The religion of works and self-gratification pervade. The demise of families, the rejection of the roles of fathers and mothers, has people awash in pain and disappointment. There are millions upon millions who don’t know that their deepest desire to be somebody, to be counted, to be recognized, can be met only in Jesus.

This week we will behold many of the great things we as a Synod are doing globally, and that is wonderful. You’ll meet inspiring church leaders and others from around the world. But I want to make this clear: There is nothing more important than what you do as a Christian in your family, in your congregation, and in your community, *giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world.*

Thank You

I want to thank you for the last 13 years. I want to thank you especially for the Praesidium. The Synod vice-presidents are

first-rate. First Vice-President Peter Lange is phenomenal. As a former district president he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the office of First Vice-President. His attention to detail is beyond belief. His work is stellar. I'm thankful for John Wohlrabe. His knowledge of LCMS doctrine, history, and the military chaplaincy are amazing. Scott Murray is a gentleman's gentleman. He's the pastor of a large congregation. He's unflappable and kind to a fault. I learn something from Nabil Nour every time we're together. His experience as an immigrant and as a person born in Jesus' hometown, his zeal for the Gospel are all tremendous gifts. Chris Esget has been a gift. His pro-life and other connections in D.C., his gifts of calm and winsome teaching are unparalleled. And I treasure Ben Ball's perspectives and zeal for the faith. The Synod's vice-presidents are all remarkable leaders and humble servants. The cohesiveness of the Praesidium is astounding. I love them all and hope to continue with them. That's your call.

Multiple times the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws call upon the President of Synod to exercise doctrinal oversight, and to see that the Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions of the Synod are adhered to and carried out. Most of the time you hear nothing about what goes on behind the scenes. I thank the district presidents for working hand in hand with me in addressing issues. I am called upon specifically to oversee the doctrine and practice of our Concordia universities. In my reports on visitations to Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis., and Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas, I pointed out issues that needed attention. I did this kindly, and with clear bylaw authority, within constitutional limits. Floor Committee 7, after a great deal of listening, much discussion of all matters, is ready to present solutions to a number of our challenges.

It's time, after 13 years of my presidency, various resolutions, floor committees, task forces, and dozens of meetings, phone calls, conference calls, revisions, deletions, making every effort to accommodate where possible, even up to the last minute, to pass the resolutions which will be put before you by the floor committee on the universities.

The kerfuffle over the explanatory essays accompanying the new edition of Luther's Large Catechism was unfortunate. Some things could have been written more clearly as the CTCR has acknowledged. But there is nothing in the book that is going to take a person into heresy or away from the clear confession of Christ. I encourage the church to read Luther's Large Catechism, as it will aid each person in faith and a clear confession.

My job as chair of this convention is to see that you get the business done you want done. The goal is that you, the duly elected representatives of your congregations deliberate and act as you see fit in accordance with our governing documents. If I have information I feel I need to share on a significant topic, I'll vacate the chair and go to a floor microphone.

We have a beautiful confession, a courageous confession. We have the clarity and certainty of Jesus' forgiveness in His Word and Sacraments. We have the answer the world needs to all its ills. And now we have the privilege of letting that confession guide and govern our work together these next few days.

Just the day before yesterday, Jonathan Schultz informed me that CPH had a record year last year. And that was due in some large measure to the increased demand for school materials. We face tremendous challenges to be true. But you will be hearing of blessings aplenty. Here we stand! And here we go!

CONVENTION SERMONS

We Preach Christ Crucified

HOSEA 6:1–6; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18–25; LUKE 24:36–49A

LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 29, 2023 • Opening Divine Service

We preach Christ crucified, the power and the wisdom of God.

Luther said on Hosea, doesn't God do strange things? Hosea comes in the time of the second-to-last king of Israel, Jeroboam. He wanted to do what was right, says Luther. He did many good things. But he didn't get rid of the idolatry.

They were still worshipping the [idols] of their ancestors. They were still killing the prophets, sacrificing their children, and filling the land with the guilt of blood. So, says Luther, Hosea preached hard against idolatry, and he preached for a purpose (Hos. 6:4–6):

*What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early away.
Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.
For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*

God does strange things. He has Hosea pick a harlot for a wife, [a woman] who marries him and lives chastely with him, to invite people to repentance, [to invite] adulterous Israel to repentance.

You have gone astray. You have forsaken the Lord. You have transgressed His Law. You have gone after other gods. You know it's true, of every one of you. Me too.

You indeed know that the universal word of Law of Hosea or Jesus or St. Paul—"Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect"—applies to us all. The Law is given that every mouth be stopped and the whole world held accountable to God.

We, this week—in this convention center, in this city—are not a bunch of holier-than-thou prigs looking down our noses at the people "out there." They might say, "Oh, look at those hypocrites in that convention center." And you should say, "Yeah, I know, and there's always room for one more."

We are sinners—repentant sinners who have a Savior. "Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up" (Hos. 6:1).

It was 2009, and I had traveled down to Haiti just days after the great earthquake. We were in an area where there was an orphanage just across the Dominican border. It was a MASH [mobile army surgical] hospital. Our missionaries, with [Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Director Rev.] Ted Krey at the lead, were taking care of hundreds and hundreds and, finally, thousands of people ... on the site of what had been an orphanage.

I put my sleeping bag in a house, a brick house that had been left unfinished, a very nice, unfinished house. All of a sudden the earthquake started to rumble, and I got my bag and got out of there and slept outside for the rest of the week.

It was unpleasant. All my clothes had been left at the airport or caught up in the baggage somehow. What a week. The earth started to rumble. We ran over to an area where there were about a thousand individuals lying on the ground, most of them with three casts or four casts on their arms and legs, having been crushed from the falling buildings in Port-Au-Prince, [Haiti].

There were people in a two-story building who had been rigged up to IVs, et cetera, with casts on, jumping over the wall onto the ground, breaking their casts, breaking their pelvises. It was horrid. People were screaming, weeping. The evening was coming on quickly, and all of a sudden this guy starts announcing on a megaphone, "God is judging you. Hell is upon you. This is the judgment of God."

I said, "Who is that idiot? And where did he get that megaphone?"

Somebody said, "That's our megaphone."

I said, "Go get it from him!" We wrestled the megaphone away from the guy. These people had been hit by the Law in the strongest way possible. They needed the Gospel.

Ted [Krey] said, “Just walk among them and pray with them until we get the food and water squared away.”

I had my [clerical] collar on. I had a crucifix on. ... [Later, coming home on the airplane], I looked down, and the body of Jesus had swung off the cross and was just hanging upside down by the feet. That was the week we had.

[At the MASH unit I prayed] with a little girl with three casts. I couldn’t speak Creole. I couldn’t speak Spanish. I couldn’t speak French. She grabbed hold of the crucifix as I was praying the Lord’s Prayer with her. She grabbed hold of my crucifix and would not let it go. She would not let it go.

My dear friends, Christ crucified has you by the neck. Christ crucified has you by the neck. Let us press on to know the Lord. He will come to us with His showers. “For it is written,” says St. Paul [in 1 Corinthians 1]. Stick to the Bible. “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.” Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified. “And the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified. “Where is the one who is wise?” Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified. “Where is the scribe?” Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified. “Where is the debater of this age?” Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified.

“Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” [continues St. Paul]. The word for “fool” here is the same

as our word, “moron.” Jesus says, when salt has been “moronized,” how can it gain its saltiness again? “Moronize” means to lose its being, to lose its sense, to be made nothing.

Stick to the Bible and Christ crucified. It makes the wisdom of the world nothing.

“Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:20–21). We preach, no matter who calls it folly.

We preach Christ—Christ forgiving you, Christ hanging on the cross for you, Christ taking His last breath for you, Christ paying for your sins.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. No matter who calls it folly, it is the wisdom and the power of God Almighty. We preach Christ crucified. Grab hold of Christ. Grab Christ’s cross in the Word, in Baptism, in His Sacrament. Christ has grabbed you, my dear friends.

This convention will be about many things. We, together, preach Christ and Him crucified for our own salvation and the salvation of the world. God grant us that this week, even as we bear witness, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Of One Mind: The Church's Life in Christ

PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11

LCMS First Vice-President Rev. Peter K. Lange

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 30, 2023 • Matins

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In about an hour, as we slowly get this convention underway, we'll take up the standing rules for our gathering, under the theme, *"We Preach Christ Crucified!"*

In this morning's text from Philippians chapter 2, the apostle Paul gives us a list of "standing rules," so to speak—a code of conduct, as it were, for our interaction together during this convention, and for our entire life together as Christians. Then Paul relates those "standing rules" to CHRIST—crucified and exalted.

Complete my joy, [he says], by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Phil. 2:2–4)

And this list of "standing rules" for Christians becomes even more thought-provoking, if you consider some of the alternate meanings found in the Greek lexicons for the words in this list.

- *"Being of the same mind"* can be translated "thinking the same thing" or "being in agreement."
- *"Being in full accord"* can be translated "united in spirit." (The word even appears on a Greek tombstone for a husband and wife who apparently had a model marriage until death parted them.)
- The word for *"rivalry"* (which isn't supposed to motivate anything we do) can be translated "selfish ambition or strife or contentiousness." And Aristotle used the word for "self-seeking pursuit of political office."
- *"Do nothing from conceit"*? Well, that word literally means "empty glory." In Texas they say, "All hat and no cattle."
- And finally, verse 4 is even stronger in the original than it is in the ESV. Instead of *"Let each of you look not only to his own interests..."* it's bluntly, *"Let each of you look not to his own interests, BUT to the interests of others."*

What a way to start a convention! What's the point of voting if we're supposed to be *"of the same mind"* and *"in*

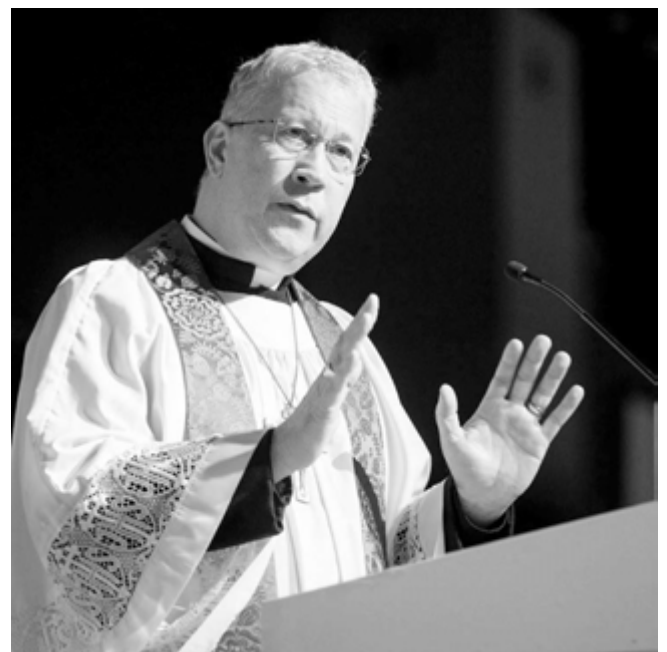
full accord"... *"thinking the same thing"*... without *"strife"* or *"contentiousness"*? And that's without even reflecting on our motivations for what we do. *"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit."* And again remember, these words aren't only appropriate for the start of a convention but are God's will for our entire lives in our interactions with spouse, congregation, colleagues, and neighbors. Honestly, insofar as we're wretched sinners, these words are like dry ice on a very sensitive tooth. It doesn't take much to do the job.

But Paul, who has just said that we are to be of the "same mind" and of "one mind," now uses this very word a third time to tell us what Jesus has to do with these "standing rules"!

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is in Christ Jesus."

This mind is "in Christ Jesus," (as the Greek literally says); and it's also "yours in Christ Jesus." Paul says something similar in 1 Corinthians 2, that *"we have the mind of Christ!"* (1 Cor. 2:16).

And here's how that "mind" in Christ was manifested in His person and work for us.



*Though he was God...
He emptied himself
And took the form of a servant, being born as a man.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.*

That death on a cross, which resulted from the mind of Christ, and is also yours in Christ Jesus, by virtue of faith in Him—that death on a cross forgives your breaking of these standing rules and your failure to exemplify the mind of Christ, because Jesus’ blood was shed unto death on that cross, as payment for your sin. That death on a cross saves you from eternal destruction and makes you a partaker of Christ’s eternal exaltation to the courts of heaven!

WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED! And He is still the Crucified One, even now that “... God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9). As we sang in the hymn: “Rich wounds, yet visible above” (LSB 525:3).

So how should we then live? How should we who have been blessed with this incredible redemptive work that resulted from the mind of Christ ... how should we conduct ourselves in the coming days and throughout our lives? The answer is simple. We do what the Lord tells us to do in His Word to us today through His servant Paul.

Before that list of “standing rules,” Paul begins by saying, “If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit... complete my joy by being of the same mind ...” (Phil 2:1–2)

“Any participation [κοινωνία] in the Spirit.”

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul says that “... he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6:17). And later in that same epistle he says, “In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

In Holy Baptism, you and I have been given κοινωνία in the Spirit.

And in one Spirit, we have been “*joined to the Lord*” who emptied Himself and took the form of a servant.

Thus, [today and every day], to God the Holy Spirit let us pray that the new man in each of us, created in that same Baptism, would daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever, empowering us...

*...to be of the same mind with one another,
...in full accord and of one mind,
...doing nothing from rivalry or conceit,
...but in humility, counting others
more significant than ourselves.*

In the name of Christ crucified. Amen!

Bound to Us by Him

MATTHEW 27:32–44

LCMS Third Vice-President Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 30, 2023 • Midday Prayer

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of

God, come down from the cross.” So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. (Matt. 27:32–44)

The One who need not have been bound by chains and cords was bound by men who sought His death. The One who was the power of God refused to let that power bring Him rescue. The One who refused to save Himself did so to save those who mocked Him. The One who had no fear of death became subject to death. The One who had no vices wrapped Himself in ours that He might free us from

them. The One who is the triumphant King suffered His own skin to be nailed to the stake as the trophy of His triumph over death. The One who hunted down death allowed Himself to be devoured by it. He was pierced through that we might be made whole. The wood upon which He was set adrift under the storming wrath of God He fashions into the ship of our salvation. It is our cross too, but not a cross of punishment for us. Rather, He makes it the cross of salvation.

The One bound by the nails is bound that He might bind us to Himself through faith in Him. We, who might be bound to Him by force, are bound rather by His mercy and compassion for us; and that binding is the more powerful because it is His. Bound to Him by His passionate and bloody embrace, we no longer fear the bonds of death in our own lives.

Punishment cannot hold us, for He long ago took our punishment. Suffering cannot overwhelm us, because He suffered for us on the tree. Fear cannot defeat us, for there is nothing to fear that can harm us. The cross is the instrument of His death, and the source of our life. Come, blessed cross!

The one truly free person puts His freedom into the chains of death that we might be set free. The one truly righteous person puts His righteousness at risk by placing it in our hands by faith, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And how did we repay Him for this? What have we returned to Him for this one act of mercy? We return to him nothing but vinegar and gall to drink. When He looks for good fruit in us, we have only yielded bad. The branches have been unfruitful. But He, the Vine, has determined to give His life sustaining body and blood for us Christians to eat and to drink. While we produced only sour grapes, He has given us to drink of His blood returning again and again to draw us into the fellowship supper of His love. We behold God and eat and drink (Exod. 24:11). Who goes away from this repast, filled with the fruits of His death, unchanged?

The apostle Paul sounds too narrow, too fanatical because he says so bluntly, “We preach Christ crucified.” Can’t there be something else? Can’t there be something warmer and cuddlier? I doubt that there is a “Precious Moments” crucifixion figurine for my grandchildren’s rooms. The crucifixion remains a stubborn fact that the Church may not, cannot, bypass. The crucifix belongs imprinted on every heart.

It is ironic that the narrower the point under the cross the more there is to experience of God’s compassion in Christ. The more completely we focus on Christ and His cross the more rich and broad our experience of the grace of God. When the Church proclaims the narrow message of

Christ crucified it embraces all people, races, languages, nations, and tribes. Christ crucified stretches out His arms to embrace all. In C. S. Lewis’s consummation of the Chronicles of Narnia, entitled *The Last Battle*, he portrays Aslan’s faithful coming into a tiny stable on a battlefield where they presume a faithful, but certain, death will befall them. As they enter the stable, they become aware that as it grows smaller everything else gets greater and ever larger. As they pass from Narnia into the paradise of the blessed, experiencing the full expanse of Aslan’s world, their refrain is “Come further up, come further in.” The Lord Jesus calls us from the narrow confines of our sin-sick world into the point of His cross where all the expanse of His love will open out for us. Our refrain this day is, “Come further up, come further in.” Let’s go into the cross, bound to the Crucified One.

Thomas, whom we call “Doubting,” when he was seeking the resurrected Lord, demanded to the signs of the crucifixion, asking, “Unless I plunge my finger into his wounds and my hand into his side” (John 20:25). Put me with Thomas! Plunge me too into His wounds. Bind me to that bloody man, who is God.

Christ has gone further up and further in. Jesus could have come down from His cross fulfilling the worst nightmare of those who mocked Him and ridiculed Him. It would have been the worst nightmare for the world if Christ had unbound the full use of His divinity and unbound Himself from the cross. What His opponents didn’t realize, and didn’t want to see, was that precisely in His crucified weakness and tenacious unwillingness to jump down off the cross was His sacrifice for the world made complete. He bound Himself to the cross and in that He sought to bind us to Him. He is most fully God for us as the Crucified One.



Gospel Power

ROMANS 1:14–17

LCMS Second Vice-President Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 31, 2023 • Matins

Christian Friends: you may remember “Tim the Tool Man Taylor” on the TV show *Home Improvement*. He always wanted “more power,” which often got him into trouble. Now Tim Allen has again teamed up with Richard Karn on a History Channel show about power tools called *More Power*. It seems that some can’t get enough power, not only with respect to machinery, but in other aspects of life too. There is, however, a power that stands in stark contrast to that of the world—God’s Gospel Power. This is the power the apostle Paul eagerly preached to the Romans, of which he was not ashamed. This is the Gospel power of the crucified Christ that we are bold to proclaim as well.

The Gospel is about Jesus Christ, God-enfleshed, bringing salvation through His life, death, and resurrection. The crucified Christ is the heart and content of the Gospel.

This good news always directs us away from ourselves and towards Jesus because apart from Christ there is no salvation. You see, we are lost in iniquity, estranged from God, conceived and born in sin. St. Paul goes on in his letter to the Romans demonstrating how both Jew and Gentile are under God’s righteous judgment. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). We cannot make ourselves righteous either. This was a misunderstanding held by the Jewish Pharisee Saul. It

was a misunderstanding of many in the medieval Roman church, including the young monk named Martin Luther. The Latin word *justificare* means “to make righteous,” and Luther disciplined his flesh through monkish ascetic means attempting to make himself right before God. But this fantasy brought Luther not only to despise that phrase “righteousness of God,” but even to hate God. He was incapable, powerless, and so he was ashamed of himself before God and others. Then Luther studied Romans 1:16–17 in the original language, especially the Greek word *dikaio sunai*. This has a courtroom connotation of being declared righteous. Thus, justification is not a change someone makes within themselves, but the gracious declaration that God pronounces sinners righteous for Christ’s sake. Those who are unable to become righteous, God declares righteous through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That forever changed Luther. From being ashamed of his shortcomings, the powerful Gospel produced confidence that he was a redeemed child of God. Luther said it opened paradise for him. It also made him bold in taking a stand and proclaiming the Gospel before the world.

Even though many have misunderstood, thinking they make themselves righteous before God, Paul is clear that it has always been by God’s grace through faith. He quotes the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk, “The righteous shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4). From the faithfulness of the Triune God, we are brought to faith, from faith to faith. After Adam and Eve fell into sin, God promised a Savior to crush Satan’s head. The people of old heard God’s promises of a Savior, and like Abraham, they believed and were reckoned as righteous. Through the powerful promise of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit works faith which receives and holds to God’s powerful Gospel promise, and this is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. It is God’s Gospel power for you!

St. Paul was writing to Christians at the capital of the Empire. Romans prided themselves in their power: military power, political power, engineering power, legal, and literary power. The Greek word *dunamis*, power, comes from the word for capable or doable, something the Romans wanted to demonstrate to the world by way of their forceful control. But Gospel power stands in stark contrast. The worldly view of power focuses on strength, might, assertiveness, force, influence, and aggression. It



sees others as objects to control. The world promotes power that pushes God out of the picture and strives to dominate fellow human beings.

On the other hand, the Gospel displays God's powerful weakness, a profound paradox based on God's love for His fallen world. The Creator of all became a weak, humble baby who grew to be the lowly perfect sacrifice, suffering persecution and death at the hands of sinful men who crucified Him. But this was so He could redeem the world. This redemption and the very righteousness of Christ are imputed to us by grace through faith, bringing to us who believe restoration with God and eternal life. It is so demonstrably powerful because it does things no earthly power can accomplish. The Gospel saves people by connecting us to Christ. Also, the Holy Spirit works faith through the Gospel. And because of that, the Holy Spirit makes us unashamed to proclaim this powerful Gospel to others. Regarding such powerful weakness, Martin Luther wrote: "He who believes in the Gospel must become weak and foolish before men so that he may be strong and wise in the power and wisdom of God" (*Luther's Works*, 25:150).

Paul says he is obliged to preach the Gospel to the wise and foolish, Greek and barbarian. And then he makes his remarkably unashamed understatement. Of course, he is unashamed! Look at what this powerful Gospel enabled him to do. Though he suffered beatings, stoning, jail, shipwreck, and more, Paul traveled thousands of miles so he could preach Christ crucified. To most of the Roman world, the Gospel was weak foolishness, and Christians were pathetic fools. But Paul knew better. He knew the power of God's Gospel, and so he made every effort to boldly broadcast this beautiful blessing wherever he could.

Though the world distorts the truth of God's Word, mocks us as feeble and foolish, even murders fellow Christians, still we are not ashamed. We, too, know the power of the Gospel. We are privileged to preach Christ crucified, which is eternal salvation for all who believe. More power? Yes, please! God's Gospel Power. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Know Christ Jesus

PHILIPPIANS 3:4B–11

LCMS Sixth Vice-President Rev. Benjamin T. Ball

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 31, 2023 • Midday Prayer

Our first mother wanted to know. She wanted the knowledge of Good and Evil, and she wanted to be like God. St. Paul wanted to know. He wanted knowledge, but of a different kind. He wanted the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and he wanted the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. Eve received the knowledge of Evil and found it in herself. St. Paul received the knowledge of Christ, and the righteousness that comes through faith, and he found those outside himself. The true and living God, Christ Jesus, met him on the road to Damascus and he received such an unexpected gift—Christ Jesus. Previously, Saul of Tarsus thought that what he knew from the Law, and what he could do under the Law were sufficient. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the Law, a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the Church, as to righteousness under the Law, blameless. Until the Damascus road, he did not know that such things could not bring him the knowledge of salvation. The knowledge he had could not bring the resurrection from the dead, nor deliverance of the curse Adam received after our first father listened to the voice

of his wife and ate from her hand. What Saul did know could only bring condemnation, but that is the very thing Saul did not know. What was needed for him and what is



needed for you is the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus, for only that can bring resurrection. Only Christ Jesus.

Christ Jesus is your Lord, just as He is St. Paul's, and to know Christ is to turn aside from everything else, to turn aside from evil, in yourself, and this world, to turn aside from whatever gain you can make out for yourself. Saul thought his persecution of the Church was offering service to God (John 16:2). He did not know how evil such work was. It had to be revealed to him, and so it was. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). After Saul met Jesus and was blinded, the same Lord Jesus told Ananias to go and lay hands on Saul, for this Hebrew of Hebrews would be the chosen instrument to carry the name of Jesus before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. And then Jesus said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:15). And suffer Paul would, for the sake of the name.

From then on, from the road and from his Baptism, all the things Paul knew, all the things he had gained in life, he counted as loss, they were no good to him at all, as they were doing damage to him, and of course his sin was damaging others, but he didn't know it. It had to be revealed by God, and it was. What he sought, righteousness, he came to know only in Christ Jesus, and it was righteousness that he received, through faith alone in the same Christ Jesus. Everything else, everything he had, everything he did, he counted it all as rubbish in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. And he was in Him, and he is found in Him. If you today think you have any reason for confidence in the flesh, stop such foolishness. Paul had more, and that was all trash. What St. Paul wrote to the Philippians is preached to you. You need to know again on this day where true righteousness comes from, and where resurrection comes from, where

life comes from. All things come from Christ, who grants you a share in his sufferings, that is, a share in what His sufferings won. Christ Jesus knows you, your sins, even greater than you do. You cannot discern the depth of your errors or your hidden faults (Psalm 19:12), but some of your sin you know, the thoughts and words and deeds of which you are ashamed. They are all known to Him, for He bore them all in the suffering of His cross. He shed His blood for them all. He died for them all. He atoned for them all. He died for you. For you were in Him on the cross and are found in Him now. The power of Christ's resurrection is that all those sins, all that trash, remains buried in the tomb, they are all forgiven, and the resurrection of the Son of God is yours. He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25), and this righteousness is yours as a free gift from God the Father who counts you as righteous before Him, not on your own, not through the law, but through faith alone in the merits of His Son, Christ Jesus.

St. Paul knew and wrote that the righteousness of God depends on faith, so he cast aside everything else. He knew the power of the resurrection, the bodily resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb. He shared in Christ's sufferings and will at the last day attain the resurrection of the dead. Thanks be to God you know the same. If like St. Paul you must suffer for the sake of the name, you will do so without fear. You have the righteousness of Christ. You have the power of His resurrection, and on the last day, you, with all the saints, will attain the resurrection from the dead. Because you know. You know Christ Jesus. And the knowledge of Christ is for all the world. What you know, who you know, proclaim in your life, until the day when you, like St. Paul, will be fully known, the resurrection day, to the glory of God the Father.

Paul Testifies before Kings

ACTS 26:12–32

LCMS Fifth Vice-President Rev. Christopher S. Esget

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023 • Matins

As Paul stands before the king, he has no fear. Because he has already been in the true King's presence. He has heard the verdict from King Jesus. He is guilty. An answer is demanded: **"Why are you persecuting Me?"**

Jesus shows Paul who he is. A murderer. Murderers deserve death.

Paul can't see who he is until he was knocked to the ground. Only in desolation can we see salvation.

But Jesus doesn't give Paul what he deserves. He deserves death. He gets life.

It's a life of profound joy, but not the sort of joy that looks to win an election, secure a retirement, or build a successful parish. Paul's parishes are riddled with divisions and false doctrine. His retirement is martyrdom.

The trajectory of Paul's career goes from a rapid rise to a difficult slog.

No matter. What does it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?

Everything changes for Paul that day. From the moment of his conversion, he has one purpose: to preach Christ crucified and risen. **“I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed”** [Psalm 119:46 NKJV].

His conviction costs him. Paul gets a chance to speak in his own defense. But he doesn’t take it, not for himself. His defense is Jesus. In his speech before Festus and Agrippa, he accuses himself of sin. “I persecuted the saints, but Jesus delivered me from that.” Paul’s defense is Jesus.

Festus and Agrippa cannot understand a man who would make such a choice. “He could have gone free,” Agrippa says, **“if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**

Why does Paul appeal to Caesar? Not to save himself, but in hopes of saving Caesar, and saving Rome, and saving the world. Paul wants to bring the Name of Jesus into the heart of the empire, into the heart of world power, that they may know that Jesus is Lord, and at His Name every knee shall bow, those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Paul doesn’t care about his own outcome. He already knows it. He serves the One who is risen from the dead.

He has one concern, the message Jesus gave him: **“So that [the Gentiles] may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me”** (Acts 26:18).

We dare not ignore this terrible power facing us. Satan is the ruling power in the unconverted men of the world. We cannot defeat him with a better social media presence or catchier music. Satan is overcome only by the Stronger One, Jesus the Christ. His Word, His Cross, His Name defeats the evil one.

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” [Col. 1:13–14 NKJV].

Judged as a murderer and blasphemer, God gave Paul freely, without any merit or worthiness in him, absolution. That is the one election that truly matters.

Forgiveness and illumination belong together. In verse 18 of this morning’s reading, Paul is speaking autobiographically. Paul’s ministry is bringing to others what he himself received: His eyes were opened, turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God; receiving the forgiveness of sins and a place among

the sanctified. What happened to him is now the Church’s message to a blind world.

It starts by recommitting ourselves to an entire life of repentance. God’s Word today calls us to this: **“That they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance”** (Acts 26:20).

What is the relationship between faith and good works? The great seventeenth century dogmatician, Johann Gerhard, put it this way:

Good works are the fruit of repentance. “Bear fruit worthy of repentance” (Matt. 3:8). “I have testified to Jews and to Gentiles to repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance” (Acts 26:20). “Repent and do the former works” (Rev. 2:5). Therefore good works are not essential parts of repentance. ... The new obedience ... is not a part of repentance but is the necessary consequence of it ... as fruit follows the tree. (Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces: On the Gospel, On Repentance* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016], 209)

So you see everything is grounded on Christ’s work, not our own. The light comes from outside of us, into our darkened world and darkened hearts. This is **“what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles”** (Acts 26:22b–23).

Now what’s the only reasonable response to this? **“And ... Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are out of your mind ...’”** (Acts 26:24).



Isn't that what this world keeps on saying to you? And perhaps it's crept into your own mind, as well, on Sunday afternoon, when you wonder if it's all worth it. Or when you're sitting in a meeting at church and once again, they're arguing and vying for control. Or when you pick up that piece of bread at the altar and the blasphemous words enter your mind: "How can this be the body of Christ, this little cardboard disc?"

This is the voice of the devil: "You're out of your mind!"

You're out of your mind for believing that a baby is worthy of life.

You're out of your mind for thinking that a man is a man and a woman is a woman.

You're out of your mind for thinking that a man should not lie with a man as he does with a woman.

You're out of your mind for thinking that God made the world from nothing.

You're out of your mind for thinking that Jesus is the enfleshed God, risen from the dead, who lives and reigns to all eternity.

This article of the resurrection is the heart of it all. Perhaps the world will allow that there is some afterlife, a disembodied spirit realm. But dead bodies stay dead, and if you think otherwise, well, you're out of your mind.

At Athens, they laughed at Paul for preaching the resurrection. Here, Felix calls him insane.

And if Jesus is not risen from the dead, then we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Jesus is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep.

Paul is not out of his mind, the world is. We often are. Conversion to Christianity is a return to true humanity. The prodigal son "came to himself." God became man to bring man back to God, back to Himself, back to himself.

Confessing Jesus to be the way, the truth, and the life is not madness.

The true madness is selling your birthright for a bowl of soup.

The true madness is abandoning eternal love for a momentary lust.

The true madness is despairing that the Lord Jesus who raised the dead cannot repair every problem in our congregations, our Synod, and the whole Christian Church on earth.

Paul could have been set free. He could have saved himself. But to save your own life is to lose it. Paul counts the truth of Jesus as the one thing needful.

In chains, Paul knows that the Word of God cannot be chained.

In bonds, Paul knows that the Word of God cannot be bound, but has free course. The Word accomplishes the thing for which it is sent.

God works by the foolishness of His Word.

Though the world call you insane, and threaten to put you in chains, stand firm! Jesus is risen from the dead. In Him there is forgiveness. In Him there is joy deeper than tears. In Him will we live. In Him will we die. His shall we be forever.

Lord, Help Me to Be a Fool

PSALM 8:1–2A, 3–5; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18–23

LCMS Fourth Vice-President Rev. Nabil S. Nour

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023 • Midday Prayer

Faithful followers of the Savior, Christ is Risen! He is Risen! Indeed! Alleluia. Holy Saints, the text for the proclamation of God's Good News is verse 18: "*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise*" (1 Cor. 3:18).

Precious saints, you who are the **B**aptized, **B**eloved, **B**eautiful, **B**lessed, and **B**lood-**B**ought children of King Jesus, let it be written, let it be known and let it be told among you that I am a fool for Christ. I have been called a

fool because I believe the totality of Scripture—from front to finish—that Christ was crucified for me a sinner. I have been spat upon, and the person who spat in my face said, "*Aravi meluchlach we noutsri Mishugah*," "Filthy Arab and a foolish Christian." I have been dishonored because I wear a crucifix. It is indeed an honor to be called a fool for Christ. The world may deny the truth, but we cannot as Lutherans deny the truth of Scripture for it is the power of God for our salvation. Therefore, I boldly and bravely preach Christ crucified, the wisdom of God to my soul and life.

David the Psalmist stated: *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’”* (Psalm 14:1a). Many people in the world deny the sweetness of the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ and His saving work for us. Whoever has difficulty believing that Christ could come from heaven, willingly go to the cross, recline in a borrowed tomb for three days, and burst forth in victorious resurrection, and yet be in heaven, should not worry about it. It may be foolishness for the world, but for us it is the wisdom of God that brings hope into our broken hearts and joy to our souls. If we are considered fools because of believing this, our foolishness won’t hurt us. We know perfectly well what we believe, teach, and confess. Because He lives, we know we will live eternally after we have been delivered from this foolish world.

May He who is the Wise One continue to make me a fool for Him and help me wear the badge of honor for His glory and spread the Gospel to the ends of the world.

Jesus’ love moved Moses to give up Pharaoh’s court to lead a nation of slaves out of bondage. At first it seemed to be a very foolish move.

Jesus met with Joshua and told him the foolish plan to bring down the walls of Jericho.

Jesus met with Gideon and told him He only needed 300 good soldiers—a little army to bring down a mighty foe.

Jesus used a fish to catch up with a foolish prophet of the world to make him a foolish prophet and learn again, *“God so loved the world.”*

Jesus foolishly called twelve unlikely men to follow Him and His pardoning love changed the world—and our lives also.

All foolish yet these salvation acts brought forth liberty and pointed to a greater day of redemption.

Jesus, the Temple in flesh, now dwells in us making us new creations even though we daily sin much—all foolishness but true!

I am running out of time to act like a fool, but I must tell you when I am a fool for Jesus it is the most joyful, delightful, peaceful times in my life. I thought it was so foolish for me, a man who grew up in Nazareth, to be chosen to be a prophet, but God surprised me by sending into my life a godly and beautiful Dutch Lutheran woman who became a key part of my foolish journey. And now I am gathered with fellow fools as we contemplate the measure of the length, height, breadth, and depth of Jesus’ infinite land exquisite love for us—which surpasses knowledge—yet there is nothing like it.

Lord, make me to be a fool. Take me through Your school—the school of the cross.

The theology of the cross is rich in God’s love although it leads to the resurrection reality ALL things are yours in Christ. You are an heir to the kingdom of God. You belong to Christ and Christ is of God. ALL things—we inherit. *“He is no fool who gives us what he cannot keep for those things which he cannot lose”* (James Elliot, missionary).

Fellow foot washers, washed by the blood of the Lamb, washed by the magnificent miracle of Holy Baptism, washed in the good news of the cross and Jesus’ entrapment of death and defeat of death, by the mercies of Christ continue being a fool and going through God’s school and be the Spirit’s tool.

I may be a fool in the eyes of the world, but Christ gave me, and He has given you, His wisdom. We are made wise by the preaching of Him who is crucified and risen from the dead. This is the wisdom of God and joy of knowing that He loves me in spite of my foolishness.

God takes the foolishness of the Gospel to overcome the foolishness of mankind to bring to us knowledge of His love. As a result of Christ’s foolishness for us we will inherit through the gift of faith the whole universe. All things ARE yours! You belong to Christ and Christ is of God!

The apostle Paul in another letter wrote: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16).

The Gospel, the Good News of Christ crucified and risen, it alone can triumph over every enemy, obstacle, and fear, and bring us to eternal joy. This is why we preach Christ crucified! Whatever it costs, stand on it, hold it fast, believe it, feed on it, savor it, count it more



precious than silver or gold. Believing the Gospel will save you—and it alone. By the Holy Spirit, preach Christ crucified and risen!

“Accept me, Lord, into Thy School, and graduate me as Your FOOL” (Martin Franzmann, “The Marks of the Theologian,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXIV, no. 2, [February 1953]: 86) Yes, I am a fool for Christ. Amen and Shalom!

There Is No Distinction; We ALL Are Saved by Grace

ROMANS 3:21–26

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Associate Professor Rev. Dr. Ely Prieto

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 2, 2023 • Matins

When Rev. Christian Broders arrived in South Brazil, March 28, 1900, he probably never imagined that a moment like this would happen in an LCMS convention.

Rev. Broders was commissioned by the Board of International Missions of the Synod to go to Brazil and assess mission opportunities in the country. Mission to the heathen (*Heidenmission*) was bred in the bone of Missouri since its inception. Of course, the primary interest was mission outreach to the German diaspora (Carl S. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* [Concordia Publishing House, 1986], 294, 303). The goal was to bring the Gospel to German immigrants and help them to grow in their faith, in a biblical and solid Lutheran foundation.

What initially started as a mission assessment among German immigrants, three months later led to the foundation of the first LCMS congregation on Brazilian soil (July 1, 1900)—St. John Lutheran Church, established only with 17 families (Walter O. Steyer, *Os Imigrantes*

Alemães no Rio Grande do Sul e o Luteranismo [Editora Singular, Porto Alegre, RS, 1999], 35).

But now, 123 years have passed since Pastor Broders arrived in Brazil, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brazil (IELB) is now a partner church of the LCMS, and it has 245,097 baptized members, 59 districts, 529 parishes, 1,937 congregations and mission stations, 933 pastors (<https://www.ielb.org.br/institucional>, 06-02-23). And your preacher this morning is a man born in Brazil. Indeed, however, his last name is not, Schüler, Müller, Scheunemann or Schultz, but Prieto!

SOUTH, WEST ... NORTH & EAST

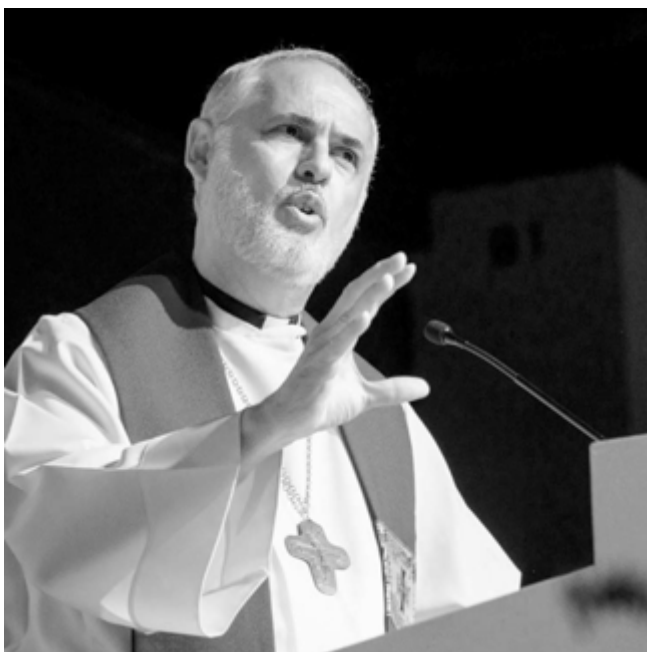
While in the early 1900s, the Missouri Synod is eager to share the Gospel in the South, in Brazil, the apostle Paul wants the Gospel to go West, go to Rome. And the main reason we engage in an endeavor like this, is just one ...

“... For there is no distinction: for *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:22–23).

It doesn't matter if you are Jew or Greek, living in Rome. If you are a German immigrant living in South Brazil. Or if you are Anglo, Hispanic, African American, Asian, living in America. It doesn't matter what your ethnicity is, what language you speak, or where you live in the world. There is no distinction! It doesn't make any difference—we, WE ALL fall short of the glory of God!

It doesn't matter how hard we try, we fail, we always fail! We all have sinned! And what makes things worse is not that we have sinned once, and then we are done with it! No! It is a continual action (present indicative)! We don't stop doing it! And though we try, and we try again, every single time, we fall short! We sin, again, again, and again! And consequently, we—all of us, no distinction—we are under the wrath of God!

We are in the pit; we have fallen into the hole that we have made for ourselves (Psalm 8:15). We are under sin, we all have turned aside from God, and we delight in deceiving, cursing; and wherever we walk, we leave behind us *a path*



of destruction and misery, but we keep on trying (Rom. 2:9–20).

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Paul says, “*Yeah, you can keep trying, it doesn’t matter how hard you try; justification will never happen on the ground of legal obedience or personal merits, it is impossible!*” (Rom. 3:19–20). It is indeed impossible, my friends!

But *then* Paul is quick to say, “*but now!*” There is another way! “*The righteousness of God has been revealed*” (Rom. 3:21).

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. ... We are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... the precious blood of Jesus, shed as a propitiation for our sins on the cross. (Rom. 3:22, 24–25)

God doesn’t ignore sin! God deals with it! In His grace He remains the God of justice. God delayed the punishment for our sins until Christ paid for them all on Calvary’s cross! “*God did not spare his Son but gave him up for us all!*” (Rom 8:32).

And the main reason we engage in mission work is because what Paul says in our text this morning, “*for there is no distinction*” (Rom 3:22) **regarding us sinners**. Jesus died for all, and then he goes on to say, “*All ... are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!*” (Rom 3:22–23). Christ died for all! The message of justification is for all! There is no distinction!

Dear brothers and sisters, as Luther says, “*Our righteousness, salvation, and consolation are outside of us. As Christians, we no longer live in ourselves, but in Christ and we live in Christ, by faith!*” (Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, 1529—The Annotated Luther—The Roots of Reform, vol. 1, 530).

Christ has done it all! Look to the cross and the empty tomb! He did it all, Christ did it for you! The gates of heaven are wide open! They are open for you! There is no distinction! (Luther, *preface to the Latin Works*, 1545—The Annotated Luther—Pastoral Writings, vol. 4, 501–502; cf. also *Martin Luther—A life Reformed*, by Paul W. Robinson, 14–15).

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IS FOR ALL

When that 34-year-old Augustinian Monk named Martin Luther nailed the **95 Theses** on the door of the Castle church in Wittenberg, on October 31, 1517, he didn’t have any idea how God would use that moment to start a movement that would impact the Christian Church forever, not only in Germany, but in Europe, in America, Brazil, in the whole world!

Yes, Reformation went VIRAL! Soon, Luther’s 95 Theses were translated to German, and other of his writings, and everyone was talking about the message of the Reformation.

Why? Because the message of the Reformation pointed to Christ and the message of the Gospel for all. Probably the most known of the 95 Theses is Thesis 1, that talks about repentance, but Thesis 62 says: “*The true treasure of the church is the most holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.*”

What matters in the Church, what is most important in the church is not our personal agenda, our own dreams, our great plans. It is ALL ABOUT the GOSPEL! THE GOSPEL for ALL!

The crucified and risen Christ is the message we proclaim to the whole world.

- *This is the message that Paul preached to the Romans!*
- *This is the message that Luther preached to the people in Wittenberg.*
- *This is the message that Pastor Broders preached to the German immigrants in South Brazil.*
- *This is the same message we preach today!*

We preach Christ crucified. We preach that the *blood of the Lamb forgives all our sins!* A blood that ransomed people for God from all corners of the world, from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev. 5:6–10)! This is the biblical teaching and is indeed, what we Lutherans believe and preach! And we want to proclaim it *TO ALL PEOPLE*, without distinction! Amen.

“*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” (Phil. 4:7)

Christ, the Death of Death, Our Foe

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13–18

South Wisconsin District President Rev. Dr. John C. Wille,
delivered in his absence by South Wisconsin District Mission Executive Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 2, 2023 • Faithful Departed

In the name of our Lord Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light, dear fellow Christians:

One of my dear friends, former president of the South Wisconsin District Rev. Dr. Edwin Suelflow, would remark: *“Sterben ist kein Kinderspiel.”* *Death is no child’s play.*

In death, in the dying process, we come face to face with our own mortality. In death, soul and body are separated. Torn apart. The prophet describes death this way: “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7).

Death is a harsh reality. Rev. Dr. Suelflow’s lifeless body now rests in a grave next to his wife and a daughter just outside of Adell, Wis.

Just like Dr. Suelflow, you are mortal. I am mortal. You and I: “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Consider what that means.

Death is never a welcome visitor in any home, or in any life. Our God created us to live eternally with Him; and yet sin ruined that. Because of the curse of sin we will die just

as every generation before us has lived and died. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

Stop by an old cemetery and you will see generations of people who once lived, now resting quietly in the earth.

I grew up in Watertown, forty miles to the west. When I go to visit my parents’ graves at the Lutheran Cemetery there, I walk amongst the graves of many whom I knew growing up. People of faith. Believers. My parents, my grandparents and great grandparents, other relatives, neighbors, and even children who seemingly died before their time.

Walking there, it is not difficult to see their faces and not difficult to remember their voices. Generations whose lifeless bodies now rest in the grave. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

Those generations are in the grave because of sin. You know the words which the Lord God spoke to Adam and Eve after they sinned: “For you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19b). Adam and Eve brought the cold, unsympathetic reality, the curse of death, upon themselves, and upon every generation after them. That includes those listed on the screen. Someday that will include you and me. My grave awaits my arrival in that cemetery with my ancestors, with those neighbors. That day is approaching.

The Psalmist comments: “What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of [the grave]?” (Psalm 89:48). Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Such is the curse of the Law. But we are blessed because there is a more powerful message, another reality, a sweeter destination than the cold, harsh headstone that records your first day and your last. Listen to St. Paul’s powerful words:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ... For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the



Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador

sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:13–17)

As Christians we are certainly not ignorant of the Easter event. The truths of Easter are the essence of the Gospel.

You have been to our Lord's tomb early that first Easter Sunday. You have heard the angel's Easter greeting: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay" (Matt. 28:5–6).

"Christ is risen! [R: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!]"

Christians have been sharing the good news of that Easter greeting for centuries, and for good reason. Jesus' resurrection means "Death has been swallowed up in victory!" The hymn states: "Christ, the life of all the living, Christ the death of death, our foe" (LSB 420:1)

The crucified, dead body of our Lord Jesus laid in the ground has come back to life. "He lives, He lives, who once was dead; He lives my ever-living head" (LSB 461:1). Good news for you and me! Forgiveness, life, and salvation for the sake of Christ Jesus.

That means that someday, upon Jesus' return, graves will be vacated. Coffins will be emptied. Head stones no longer valid. There will be no more death!

Generations of believers whose lifeless bodies now rest in the grave will rise, just as our Lord Jesus rose. Remember how Jesus comforts Martha: "*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die*" (John 11:25–26).

My parents, my grandparents and my great grandparents, other relatives from generations unknown, neighbors, and even children who seemingly died before their time, will rise. I will see their faces again, and I will hear their voices once again. I will see the twinkle in the eye of Dr. Suelflow once again. What a glorious reunion of believers! Can you see that?

Let's bring it closer to home: Jesus' empty grave is *your* empty grave. His Resurrection is *your* Resurrection. His living is *your* life. Jesus asked Martha, "*Do you believe this?*"

"Christ is risen! [R: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!]"

Thanks be to God, who gives us such a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Keep On Praying

1 TIMOTHY 2:1–7

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., Pastor Rev. Josemon T. Hoem

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 3, 2023 • Matins

I think it is safe to say it's been a long week. A good week, but a long week. I woke up this morning feeling a little anxious. Anxious thinking about moving my daughter 10 hours away to college next week. Anxious because my son called last night saying he still has not been approved for in-state tuition. A little anxious because I am here at convention with my wife and again the church calls away from family.

If I am honest, I get a little anxious about what the next three years will bring, for our schools, our universities, and the church as a whole.

I, like most of you, worry about finances, my family, my friends, my members, and especially those who remain outside the church. Yet today I am reminded we have a Christ who is crucified. I am reminded of the words from the song "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (you can say it with me):

O what peace we often forfeit;
O what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer. (LSB 770:1)



Often when I am meeting with a family and things seem hopeless or completely lost, I will hear them say; “Well Pastor, I guess there is *nothing* left to do but pray.”

It’s tempting to treat prayer like it’s a last resort. But what if *instead* we listen to Paul, who urges us or as the Greek says (παρακαλῶ, *para-kah-lo*) or “exhorts” us to pray as a *first* resort instead of our last?

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.
(1 Tim. 2:1)

When I hear this, I reflect on my own prayer life. I realize just how shallow my prayer life actually is. So often my prayers and requests to God are all about what I want and what I think that I need.

How often have you and I prayed, “Let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” But what we really mean is, “Let *MY* will be done and do it this way and I prefer for you to do it right now.”

If we are totally honest with ourselves, we must admit the real problem is that we actually want to play God and we are arrogant enough think that we know what is best for us.

Paul goes on to say that prayer

is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:3–4)

What greater prayer can you and I pray then to pray that *all* people be saved and to know and believe in Jesus as their crucified and risen Savior.

You see, when God says He desires all people to be saved, He actually means *all* people. He means those who we disagree with and those we did not vote for at this convention. Those who look and think different than us, those who struggle with addiction, identity, and belonging in this world. We are to pray first, not as some afterthought. But we pray that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of His truth. Because we are all sinners in need of Christ the crucified.

Then Paul says:

[Pray] for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim. 2:2).

My encouragement is for us to leave here and continue to pray for our government leaders and for leaders in our beloved church, the LCMS; for all those who were elected by this Synod in convention; for unity in the church here on earth.

We also pray that we continue to be a faithful, confessional, church body who always preaches the good news of Jesus Christ crucified. Yes, pray that we stay true to our biblical identity and our confession especially at a time when we see the church being ridiculed, made fun of, and persecuted.

But you might be thinking, “Pastor, I pray all the time but I still don’t have much peace in my life.” You see, when prayer is our first resort, then we are praying with the Holy Trinity. And when we pray with the Holy Trinity that is where we find our true peace. Not the peace the world gives but the peace that comes from knowing we are forgiven for all those sinful thoughts, words, and deeds.

Because we have a Christ who was crucified.

Here is your one take away:

O what peace we often forfeit;
O what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer. (LSB 770:1)

So, when you wake early in the morning because your mind is racing and your heart is troubled, rest in the peace of your Heavenly Father and His promises. Because when prayer becomes our first resort everything works out according to God our Father’s good and gracious promise; through the love of His Son, Jesus the crucified, we are strengthened in His Holy Spirit which is always for our good and for the benefit of those Jesus has placed along our path.

CONVENTION ESSAYS

We Preach Christ Crucified

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, President Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 30, 2023

It is a great honor to deliver the first of four essays for this convention, all grounded in Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1. There Paul acknowledges that the message of the cross seems foolish and weak, but that this crucified Christ is the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the redemption of the world.

Tomorrow, Dr. Abjar Bahkou will develop the theme, "Christ, the Wisdom of God." Tuesday, Dr. Russell Dawn will speak on the theme, "Christ, the Power of God." On Wednesday, Juhana Pohjola, the courageous bishop from Finland, will deliver an essay titled, "Christ, the Redemption of the World."

This morning, my essay elaborates ten brief statements on the theme, "We preach Christ crucified."

The times are changing. I don't know about you, but when I look around, when I listen to the rhetoric of a world gone mad, when light is called darkness, and lies truth, and God's own love is branded as hate, when I hear stories from dear friends of children caught up in the whirlwind of the addictions, ideologies, and self-idolatries of our time, when I hear from pastors about declining attendance and participation, when I hear voices of pessimism and cynicism about the church and her future, it is easy to grow weary; it is easy to wonder whether the promises and purposes of God for us and for our church still stand, whether God Himself has not stepped away, a bit, or something.

What should we do in such times? What should Christ's church do in such times?

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, we preach Christ crucified. In such a time as this, and in all times, "Till all the world adore His sacred name."¹

We preach Christ crucified. For this Gospel, alone, is the power of salvation for all who believe (Rom. 1:16). To this high and beautiful task, God Himself has called us, until the end of the world. "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified," St. Paul writes (1 Cor 1:22–23 ESV, as for following quotations, unless otherwise noted).

"We preach Christ crucified." Four words. In this essay, I want to offer a few reflections on each of those words, beginning with the last word "crucified," and working our way back to the pronoun "we." I'll elaborate on ten basic statements, in all.

Let's begin with "crucified."

Statement number one: Jesus came as a Lamb of sacrifice for the sins of the world.

In the Book of Revelation, John recounts his vision at the heavenly throne of God. John describes Jesus there, in heavenly glory, as a *Lamb, looking as if it had been slain*. And the living creatures around the throne of God fell on their faces in wonder and worship, praising Christ and saying, "Worthy are you!... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation!" And John saw angels, many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, all saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And then, John heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, joining in this song of praise to the Lamb who was slain (Rev. 5:1–14).

Jesus came as a Lamb of sacrifice for the sins of the world. God sent His Son to us, and He offered up His Son as a sacrifice for human sin.

John the Baptizer pointed at Him, and declared (John 1:29), "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."



¹ Refrain from the hymn "Lift High the Cross" (LSB 837).

Jesus said He had come “to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28; cf. Mark 10:45), repeatedly telling His disciples, that “he must go to Jerusalem....*suffer...and be killed*, and on the third day be raised” (Matt 16:21).

This is the Gospel, this is the message the church has been given to proclaim: that God’s free gift of salvation has come to all who believe, in the redeeming death of Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a reconciling sacrifice by His blood.²

Our Lutheran Confessions put it very plainly—Augsburg Confession [AC], Article III: “Christ...truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind.”³

This is our message and our faith, that Christ has “purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death” (Small Catechism [SC] II 2).

Through the blood of Jesus, we now have peace with God (Col 1:20; Rom. 5:1).

We who were without hope and without God in the world have become the people of God, with an everlasting hope (Eph. 2:12). On the last day we will rise again not to shame and doom but to eternal honor and joy. For our names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). We have a place in His kingdom, at His table forever, we whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

The cross of Christ is the center and the summary of our faith.⁴ Jesus came as a Lamb of sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Statement number two: The world’s mockery of our crucified Lord falls also upon us.

One of the oldest existing images of Jesus comes from ancient Rome. It is a piece of graffiti found scratched on the side of an excavated house. Archaeologists date this image to about 200 A.D. It shows Jesus on the cross, but with a twist.

The figure of the man on the cross, in this picture, has the head of donkey. And there’s another man drawn beside the cross, hand raised in devotion. There’s a caption written with this picture, that says, “Alexamenos worships his god.” The drawing mocks this Christian man Alexamenos. It mocks Christianity. It mocks Christ. What kind of a God is this weak, dying criminal?

² Paraphrase of Rom 3:24–25.

³ Augsburg Confession III:2–3. Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions are from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, copyright © 2005, 2006, 2009 by Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁴ Christ crucified is the center not only of our preaching but also of the Sacraments. The cross and resurrection of Jesus are the saving power at work in Holy Baptism. When our Lord forgives us through Holy Absolution, the pastor declares: “Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins....” With Holy Communion, it

The Crucified Christ is foolishness to the world.

Even as He hung there suffering and dying *for them*, those passing by Calvary mocked Jesus and heaped insults on Him.

He was despised, rejected. Not only the wrath of God but also the loathing of mankind was heaped upon Him. He looked like a criminal. He looked like a fool. He looked like an ass. That’s your God, Alexamenos? That’s your God?

Yes, world, this is our God. And your rejection, your hatred, your mockery, we accept, with patience and mercy. Our dear Lord was nailed to a cross, yet prayed, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34). Our dear Lord was taunted and despised by the crowds, by the criminals hanging beside Him, yet He continued to bleed and to thirst and to die—for them. From His gasping lungs, He said to one of them, “Truly, I say to you, today, you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

So we preach Christ crucified, to a mocking world. With mercy and patience. And different people respond in different ways, but we ought never be surprised or discouraged if this Gospel is met with patronizing ridicule or outright hostility.

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,” Paul writes (1 Cor 1:18). Jesus spoke plainly about this: “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household” (Matt. 10:24–25). “You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 10:22).

The Lord calls us to preach the Gospel “to men who like or like it not.”⁵ That many might be saved. We preach Christ crucified, *αυκαιρος ακαιρος*; *opportune, importune*; “in season and out of season.”⁶ The world may mock, rail, jail, and even kill. But many will be saved. And they will be with us, and with their Savior, in Paradise.

Yes, the world’s mockery of our crucified Lord will fall also upon us. “Oh, what of that, and what of that?”⁷ We preach Christ *crucified*.

Statement number three: Jesus’ cross proclaims God’s love for you.

We live in a day when our religion is branded by many as “hate.” And we ourselves sometimes question God’s love and regard toward us. In such a culture, and with hearts such as ours, we need the true preaching of Christ crucified. For the cross of Jesus is the most powerful proclamation of God’s love for all and of God’s love for you.

What a strange thing that the image of Christ, bloody and dying on a cross, should be a picture of love, but it is. For “*greater love*

is, again, Jesus’ crucifixion for us, that is central. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26 ESV). In Divine Service, Setting Four, we pray: “Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of [Jesus’] cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood” (*LSB*, p. 209).

⁵ A memorable line from the Martin Franzmann hymn, “Preach You the Word” (*LSB* 586, st. 1).

⁶ Greek, Latin, and ESV for a phrase in 2 Tim. 4:2.

⁷ Another line from Franzmann’s hymn (*LSB* 586, st. 4).

has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). "God *shows his love for us* in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "*This is love*, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the [reconciling sacrifice] for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

"Christ died for sinners," the Bible says.⁸ "Christ died for all," the Bible says (2 Cor. 5:14–15).⁹ So when you hear the preaching of Christ crucified, you can be certain that Christ died for you and that God loves *you*.

Jesus' cross proclaims God's love for you—and for all. "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32).

We preach Christ *crucified*. And, we preach *Christ* crucified.

Statement number four: God Himself died on the cross.

Behold, dear friends, behold and marvel at *who it is* that bleeds and dies at Calvary. Our hymns express this sublime truth, beautifully:¹⁰

"O wondrous Love, what have You done! The Father offers up His Son, Desiring our salvation.

O Love, how strong You are to save! You lay the One into the grave Who built the earth's foundation."¹¹

In a sermon on John 3:16, Martin Luther emphasizes the supreme value of God's own Son dying for us on the cross: "Christ...is...the Creator of heaven and earth and Lord over all creatures. His sacrifice for me was not St. Francis or any other monk or the mother of Christ or St. Peter or an angel...; it was a far more precious treasure. Salvation and deliverance from death call for a greater service than any human or any angel could render," Luther writes. "Only God's only-begotten Son can render it."¹²

Do not doubt, dear friends, that our Gospel, the message of Christ crucified, is really something. It is earth-shattering. History-defining. Salvation-bringing. Eternity-winning. Sin-forgiving. Hell and death-defeating. And life and world-renewing. For the Almighty, Ever-living God Himself, has taken upon Him your sin, death, and shame. You are God's own flock, the church "obtained with [God's] own blood," St. Paul says.¹³

We preach *Jesus Christ* crucified. *God Himself* died on the cross to save you, that you might belong to Him.¹⁴

⁸ Allusion here is to Romans 5:8, as well as 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18; and many others.

⁹ Note also the many verses that say His saving work was for the "world" or "the whole world," such as John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; 2 Corinthians 5:19.

¹⁰ See also the hymn "O Darkest Woe," LSB 448, sts. 2, 6: "O sorrow dread! Our God is dead, Upon the cross extended; There His love enlivened us, As His life was ended....O Virgin's Son, What Thou hast won, Is far beyond all telling: How our God, detested, died, Hell and devil felling." Another example is "O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken," LSB 439, st. 5: "The sinless Son of God must die in sadness; The sinful child of man may live in gladness; Man forfeited his life and is acquitted; God is committed."

¹¹ "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth," LSB 438, st. 3.

¹² *Luther's Works*, AE 22:359–60.

Statement number five: The *long-promised Messiah* died on the cross.

We preach not only that God's own Son, God of God and very God of very God, died for us on the cross. We preach also that he was the Christ, the Messiah, the seed of the woman, the offspring of Abraham, the son of David and heir of David's throne, the great King, Savior, and Restorer who was long-promised by the prophets, whom believing men and women had been waiting for since Adam and Eve were first banished from the Garden. He came to crush the serpent's head and to destroy the works of the devil. He came to give rest from the pain, suffering, and toil of the sin-cursed world. He came to bear sin, to be pierced for our transgressions, to bring us peace with God and healing by His wounds. He came to swallow up death forever. He came to bring light to the nations. To settle all disputes. To make the world fruitful again. To restore the voice of celebration and joy in the world. To turn mourning into dancing and tears into laughter. To give us rest and safety from all enemies. To shepherd God's people once more, in faithfulness and fairness. To gather us into one flock. To feed us and give us drink of clear waters. To forgive sins. To bind up the brokenhearted. To set the captives free. To give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf. To heal all diseases. To restore the dwelling of God with man. And to restore God's righteous dominion over all things. And all of these promises, in the saving death of Christ, the Messiah, all of these promises are being fulfilled.¹⁵

"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him" (2 Cor 1:20). It is *the long-promised Messiah* who died for us on the cross. We preach *Christ* crucified.

Statement number six: We preach the Jesus of the Scriptures.

We do not test-market our message for today's culture. We do not custom-design a Jesus who resonates with the spirit of our times. If we were to come up with a religion that would really "sell" today, it probably wouldn't be centered around a crucified Messiah. The Lord has not called us to invent a new message, but to proclaim the crucified Messiah of the Holy Scriptures.

In Ephesians 2, St. Paul describes how, through Christ's death, God is gathering His one church, His one household "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus

¹³ Paul makes this statement in his farewell speech to the pastors at Ephesus in Acts 20:28 ESV.

¹⁴ In stressing the divinity of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, this is certainly not to deny or downplay His true humanity and the significance of His full humanity for this sacrificial, substitutionary work of atonement. Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, Third Revised Edition (London: Tyndale, 1965), 303, notes, "When we speak of substitution in connection with His death, we should bear in mind that He made Himself one with those for whom He suffered, so that the substitution which results is not the substitution of a casual stranger, but of one who stands in the closest possible relationship with those for whom He died."

¹⁵ This litany of Old Testament messianic promises draws especially on passages from Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

himself being the cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). We preach Christ crucified by preaching the Christ of the apostles and the prophets. Those who prophesied His saving death and resurrection in the Old Testament,¹⁶ and those who were eyewitnesses of these things, and, commissioned by Christ, have given us their Spirit-inspired testimony in the New Testament. Because the Scriptures testify of Christ, and because Christ and His apostles have left us the example of preaching Christ crucified from the Scriptures, we devote ourselves to this sacred book, the very Word of God that cannot be broken. And searching these Scriptures diligently and learning from the whole counsel of God, we preach Christ crucified, the Christ of the Scriptures.

We preach Christ *crucified*. We preach *Christ* crucified. We *preach* Christ crucified. Because—**statement number seven: Preaching is God’s plan for the world’s salvation.**

Can that really be? Would God really have taken all of the saving power, all of the saving benefit of His beloved Son’s self-sacrifice, and located it in mere preaching? That is exactly what God has done.

It seems so ordinary and mundane: preaching. *In a sermon*, Luther once mused about how useless and feeble mere preaching seems. Luther says, “In the eyes of reason God appears to be the biggest fool of all fools when He tries to accomplish His purpose by means of the Word and preaching....To be sure, the world despises it and says: ‘It is a matter of opinion’....The world has always been opposed to preaching. If I had been...Christ’s counselor,” Luther continues, “I would have recommended the use of force and fists. I would have told Him: ‘What good does it do You to preach? The more You talk, the less happens. They laugh and jeer about You to boot. But if You beat about with Your fists, they would feel it.’ [But] Christ does not follow my advice.”¹⁷

Indeed, *preaching* is God’s plan and God’s way. St. Paul writes, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of [preaching] to save those who believe.”¹⁸

This was God’s own plan. Jesus told His disciples, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Acts 1:3; Luke 24:27, 46–47). And that is exactly what happened, beginning in Jerusalem. His apostles and His followers bore witness, they preached Christ crucified. Whether they were sent for this purpose or scattered by persecution, “they went about preaching the Word” and “proclaiming the Christ”—in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8; 8:4–5).

¹⁶ Jesus taught that the Old Testament predicts His betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. The apostle Paul says something similar, that his proclamation of Christ’s death and resurrection is “nothing [other than] what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass” (Acts 26:22 ESV).

¹⁷ Luther’s Works AE 23:382.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:21. The ESV translates the expression τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος as “through the folly of what we preach.” This can also be translated as “through the folly of preaching,” as an

“How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom. 10:13–14). This is still how the Lord is adding to the number of those being saved. Through the preaching of Christ crucified. Publicly in the church through His called pastors. And through the witness and message of Christ crucified given by parents and teachers and friends and neighbors.

We preach Christ crucified because preaching, because the message of the cross, is God’s plan for the salvation of the world. And thanks be to God that He has brought such preaching and such good news to you and to me.

Statement number eight: Preaching is powerful.

While preaching may look simple and weak and even foolish, the preaching of Christ crucified comes freighted with the Spirit of God and the Light of Christ Jesus. The message of Christ crucified is *God’s own* message—and the Word of God does things.

God spoke, and there was light. God spoke, and all things came to be. He spoke, and lepers were cleansed. He spoke, and the centurion’s son was healed that very hour. He spoke, and the storming sea became still as glass. He spoke, and dead Lazarus came walking alive from his tomb. He spoke, and the paralytic’s sins were forgiven, and he took up his mat and walked home.

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters,” the Psalmist declares. “The God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon” (Ps. 29:3–5).

What will be the church’s future? What will sustain the church’s faith? What will bring Christ’s light and salvation to hurting sinners who grope in darkness, even to those who mock and rail against Him? The preaching of Christ. We preach Christ crucified, because such preaching is not really the word of man, but what it really is, is the word of God.¹⁹ “The one who hears you, hears me,” Jesus says (Luke 10:16).

We preach Christ crucified, for preaching is powerful.

Statement number nine: We preach Christ to all.

Isaiah prophesied about the Christ, “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

And so, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, having died for all, having, by His blood, “ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation”

ESV text note suggests. (Similarly, KJV: “by the foolishness of preaching.”) Both are legitimate translations of the noun κήρυγμα, one focusing on the *message* that is preached, the other focusing on *the act of preaching* itself. Both are also theologically true: It pleases God to bring salvation by such a simple, foolish-seeming thing as our preaching, and it pleases God to bring salvation by the foolish-seeming message of the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world.

¹⁹ See 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

(Rev. 5:9), sends His apostles and pastors and people out, to preach Christ crucified and to bear witness to His bleeding love to everyone, to every single one.

We preach Christ to all. What an opportunity we have in our day, with so many immigrant communities settling all around us in this land, and with so many opportunities to preach Christ and to partner with those who are preaching Christ in other lands. “For God shows no partiality” (Rom. 2:11). “For God so loved *the world*....” (John 3:16). For God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” Jesus said, “baptizing them...and teaching them” (Matt. 28:18–19; cf. Matt 24:14).

We preach Christ crucified *to all*, for “He is the [reconciling sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2 ESV, revised).

And, finally, just a brief comment on the pronoun itself. *We* preach Christ crucified.

Statement number ten: God has entrusted this task to us.

There were times in the world when *God Himself* came and spoke, came and preached, you could say. To Adam and Eve, to the patriarchs, at Sinai, at Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration. There were other times when God sent angels for this, like the Angel Gabriel announcing the birth of the Savior to Mary.

But marvel at this. When it comes to preaching the Gospel of Christ Crucified to all the nations of the earth, God has not taken this glorious work solely into His own hands, nor has He commissioned the mighty angels. He has called us. Us! It does

no good to debate whether this was wise; it’s what God Himself has ordained.

And why would God choose us? In closing today, let me just offer one answer to that question, an answer that I recently came across, expressed very nicely, in the introduction to the published sermons of Dr. John Tape. Pastor Tape writes, “Why would God choose me to share His word with His people? Is He that hard up for preachers? No, He could place angels in the pulpit every week if He wanted. But because of His great love and kindness to me, He has granted me such a privilege.”²⁰

Brothers and sisters, delegates to our 68th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the pronoun “we” is plural. *We* preach Christ crucified. And why would God choose *us* to share His word? *Because of His great love and kindness to us, He has granted us such a privilege.*

And He has granted us a further privilege. To carry out this holy task, this Great Commission, *together*. We preach Christ crucified, alongside the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and *alongside one another*. Thanks be to God.

Let us believe that and embrace this shared privilege from God, and His gift to us of one another. The purpose of our Synod, and the purpose of this convention, is not to contend against one another, but to align ourselves, with joy and resolve, to the Scriptures, to the Confessions, to one another, and to the great work of preaching Christ crucified to all.

We. Preach. Christ. Crucified. God strengthen us and bind us together in this task, for Jesus’s sake. Amen.

We Preach Christ Crucified: The Power of God on the Cross

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Associate Professor of Practical Theology Rev. Dr. Abjar Bahkou

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • July 31, 2023

In the first “Hobbit” movie, entitled “An Unexpected Journey,” Gandalf, the wizard, meets Bilbo Baggins and asks him to be part of the adventurous journey to retake the Lonely Mountain from the dragon, Smaug. Bilbo is hesitant and does not want to take this journey nor be part of it. He wants to remain in his comfort zone with his books, sitting on his comfortable rocking chair. A conversation between Bilbo and Gandalf starts, and the wizard tries to convince Bilbo to be part of this journey. In this dialogue, Bilbo asks Gandalf, “What insurance would you give me that this journey will succeed?” to which Gandalf responds, “I have no insurance, but I can assure you that if you take this journey with us and be part of it, you will never be the same.”

“*You will never be the same!*” When we are baptized in Christ, we are not the same person we were before. We are alive in Christ:

“... if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17 NIV). As a new creature in Christ, all that we have, body and soul, come from the hand of a generous Creator. The Creator became a creature of our flesh and blood to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. That good news of this redemption was brought to us in Word and Spirit.

The spirit enables us to call God our “Father” with the boldness and certainty born of faith. Baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have died with Christ and so live with Him as we await the resurrection of our bodies. In the meantime, we live in repentance and faith, confessing our sin and receiving the absolution from Christ Himself on the lips of His servant. In the Sacrament of the Altar, Christ Jesus comes to

²⁰ John W. Tape, *The Collected Works of Dr. John W. Tape, Volume One: Sermons* (Lulu Publishing, 2021), introduction.

us with His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sin, strengthening us in the life and salvation He acquired for us on Calvary.

Strengthened by His testament, we now thank and praise, serve and obey our Father, coming to Him in daily prayer and living according to His commandments in our earthly calling with the congregation, civic community, and household. This is the life journey of discipleship. Therefore, unlike Gandalf's response to Bilbo that *he has no insurance the journey will succeed*, the baptized believer can say the opposite:

I have insurance that I will succeed in my journey, through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, because I am baptized, and now I have a daily battle, confessing my sin and drowning them, and living the new life according to God's goodness and love.

The Cross and Sin

Before we talk about the cross, we need to address the subject of sin because the cross has to do with sin, and sin is the character that sets the stage. We trivialize the cross when we minimize sin. People will not see the need for salvation and the Good News of the Gospel before they recognize the devastating bad news of sin and its consequences on their lives.

When we define sin, we are affected by our Western exegesis that sees sin from the paradigm of guilt/innocence. We may notice this in a common interpretation of Romans 3:23: "For all *have sinned* and fall short of the glory of God." Some speak of sin simply as *missing the mark*, or *coming up short of perfectly obeying God's Law* which means *being guilty*. Sin is equated with *being guilty* for missing the mark.

The phrase "fall short of the glory of God" carries double meaning. First, that people fail to properly glorify God. In other



¹ For more details see the newly released book, Jackson Wu, *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission* (IVP Academic, 2019).

words, sin is equated with imperfectly and incompletely *glorifying* God. Second, the glorious existence God intended for people is absent. Humanity is deprived of the glory of God at the Fall. The glory and honor bestowed on Adam and Eve at creation is now absent, or to use Luther's word, it is *obscure* in all people. With Christ, man is able to regain the glorious existence, and the eyes can enjoy the glory of the Divine.

In this context, the root of human sinfulness and death is *dishonoring and disobeying God*. And the human problem is one of failing to glorify God as He deserves. John concisely defines sin as lawlessness, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4 NIV). This definition helps us see the link between honor and obedience presented in Romans 1. When Adam failed to honor God, he transgressed the law. The idea of *dishonor* is directly connected to *disobedience*. In this same context we can read Jesus' command, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If you honor Me, obey Me.¹

Jesus Honored God

How did God reverse the devastating consequences of sin? To answer this question, church fathers historically used analogies. One of the most common analogies to explain suffering and the cross is that of the disguised king.

The analogy is constructed in response to potential objections to the logic of Christian salvation history and can be traced back to the third-century Christian writer Origen, who was inspired by Paul's phrase that Christ "assumed the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). The analogy was used to explain how God used His love at the expense of His power to save humanity, and how Jesus honored God by taking the form of man and suffering on the cross.

The story begins with a king who has four virtues: justice, power, mercy, and wisdom. A high-ranking servant rebels against him and, as a result, the king expels him from his kingdom. The rebellious servant, seeking revenge, builds an inn and planted a garden in it. Anyone who travels to the king's palace must pass by the inn and hear and see all the attractions that the rebellious servant built with the evil intention of luring the passersby.

But the king has a trusted and a beloved servant whom the king loves and gives access to all the royal rooms, not forbidding the servant from any delicacies and enjoyments of the place. The king also warns his beloved servant not to walk toward the inn and to be careful of the deceptions of the rebellious servant.

The trusted and beloved servant cannot resist the temptation, however, so he leaves the royal palace and walked towards the inn. As soon as he enters the inn, he is captured, tortured, and thrown in prison.

The king is aware of the rebellious servant's character and its harshness, injustice, wickedness, and deceitfulness. The king is faced with a dilemma: if he neglects the prisoners, his mercy

will be compromised; if he exercises his power, he will not be acting justly; and if he overlooks and does not free the prisoners, his power will be weakened.

To solve such a dilemma, the king does the unthinkable: he disguises himself by putting on servant's clothing, exiting his royal palace, and walking towards the inn, which is the place where the rebellious servant imprisons and enslaves the royal servants.

Because of the king's disguise, the rebellious servant does not recognize him when he walks toward the inn and enters it. The evil servant uses all his wicked and deceitful tricks to attract the disguised king, but the king does not surrender to the rebellious servant's temptation. This made the evil servant suspicious, and he does not know what to do but to use his harshness and forceful will on the king. So he captures the king, puts him in chains, and harshly tortures the righteous king.

After much humiliation, suffering, and torture, the king is sent to prison. When he enters the dungeon and becomes united with his servants, the king finally reveals his real identity. The royal soldiers hasten to help him and are astonished by his descending to them. The evil servant is shocked when he recognizes the king, and he becomes confused.

With this confrontation, the evil servant's power diminishes, and he feels he is perishing because he had transgressed, unjustly and wrongfully, against the one who could not be defeated by deception. And the king fulfills his virtues of mercy and justice. He fulfills justice by unjustly being punished and fulfills his mercy by freeing his faithful servant from the power of evil. The king then binds the evil servant in chains forever, destroys the garden, frees the servants, and returns with them triumphantly to his kingdom.²

The Analogy as Gospel Presentation

The analogy is presented to illustrate the ingenuity of the plan of redemption. It explains the soteriological (salvation) function of the Divine disguise by presenting a comparison between Christ liberating humankind from the dominion of death and a noble king going into the land of his enemy in disguise to persuade the captives whom the enemy has taken as slaves to return back to their rightful lord.

The analogy highlights the shame and humiliation the king must endure in order to save the servant, representing the shame Jesus suffered on the cross.

The central point of the analogy is that it is not a question of God's weakness but only of a *restraint of power* on God's part with a view to bestowing His mercy upon humankind and securing a true defeat of Satan. The message is that God's use of power at the expense of His mercy would have compromised His character of mercy, whereas using His mercy at the expense of His power is just, wise, and ultimately effective.

In Christianity, God reveals Himself as *agape love*, meaning that He allows Himself to suffer. He is a participant amid human

experience and ambiguity. This nature of God is expressed in the New Testament, where Jesus is the "suffering Servant" prophesized by Isaiah. Jesus embraced both the *suffering* and *servanthood* concept.

In Christianity the cross is the ultimate fulfillment of the divine love. Jesus summarized this truth to Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In Genesis we read about God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. This story shows that the truest test of commitment is love expressed in the willingness to give that which is most loved. Yet, on a greater scale than Abraham, the New Testament reveals the God who has "poured out his love" (Rom. 5:5) on creation and who "... did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all ..." (Rom. 8:32).

This *participatory love* invites a response. It breaches into human life and opens the possibility of communion with God. God does not only call humanity to love Him, but He enables them with His invitation. This invitation and encounter engage God and man in a graceful embrace where God, and only God, takes and maintains the initiative. Man, in turn, is to fear, love, and trust God.

The Cross Creates a New Reality

Christianity sees the cross not as an instrument of torture but of life that comes out of death. On the cross people die, but from it, Christ made his way back to life. On the cross, human beings can see what God's experience, disposition, and essence are, and what humanity is. Martin Luther, in his introduction to Psalm 51, answers who God is and who man is: man is condemned, guilty of sin, and God is the Justifier and Savior of man, the sinner. Luther considers any theological discussions outside this subject error and poison.³

The cross recaps this theological reality. The cross created a new reality within God's fallen creation: a new reality for *Satan*, when He nailed the accusations of the law to the cross and rendered them illegible by soaking them in Christ's blood; a new reality for *death* when He laid it to eternal rest in Christ's grave; and, finally, a new life for *sinners*, since they were buried in Christ's tomb and raised to new life, through the death and resurrection of the Crucified One.⁴

This is the foundation of Origen's parable. The servant lost his community, became enslaved to a false king, and lived in a state of death. The good king, out of love, restored him back to fellowship with his kingdom, not using his power and might, but suffering on the servant's behalf. The servant is restored to his status as a member of a redeemed community. As baptized believers, when we join a community, we become living members. To use St. Peter's words, we become a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). When we dishonor and disobey God, we are dead to sin, living outside of God's family.

² Cf. Abjar Bahkou, *Defending Christian Faith, the Fifth Part of the Christian Apology of Gerasimus* (Boston: De Gruyter 2014), 32–35.

³ Luther, *Psalm 51* (1532), AE 12: 311

⁴ Cf. Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Theology of the Cross," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XVI, (2002), 443–66.

Shame is a relational issue, and the solution must be relational. The king liberated the servant from the place of disgrace and exclusion and granted him a new identity by taking the form of a servant. The king exchanged his righteousness and goodness with the servant's shame. By such a *joyful exchange* the servant received honor and acceptance from the king and went back as a full citizen of the royal kingdom.

In his letters to the Corinthians and Romans, Paul explains that if we are members of Christ, we are implicated in what happened to Him; that means we, who are alive in Christ, are also dead with Him. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3). "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died" (2 Cor. 5:14). Robert Kolb summarizes Martin Luther thus:

No one has seen God, but Jesus of Nazareth, God in the flesh, has made Him known: a God with holes in his hands, feet, and side; the God who has come near to humankind, into the midst of its twisted and ruined existence. ... [This] God on the cross reveals the fullness of God's love as well as the inadequacy of all human efforts to patch up life to please [God].⁵

The message of the cross speaks about a new identity and reconciliation. This is also connected to the term *justification*. To be justified means to *be made right with God*. Some other interpretations explain it as *brought into a right covenantal standing*. In this perspective, to be justified is to be placed in a proper relationship with God and to be a full participant in the community of God's people. To be justified does not simply mean to *be declared innocent*, but also to *belong within God's community*.

The closest Bible story to what we have been discussing is the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32).⁶ The central figure in the parable is the father who reaches in love to both sons: the one lost in a foreign land, and the other lost at home. By inviting his sons to come together and eat at one table again as a family, the father pursues restoration and harmony. The father willingly suffered shame to communicate love and forgiveness in order to restore relationships with each son personally and together with the family.

The Task of the Baptized Believers

The Christian perspective of the cross is an invitation of a relational model for Christians. This *relational model* is explained

by Luther in simple terms: *We need to learn how to receive faith and how to give love.*

The love of God encourages believers to live out the moral implication of God as a self-emptying God, who loves us and gave Himself for our salvation. Jesus calls us to imitate His own submission, and participate with Him, by taking up the cross daily.

That is what the servant did in the parable. The writer of the disguised king presents a changed servant who, after his liberation, walks around, wearing the chains and the filthy clothes that his righteous king put on in order to save him, proclaiming to everyone the favor and goodness of his master toward him.

The suffering king transformed the servant's life from selfish behavior to a new person who walks around carrying the filthy clothes and the chains as a proclamation of his freedom. That is what the text of the convention theme invites us to do:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor. 1:18, 23–25)

The bearing of the cross means faithful witness to people despite rejection. The message of the cross inspires believers to respond to critics with patience and love. Paul calls Christians to *crucify* their selfish and sinful nature (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24) because God has crucified the world to us (Gal. 6:14). The cross is not only part of the Bible story and the Gospel story; *it must be also part of our story*. We must deal with our sins and expose them. We must follow the obedience and meekness of Christ. We must show in our lives *that* God who is involved in human affairs, who does not overlook sins, who accepts the effect of sin but does it with forgiveness, who is not ashamed to be associated with sinful people, and who triumphs through death.

Let us then "lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, Till all the world adore His sacred name" (*Lutheran Service Book* 837).

⁵ Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Lutheran Quarterly / Fortress, 2017), 36.

⁶ Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker retell an expanded version of the parable from the perspective of honor and shame culture.

Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials (IVP Academic, 2016), 102–5.

We Preach Christ Crucified: The Wisdom of God

Concordia University Chicago President Dr. Russell P. Dawn

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023

Good morning, brothers and sisters. I am honored to stand before you. May my words today edify the Church to the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

Our text is 1 Corinthians 1:18–25:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The specific focus of this essay is *Christ the wisdom of God*. The essay begins with a brief unpacking of how we should understand Christ crucified in terms of both Law and Gospel. Next, the essay addresses the importance of Christ the wisdom of God in what we Lutherans sometimes call the right hand of God’s reign, which is to say importance in the economy of salvation. The essay then turns to the importance of Christ the wisdom of God in what we Lutherans sometimes call the left hand of God’s reign, which is to say importance in earthly matters. This section occupies the bulk of the essay, and in particular shines a light on the chaotic outcomes we see from societal abandonment of God’s wisdom. Finally, the essay concludes with the great Lutheran question, “What does this mean?”—and specifically what it means for us as those who are in Christ and therefore in God’s wisdom as we make our baptismal journeys through this tear-stained vale of chaos.

I

To say that we preach Christ crucified is to say that we preach the whole counsel of God, both Law and Gospel. When we see our crucified Lord, we see the full force of the Law. We see the death that we deserve, the death warranted by our fallenness and slavish devotion to sin (John 8:34; Rom. 3:23). More importantly, however, we see also the full mercy of the Gospel. We see the God who takes on our punishment, our suffering and death, so that we are reconciled to God the Father in spite of our sin and brought into new life in the Holy Spirit, through whom we love God and serve our neighbors, as we look forward

¹ Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2013), 25–26.

in confident hope to everlasting life with Christ (Rom. 5:8–10; Rom. 8:9; 1 Thess. 4:17). In both aspects, Law and Gospel, we see the love of God. It is not a cruel god who gives law and a loving god who gives gospel, but rather the one God who is love (1 John 4:8) giving both Law and Gospel, and by whose grace all things work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

II

Christ crucified is the wisdom of God, with all the fullness of God’s loving Law and Gospel. It is obvious that this fullness includes all manner of things related to the right hand of God’s reign, that is, things related to salvation. Christ is the wisdom of God both in His person as the bridegroom of the church and in His work as the maker of that happy exchange whereby the bridegroom receives the squalor of the bride and the bride receives the glory of the bridegroom (Eph. 5:31–21).¹

Following the teaching of St. Augustine, Luther in his lectures on Romans states that “the wisdom of God is that wisdom by which He contemplates all things in Himself,” things knowable “by faith alone or a rapture into heaven,” as opposed to things that are outside of Himself and created.² The center of all that is known only to faith is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Earlier in the same lectures, Luther states that the wisdom of God is “that by which He makes us wise,” just as His righteousness is that by



² Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 25 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 432.

which He makes us righteous.³ We are wise to know that the Law condemns us, and therefore we can place no hope in miraculous signs like the Jews do or in worldly wisdom like the Gentiles do. We are also wise to know that our hope, the only true, eternal hope, is in the fulsome grace of God, Christ crucified, the wisdom of God. That wisdom is a stumbling block to Jews because they expected a powerful messiah, not one “crucified in weakness” (2 Cor. 13:4) and obviously cursed by God because He hangs on a tree (Deut. 21:22–23). Likewise, God’s wisdom is foolishness to Gentiles, who mocked Christians as worshipers of a dead man.⁴

Moreover, in his letter to the Christians at Colossae, Paul refers to Christ as God’s mystery, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). Whatever one might seek in terms of wisdom and knowledge can be found in the person and work of Jesus.⁵ That includes the life of good works flowing from the “fear of the Lord,” that is to say, from faith, as that life is described in various places throughout the Book of Proverbs (see, e.g., Proverbs 3). It’s also described in the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Colossians, where he prays that they will be filled with spiritual wisdom “so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him” (Col. 1:9–10). Fear in faith, as Deterding describes in his *Concordia Commentary on Colossians*, “moves and empowers one to live a life of wisdom.”⁶ Moreover, in his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul admonishes them to be careful to walk in wisdom (Eph. 5:15–16; Col. 4:5–6).

All of the foregoing, from knowledge of the Law’s condemnation, through knowledge of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, to knowledge of our walking by God’s grace in a manner worthy of the Lord, is wisdom unto salvation. It is the right-hand importance of Christ the wisdom of God.

III

Unsurprisingly, there is also left-hand importance of Christ the wisdom of God. That is to say, there is also earthly importance, importance in temporal matters. If all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, then knowing and being in Christ the wisdom of God entails practical, day-to-day wisdom, such as that found in Proverbs 11. As Deterding describes, the wise one “will also live his life with ‘common sense,’ for wisdom includes a practical aptitude for life in the real world. It is life lived in harmony with the order, moral and otherwise, which God has placed over and through this world.”⁷

The converse can also be true; rejection of Christ the wisdom of God often leads to chaos and disarray, a life that lacks concord with God’s order. As the Epistle of St. James informs us, “where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice” (James 3:16). And similarly, Paul describes the Gentiles as “darkened in their understanding” and therefore “callous” and “greedy to practice every kind of impurity” (Eph. 4:18–19).

This is not just an individual reality, but it can and does occur on a societal level. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul describes the last days: “For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:2–5).

Even a casual observer of modern American culture can attest that this description of the last days fits our society entirely too well. Under the appearance of godly concern for others’ feelings and for peace, it is now socially unacceptable to affirm that God created us male and female and that the sexes are distinct from one another; that sexual interaction is God’s good gift to a man and a woman in holy matrimony, and that any other use of the gift is abuse; and that there is transcendent truth, especially transcendent moral truth. Our society celebrates those who celebrate themselves and their base impulses, extolling pride and selfish ambition while deriding the humble and the selfless. We excuse envy and treachery, protecting the so-called rights of those who take or destroy the property of others. In our lust for power and vengeance, we whitewash the evils of those who represent what we perceive to be our side. We have turned slander into a national pastime, destroying the reputations of our social and political foes as if Christ did not die for them. We brutally kill the weakest and voiceless among us, using forceps or acid or drugs that target our babies like infections.

If our current time is not the last days, it is a good imitation. Still, we should not be surprised, as if this cultural moment fell upon us out of the clear blue sky. The societal ills of America and the West may seem to have burst upon us in a few years or perhaps half a century, depending on one’s perspective, but the groundwork has been laid gradually over the centuries by influential thinkers whose ideas have eroded, and may have destroyed, the foundations of Christian civilization in the West. Their ideas—ideas that reject Christ the wisdom of God—have been spread through our educational institutions, institutions that we and our forebears foolishly thought we could trust. The beginning was not 2015 or even 1967. We have been building toward our current decadence since before the founding of our country.

Recall what was stated earlier about Christ crucified. It was stated that in Him we see the God who takes on our punishment, our suffering and death, so that we are reconciled to God the Father in spite of our sin and brought into new life in the Holy Spirit, through whom we love God and serve our neighbors, as we look forward in confident hope to everlasting life with Christ. This sentence contains three fundamental aspects of human life that have been undermined explicitly and intentionally by influential thinkers and their followers over

³ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 25:249.

⁴ Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 70–71.

⁵ Paul E. Deterding, *Colossians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 85.

⁶ Deterding, *Colossians*, 39.

⁷ Deterding, *Colossians*, 39.

the last few centuries. The fundamental aspects are the following:

1. Human beings are sinful and indeed enslaved to sin.
2. We reach our true end or goal in the next life, not the current one.
3. The purpose of this life is to love God and serve neighbor.

The broad societal rejection of these three truths of Christ the wisdom of God has developed in fits and starts, easily here and against great resistance there, gradually and seemingly inexorably. As we unpack the ideas that have been adopted in place of these truths, it will become obvious how we have arrived in our current state of decay.

Our journey away from wisdom begins in seventeenth-century Europe. The Thirty Years' War wracked Europe through most of the first half of the 1600s. The war was quite worldly, but because it dealt in great part with a confluence of religious affiliation with the quest for geopolitical domination, it will forever be thought of as a war of religion. This combination of truth claims with widespread destruction left behind a mood in Europe that was decidedly doubtful about whether religion was the right place to look for real understanding about the nature of humanity and the world. The mood among many was to look elsewhere, and that mood corresponded in time with the beginning of an age of great scientific discovery and technological innovation. Hence, the great merger of technical advancement with spiritual reversal that we now know as the Enlightenment.

An idea that began to take hold during this era was that humanity is not fallen or enslaved to sin, but rather is basically good. As the eighteenth-century Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau described,⁸ man in his primitive state of nature is good, loving self only in the sense of meeting his own needs, having natural impulses of justice and of compassion for others, and possessing perfectibility. It is only through the corrupting influence of civilized society, and especially of private property, that man has become duplicitous and ruthless. Reformed author Carl Trueman, whose work *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* I highly recommend, summarizes Rousseau's view this way: Man is "at his best—he is most truly himself as he should be—when he acts in accordance with his nature."⁹ It is difficult to overstate how broadly and deeply this idea of basic human goodness has penetrated the modern consciousness.¹⁰

This denial of bondage to sin is really denial of Christ the wisdom of God. And while the denial of bondage to sin poses a grave danger to one's soul, at the societal level it can also have devastating effects in the here and now. We see those effects all around us, as Dr. Trueman aptly describes.¹¹ Because our nature is widely seen as good, self-restraint is seen as unhealthy or hypocritical, while self-indulgence and embracing one's

impulses are celebrated as authentic. Because society breeds falsity, societal constraints on morality are distrusted, while defining oneself according to one's feelings is the highest good and must be respected at all costs. The resulting disorder, and ultimately the persecution of those who would seek to bring order under God's Law, is unsurprising to anyone who knows the depravity of the human soul.

If, as asserted by Rousseau and so many other thinkers since the eighteenth century, humanity is good but societal influences are evil, then it would make sense that earthly life could become paradisaical if only we could correct the societal forces. There would be nothing about humanity itself that would prevent an earthly paradise. And so, the last three centuries have witnessed one urgent quest after another to engineer society into a perfection that allows humanity to enter into bliss. This is not the heavenly bliss of eternity with Christ, of course; it is earthly bliss. And this is the second rejection of a fundamental aspect of Christ the wisdom of God—the rejection of the notion that our ultimate destination, our ultimate joy, is to be found not in this life, but the next.

Perhaps the most famous and societally destructive philosophy that aims toward earthly bliss belongs to Karl Marx. He saw private property as the fundamental evil plaguing humanity and preventing the realization of universal bliss. If there were no private property, there would be no want. Neither would we have need of any exclusivity (such as marriage) that leads to jealousy, nor would we need religion to help us to feel better because we would already feel better, since there would be no material or social alienation. The solution, then, is for the working class to overthrow the owners of property and factories and such. Eventually the government will wither away from lack of use, and all people will live in the harmony of communism.¹²

Tens of millions of people have died around the globe because of the pursuit of this unattainable chimera of universal peace, of earthly bliss. They have died because people have exchanged their eternal inheritance in Christ the wisdom of God for the bowl of pottage that is communist bliss. And we should not imagine that Marx's ideas have no purchase here, for whereas he focused on dismantling the economic system, others in the last 100 years have applied his ideas instead to dismantling sexual ethics, dismantling the family and even dismantling language. Essentially, any distinction that could be perceived as placing one group above another is subject to destruction—or as the sanitized vocabulary has it, deconstruction.¹³ We must not delude ourselves: American society has embraced the quest for earthly bliss, and much of the aggressiveness of the movement toward moral disorder is explicable in this way. Those of us who are in Christ the wisdom of God, living out our baptismal pilgrimages toward our ultimate home in the next

⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *(On the) Equality Among Mankind* (Hoboken, N.J.: Generic NL Freebook Publisher, 2000).

⁹ Carl R. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2020), 123.

¹⁰ For more on the ideas and influence of Rousseau, see Trueman, 116–28, and Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI (London: Search Press Limited, 1960), 65–69.

¹¹ Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph*, 124–28.

¹² For an incisive and brief treatment of Marx's philosophy, see Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VII (London: Search Press Limited, 1963), 305–34.

¹³ Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph*, 232–36. See also Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories* (Durham, N.C.: Pitchstone Publishing, 2020).

life, stand squarely in the path of those who are pursuing earthly perfection.

The embrace of the notion of a worldly paradise in rejection of the life to come leads, almost inevitably, to a rejection of the third fundamental aspect of Christ the wisdom of God upon which this essay focuses. That is, we see all around us the rejection of the truth that the purpose of life is loving God and serving neighbor. What we see instead is the widespread adoption of ourselves as the purpose of this life. In the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, “One thing is needful: namely, that man should *attain to* satisfaction with himself.”¹⁴ And who among us has not been taught by Abraham Maslow and his famous hierarchy of needs that the highest of human needs is self-actualization? That might be the most influential idea in America today. It drives our consumer culture, our need to define ourselves (even against our own nature), our extreme sensitivity to criticism, and our needs for participation trophies and bucket lists and constant entertainment. Self-actualization may feel like the ultimate human need, but it is an evil need. It is a need that is mired in our fallen nature. It is, quite simply, pride. We were not created for pride. God does not call us to actualize ourselves. God calls us to love Him and to serve our neighbors. Indeed, He calls us to become as Christ, suffering all for the sake of our neighbors.¹⁵ If I may take a linguistic liberty,

we are called in Baptism to actualization in Christ the wisdom of God.

IV

There are, of course, other fundamental aspects of Christ the wisdom of God that are rejected by the modern world. Among the obvious ones are that God created the world and everything in it, and that marriage is an image of the relationship between Christ and His church. The rejection of these also feeds the moral disorder of our world. Whatever aspect one chooses to emphasize, the problem is the same: rejecting Christ the wisdom of God jeopardizes the soul and visits moral chaos upon society. That chaos is mounting with breathtaking speed. So, what does this mean for us? How are we to respond to so much obvious evil and decay? The answer is unsurprising. We respond with Christ the wisdom of God. We respond with the Law, spoken in love because the Law is a loving gift from God. We respond with the Gospel, also spoken in love and for the same reason. We respond with Christ crucified. It is not the job of the church to take back this country for Christ or to follow some other triumphalist path that places the moral law above the Gospel. Whatever our context—in the family, in the church, and in our communities—we speak in love the transcendent and powerful truth of the whole counsel of God. We speak Christ, the wisdom of God.

We Preach Christ Crucified: The Redemption of the World

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese Bishop Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola

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Over a hundred years ago in Finland, a young man was going through a spiritual agony. He was walking down a country road and stopped by an old fence. While he was looking at the red-painted fence, it crossed his mind: The fenceposts certainly look wretched inside, but the red color covers them all. With a new joy he confessed: “The righteousness of Christ Jesus covers me totally. Although I am a sinner, I receive forgiveness.” This man later became a pastor and wrote a hymn: “Go to the ends of the earth preaching the Good News from the cross: It is fulfilled!”

“But we preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). This is the mission statement of St. Paul. This is the Gospel that he preached. This message, which is the wisdom and the strength of God, has only one goal: to save us. “... It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21, see also v. 18).

1. The cruciform content of our salvation

We know that the words *save* and *salvation* are used in a generic sense. We had a parliament election last spring in Finland and one party had as its slogan: Save Finland. We need to be saved from many things: war, famine, accidents, illness, poverty, or even from boredom and too long meetings. The New Testament

also speaks of salvation in a non-theological sense. When the imprisoned Paul was in a storm, Luke writes, “All hope of our being saved was at last abandoned” (Acts 27:20).

The apostle Paul, however, had a specific meaning, a cruciform content, for the words *Gospel of salvation*. This was passed on to him from the eyewitnesses directly in Jerusalem. And he had handed this sacred and immutable apostolic teaching to the congregation in Corinth: “... the Gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you. ... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried that he was raised on the third day” (1 Cor. 15:1–4). The content of the Gospel of salvation is this and this only: Christ was crucified for our sins, and since he was raised from the dead we are no longer in sin and do not perish (1 Cor. 15:17–18). Redemption is not a utopian dream to be fulfilled on earth, not a spiritual opportunity to achieve and earn final salvation, and not even something that our faith in Christ causes. Redemption of the world is an existing reality. Paul is preaching the Gospel of salvation in a world that is already atoned for and redeemed on the cross and declared forgiven in

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 224, emphasis original.

¹⁵ Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*, 38–39.

Christ's resurrection (Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:19–21). Certainly Paul teaches that salvation is a future and eschatological reality, when we are saved on the Day of the Lord from the wrath of God (1 Cor. 5:5). However, salvation is also a present reality, one to be received as a gift through faith: "Behold, now is the favorable time, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

A young man walks down the street in Milwaukee and sees a fence painted with rainbow colors. What might he think? Progress, but there are still too many fences, unequal power structures that must be demolished. If he searches for deeper meaning in life or even God, he desires to be pleased rather than to be saved. He strives for emotional well-being rather than being forgiven. He wants society and church bodies to affirm who he chooses to be and to celebrate his ultimate freedom of expressing himself rather than being called to live by moral codes of natural law or by some "bigoted" church authority to transform his life according to the image of Christ.

We preach Christ crucified, but Paul's sermon included something else in his mission tour in Greece. In Thessalonica people "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). In Athens Paul's spirit was provoked to see all idols, and he preached that the time of ignorance was over: Repent (Acts 17).

While we keep on speaking of sin and guilt, grace and forgiveness, we should also unmask the idols of our time, which promise a meaningful and satisfying life but apart from the living God. In his excellent book *The Unholy Trinity*, Rev. Michael A. Lockwood unravels our Western idolatrous culture of Me, Myself, and I.¹ We are called to dethrone the rivals of Christ, the idols of our time, in which we are tempted to put our trust and hope. Whether they focus on consumerism or generic spiritualism, idols give empty and deceitful promises but eventually turn out to be weak and of no help for a dying and suffering man facing the final judgement. We are called to confess our love for the greatest idol: the self, who strives to be self-sufficient and independent from God and provide for oneself and even determine one's own existence and direction. This is nothing but self-justification, the way of the law and not the way of the Gospel of salvation.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were saved from idols: "... we know that 'an idol has no real existence,' and that there is no God but one. For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth ... for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor. 8:4–6). What a message to meditate upon and share: Idols have no real existence, but in the Lord Christ we have our existence!

We preach Christ crucified! But how did Jews in Jerusalem see Christ crucified? According to Dr. Scott Hahn, it was impossible for Jews to see Christ's crucifixion as a sacrifice:

A sacrifice was permitted only in one city, the holy city of Jerusalem; yet Christ was crucified outside the walls. Sacrifice could be offered in only one place in that holy

city, in the Temple, on the altar, by a priest of the tribe of Levi; yet Calvary was far from the Temple, and it had no altar and no offering priest. To even the most careful observer, the crucifixion of Jesus would have appeared to be a profane event, a fairly unremarkable Roman execution. A sympathetic soul might have judged Jesus' death to be an act of martyrdom, like deaths recounted in the histories of Maccabees, but not a sacrifice.²

What would you answer to this claim? Should we ask about the sacrifice from Christ Himself?

2. The sacramental and communal nature of our salvation

It is no coincidence that St. Paul in the same letter for the second time mentions: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "... 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. ... This cup is the new covenant in my blood'" (1 Cor. 11:23–25). Christ Himself preaches Christ crucified. He defines the true meaning of His death on the cross. My body and blood for you, on your behalf! This is sacrificial language. Christ is the ultimate vicarious sacrifice. Through Jesus' atoning blood we have redemption, the new covenant and the new liturgy in remembrance of Him established. Christ is the new Paschal lamb, whose blood saves us from death and damnation. Paul states: "... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). This is the Gospel of salvation!

But Christ's words are more than explanatory or a prophecy. They are institutional, having the divine power to accomplish what they say. These words consecrate the bread and wine to a meal of redemption. Herman Sasse summarizes how we cannot separate the cross, the Holy Communion, and the Church:



¹ Michael A. Lockwood, *The Unholy Trinity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016).

² Scott Hahn, *Consuming the Word* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2013), 24.

Without the institution of the Lord's Supper the Gospel could be misunderstood as a teaching about the redemption and Jesus Himself as the greatest of the prophets of the coming Kingdom. This misunderstanding is now no longer possible. ... Wherever the Words of Institution resound anew, there redemption is something more than the object of the promise. It is actually given to whoever receives the Sacrament in faith. ... The Lord's Supper confirms the sacrificial meaning of the death of Christ. ... The Passover of the new covenant is really the organization of the new people of God.³

We preach Christ crucified when we gather to receive His true body and blood, as Paul writes: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). When we gather in remembrance of Him, that is, when we receive His true body and blood as gifts so that our God remembers us graciously, we gather as the Church. To gather around the Lord's table means living as the Church. St. Paul starts the section on the Supper, saying when you gather "as a church" (v. 18). Preaching Christ crucified is not only sharing information and teaching. It is not something that we can only follow online and from a distance. Christ crucified is always bodily and concrete, sacramental and communal, that is, liturgical and ecclesial.

My late teacher Kurt Marquart reminds us that in the transmitted Gospel traditions the Supper (1 Cor. 11:23f.) and Resurrection (1 Cor. 15) are the special points of our Lutheran teaching. The perfection of the objective justification and the true presence of the Lord's body and blood are also the demarcation line between the Lutheran teaching and both Rome and the Geneva Reformed tradition. Prof. Marquart writes: "The two constitutive foci of the Church of the Augsburg Confession are justification and the Holy Supper. These stand at the center of her confession, and without them she ceases to be."⁴

How do we then pass on this heritage to the next generation and new people? We asked this over twenty years ago in the midst of spiritual ruins in Finland. There are many mission models. What would be ours? We fixed our eye to this profound truth: All the life of the Church flows out of the altar and the pulpit. What builds the Church is the purely preached Gospel and the rightly administered Sacraments as our fathers confessed at the Diet of Augsburg (AC VII). We gather weekly to hear Christ speaking to us and to receive his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

This way of the cross has both a vertical and a horizontal aspect for building up new congregations. We need both substance and contact, faith and love. Theological substance means the vertical gifts given freely by Christ through the service of his ordained servants in the divine service. The horizontal aspect is the contact with people, showing hospitality, sharing life together as the family of God amidst individualistic society and

broken culture. This means that the mission is shared together with pastors and the royal priesthood, each according to one's vocation. This means that in a postmodern world it is not enough to theoretically explain crucifixion and teach how the congregation is a body of Christ, but rather to call people to live and experience the sacramental and communal life together. If the younger generation is skeptical of the big words and cynical about solemn statements and they look for concrete answers, we have a great opportunity to invite them to an embodied liturgical and congregational life. Christ's mission is His Church. The motto of my church is simply: "Divine service for life, congregation as home." Nothing new but old truth rediscovered in a different cultural context—and we are still in the learning process!

St. Paul shows us this sacramental and communal aspect in his letter to the Corinthians. The Church is the wandering people of God (*ecclesia migrans*). Christ is the new Moses, who leads the new exodus through the waters of Baptism, for both Jews and Gentiles to a new promised land: heaven. "... Our fathers were all under the cloud ... and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1–4).

The Church is one body with many members: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Often we suffer from the tyranny of numbers, the idea of being big—at least if you have a state church background. However, the house congregations gathered in Roman-style homes, in which the inner courtyard (atrium) had a capacity only for a few dozen people. No wonder St. Paul describes the congregation as being small and as a place of caring and genuine relations: "If one member suffers, all suffer together ..." (1 Cor. 12:26). This should not only be a noble ideal but an everyday reality. From this angle, being a small congregation is not necessarily a threat but can be also a gift and a possibility. And for a larger congregation, it poses questions like: How can we maintain a close family-like atmosphere? Should we be open in prayer to start a new daughter congregation?

To preach Christ crucified, to receive the water and blood from the side of the Crucified, and to live a communal life as members of the Crucified call us in the Holy Spirit to share the redemption of the world to the whole world.

3. The cruciform witness of salvation

When a Christian mother walks down her home street and sees a red-painted fence, she may well think that the public space is getting smaller for Christians. How long do we maintain our basic freedoms? Do I dare to speak up in the school board or keep my opinions to myself? How do I keep my children close to

³ Herman Sasse, "The Lord's Supper in the New Testament," *We Confess The Sacraments*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 88–89, 94.

⁴ Kurt Marquart, "The Church in the Twenty-First Century: Will There be a Lutheran One?" *All Theology is Christology: Essays in Honor of*

David P. Scaer, ed. by Dean O. Wenthe et al (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 195–196.

God, truth, and beauty when all moral fences have been torn down? Yes, red is the color of the martyrs.

We preach Christ crucified! We have been given the holy calling of proclaiming the Good News of the redemption of the world that everyone needs to hear but no one by nature wants to listen to. The prince of this world is a liar and murderer and cannot stand the word of truth and life (John 8:44). By necessity, in this world preaching the cross means carrying the cross. Christ's cross reminds us constantly that we cannot escape suffering for his name's sake. "... A servant is not greater than his master ..." (John 15:20). St. Paul's letter is written by a persecuted apostle to persecuted Christians: "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too" (2 Cor. 1:5).

I am reminded of the words of a German theologian: "A Christian never lives without persecution. Either he is persecuted or he suffers with the fate of those who are persecuted."⁵ This is a lesson that we are all learning also in the West. In my experience, when God plans to expand his work, He increases the weight of the cross. Thus He pulls us closer to Himself. But carrying a cross is a powerful witness and always a gift, not a punishment from the Lord. At this time we need even more mutual prayers and encouragement from sister churches and organizations like the International Lutheran Council, a worldwide association of confessional Lutheran church bodies in five continents. We are responsible for passing the faith to the next generation. There is a constant temptation to shy away from the scandal of the cross and to adapt ourselves to the surrounding culture and to the spirit of the age. At the moment we see all over in Christendom massive apostasy from the Christian faith. In this cultural pressure one church body after another is divided on issues of creation and redemption of man. If church bodies and church leaders do not confess the sacred faith in a hostile world, they betray their mission and the people wandering in darkness—and they soon join persecutors. "No man's land" is not an option in a spiritual battle.

In post-Constantine and now even post-Christian Western societies, we within the Mission Diocese of Finland have had to learn anew the way of the early church and the future church. First, mission and outreach work is not only done somewhere far away but right here due to waves of immigration and the dechristianization of Western societies. Second, hostility and oppression towards Christians are not only far away in non-democratic countries but an issue among our members.⁶ Third, while our culture in a narcissistic way idolizes the body, there is a great confusion about what a man is and a devaluation of our created body given as a gift from the moment of conception to natural death.⁷ Fourth, the presence of diabolic phenomena and spiritual warfare are not issues only in a traditional pagan environment but are becoming a part of pastoral ministry.⁸ Fifth, we have to learn to do the Lord's work together as the family of God with much fewer resources, numbers of people, and cultural support but still remain joyful, hopeful, and bold in Christ!

A few years ago a man, not so young anymore, walked on the beautiful island of Malta. So many rulers have conquered this strategically important island in the Mediterranean. Romans came with their iron power. Ottoman rulers attacked it with a mighty fleet. Napoleon's powerful army was stationed there, and the great Royal Navy of England harbored there. When I walked down to St. Paul's Bay in distress, pondering the weaknesses and challenges in my church, I stopped to marvel at the sea and asked myself, how did our Lord conquer the island? Who was our King's ambassador? Imprisoned Paul. What was our King's fleet? A sunken ship. How did our King arrive? Paul swam to the beach soaked to the skin among a group of criminals. How was he received? He was bitten by a snake. What were his resources for mission? Owning nothing but the word of Christ crucified.

This was the great entry of our crucified Christ! This was and is His way of showing His power and His wisdom and bringing the word of the redemption to the whole world even today.

What more can we ask in our short life than to live by His grace and share His Gospel of salvation!

⁵ Thomas Schirrmacher, *The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All* (Oregon: The WEA Global Issues vol. 5, 2001), 16.

⁶ See Jesse Yow, *Standing Firm* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015).

⁷ See John W. Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2021).

⁸ See Robert H. Bennett, *I Am Not Afraid* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013).



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

The Biblical and Reformation Heritage of LCMS Pastoral Formation

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, President Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023

Be alert, study, keep on reading! Truly you cannot read too much in the Scripture; and what you read, you cannot understand too well; and what you understand, you cannot teach too well; and what you teach well, you cannot live too well. Believe me, I know by experience! It is the devil, it is the world, it is our own flesh that storm and rage against us. Therefore dear sirs and brothers, pastors and preachers: pray, read, study, be diligent! I tell you the truth: there is no time for us to lazy around, to snore and sleep in these evil, wicked times. So bring your talents that have been entrusted to you and reveal the mystery of Christ.¹

These are Luther's words. They shouldn't surprise us given the fact that Luther, in addition to being a pastor, was a professor and an unswerving proponent of Christian education. The Lutheran Reformation was born in the context of the university, and its identity is inseparably bound up with that fact. Luther dedicated his life to raising up pastors who were "able to teach" the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) in the home, at Christian primary schools, and at the university in Wittenberg.

This commitment was rooted, of course, in the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul clearly communicated the qualifications one needed for the pastoral office—especially his injunction that pastors be "able to teach." And here "able to teach" does not simply mean pedagogical proficiency. It means being an informed, skilled, and faithful confessor of Christ who properly distinguishes Law and Gospel as he carries out his God-given pastoral vocation of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments. 1 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 2:2, and 2 Timothy 2:24 have provided the basic rationale for pastoral formation and, ultimately, the establishment of theological seminaries for what we now consider the "traditional" mode of preparing pastors. The Scripture is clear on the requirements for pastoral candidates; the question for Luther and his successors—including us—was and is, how is formation for service in the name of Christ best accomplished?

¹ Martin Luther, introduction to *Spangenberg's Postille* of the Year 1542, vol. XIV, page 379ff. (from C.F.W. Walther, "Third Sermon at the Synodical Convention," trans. Everette W. Meier, in C.F.W. Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden* (Saint Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. a. Staaten, 1867), 11.

² C. Ferd. W. Walther, Ottomar Fürbringer, Th. Jul. Brohm, Joh. Fr. Büniger in the *Anzeiger des Westens*, August/September 1839. Cited

I. Pastoral Formation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Our founders established The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on April 26, 1847. Even prior to its foundation the founders had established two institutions dedicated to forming servants of the Word. What is today Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, (CSL) was founded in December 1839 and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, (CTS) was established in October 1846. This simple fact not only shows that the founders wanted to continue historic Lutheran practice, it underscores the importance that they placed on pastoral formation and the need for pastors to be "apt to teach."

The following notice appeared in a German-language newspaper in St. Louis in the late summer of 1839:

We, the undersigned, intend to establish an institution of instruction and education, which distinguishes itself from the ordinary elementary school especially by including, besides all the usual elementary studies, all branches of a *Gymnasium*, which are requisite for genuinely Christian and scientific education, such as: Religion, the Latin, Greek, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Natural History, Fundamentals of Philosophy, Music, Drawing. In the branches named the pupils at our institution will be sufficiently advanced so that after completion of a full course they will be prepared for university studies.²

This was the foundation of what we know today as Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Despite its humble beginnings in rural Perry County, Missouri, its program of studies was a rich one, carried out by capable teachers, including C.F.W. Walther, later president of Concordia Seminary.

At its inception, the institution was more a "school" than a "seminary." But in 1843 its curriculum was revised to emphasize theological formation more intentionally. "The scope of the original program was curtailed," noted Carl Meyer. "Now it was to be a preparatory school for those entering the service of the church...."³ By the time the institution moved to St. Louis in 1850, it was a seminary in every sense of the term.

in Walter Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 502. See also Carl S. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 214.

³ Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry 1839–1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 9.

A few years later and 400 miles to the northeast, Wilhelm Sihler made the vision of Wilhelm Löhe and Friedrich Wyneken a reality when “The Lutheran Seminary at Fort Wayne” began operations in October 1846.⁴ “It has pleased the almighty and all gracious God,” Sihler wrote, “to revive our precious Lutheran Church on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the false influences of the ‘unionists’ of our times, therefore faithful members of the church in the German fatherland lovingly worked for their brothers-in-faith here in America.” Sihler continued: “Because of the current need, and in anticipation of increased future need, they have decided to establish a seminary in Fort Wayne, so that faithful, qualified young men can receive the necessary training to take over the holy office of the preacher in the Lutheran church.”

Curricula at the two seminaries were constantly assessed and revised, though the basics—Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions—always remained at the center. In these days before accreditation, neither St. Louis nor Fort Wayne required exceptional students to complete the entire course of study. Either President Walther or President Sihler might walk into class any given day and inform a student, “your studies are complete.” Typically, in cases like these a divine call from a congregation had been received and the president made the determination to place a student into that setting. The seminary through the president had certified that the man was “apt to teach.” Next steps were ordination and service as a pastor.

The *Catalog* of synodical institutions of higher education for 1876 shows that both institutions were seen as “preachers seminaries.” Further, both had a “three-year course” of study and required preparatory work before seminary. The two institutions differed mainly with respect to language



⁴ Wilhelm Sihler, “Birth Announcement of Concordia Theological Seminary: The Lutheran Seminary at Fort Wayne,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 85 (2021): 99. Wilhelm Sihler, “Das lutherische Seminar zu Fort Wayne,” *Der Lutheraner* 3, no. 5 (October 1846): 29–30. This text was translated for Project Wittenberg

requirements—though as time passed, this distinction disappeared. Bottom line: A student could anticipate spending from six to eight years in preparation for pastoral service whichever seminary he attended.

II. Where Are We Now and Where Might We Be Going?

Over the course of the twentieth century both LCMS seminaries reflected a changing climate in theological education in the United States and in the world. Once the seminaries received recognition from the Association of Theological Schools—CSL in 1963 and CTS in 1968—curricula and faculty development were increasingly responsive to accreditation requirements. But the Synod remained at the center of the seminaries’ work. Needs within the church body led to the addition of classes in areas like pastoral psychology and counseling, administration, and leadership, as well as an increasing emphasis on the centrality of missions “contextualization.”

Most recently, the emergence of information technology as a useable tool in education has raised questions about the possibility and the desirability of distance education for pastoral and diaconal formation. Some have even questioned the necessity of residential theological education. Yet, a sustained and compelling argument for the importance of residential theological education appeared in the late 1990s in the book titled *Being There*, published by Oxford University Press. Authors Jackson Carroll and Barbara Wheeler, among others, studied two seminaries, one “liberal” and the other more “conservative.”⁵ They concluded that for students to be formed by the culture of an institution—specifically if they were to internalize and synthesize the institution’s theological commitments and practices—it is necessary for that student to “be there,” to spend time on campus learning and living in the midst of the community. My colleague, President Egger, will have more to say on this in just a few moments.

So, what can we learn from this historical snapshot? While we tend to view our seminaries as static, the historical record shows that over the course of their histories our seminaries have been incredibly dynamic and responsive to changing contexts and the needs of the church in the fulfillment of its mission.

This creates a healthy tension for confessional Lutherans. We believe that there is *the faith*—the *fides quae*, the faith once delivered to the saints. This faith is captured in phrases like *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Scriptura*. The Scriptures teach and the Lutheran Symbols confess this one, true, catholic, and apostolic faith—and as such, this faith is as true and unchanging as the God who revealed it in the Scripture. The faith does not change. At the same time, we all know that the church today exists in dynamic circumstances. The theological/religious questions of today are framed differently than those voiced by Luther in the sixteenth century; just as the questions Luther framed differed from those of Augustine in the fourth and fifth centuries. This means that we must constantly strive—as did Augustine, Luther, and the faithful

(<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/etext/cts/ctsborn.txt>) by Erika Bullmann Flores in 1994 and edited by Nathaniel Jensen in 2020.

⁵ H. Jackson Carroll, et al., *Being There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

over the ages—to apply the unchanging message of the Gospel to these differently framed questions. Because the spiritual need of people does not change: Christ crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins.

Historically, Lutherans have placed a high priority on the intellectual attainment of understanding the faith. And so Lutheran pastors have been theologically formed from the beginning in universities and seminaries. Yet, it should be noted that this deep understanding of the faith was always seen in the service of teaching the faithful and reaching the lost through the clearest possible proclamation of the Gospel. My own perspective is this: At its best it has used confessional seminaries to form confessional pastors, which lead to

confessional Lutheran congregations and mission. And we as a Synod need to commit ourselves to keep doing this with all possible vigor and support, especially now as church bodies throughout the world continue the cry out, “Come over ... and help us!” (Acts 16:9 ESV).

God has richly blessed the LCMS with two excellent and faithful seminaries. Are they perfect? No—we live in the church militant. Is there room for improvement? Yes—and both are committed to the pursuit of excellence. Will there be frustrations and joys as we move forward? Yes, and yes. It has always been that way, and it always will be—until our Lord returns. May it be soon. “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20 ESV).

Our Residential Seminaries: Deep Pastoral Formation and Worldwide Impact

Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, President Thomas J. Egger

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023

The seminaries enjoy a good partnership as we work together to form pastors, deaconesses, missionaries, scholars—in service to the LCMS and to her church partners around the world.

Dr. Rast offered us historical reflections. I’m going to build on his fine presentation to explain why we continue to invest in, and emphasize the value of, full-time residential study at our seminaries as the optimal way of forming pastors for a lifetime of “preaching Christ crucified.”

The church always faces new challenges to this mission, encounters new possibilities, and develops new approaches—including new ideas for raising up and forming servants for the church. Dr. Rast reflected on some innovation and adaptation from our seminaries’ pasts. In recent decades, we have developed the Specific Ministry Pastor Program, SMP Español and the Center for Hispanic Studies, the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology, and the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center. We thank God for the servants formed through these programs.

As we continue to generate and evaluate new proposals and new ideas, we must remind ourselves of the enormous blessings that have come to us from our Missouri Synod heritage **of deep scriptural and theological preparation for ministry**. And we must *recommit* ourselves, continually, to build upon and never to forfeit this commitment.

The emphasis on deep scriptural and theological preparation for ministry is not naïve nostalgia. This emphasis does not spring from institutional protectionism, from lazy inertia, from fear of change, or from blindness to the pressing need for new pastors. Rather, this emphasis arises from the two great goals

of all Lutheran theology. First, that we give to Christ *the full glory due Him* for all He has done in saving sinners. Second, that we deliver *the full comfort of His saving work* to sinners, that they might place *their full hope* in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.¹

In the brief time I have this morning, I want to highlight some of the crucial strengths, benefits, and reasons that **full-time residential study at our seminaries** must remain our main program of pastoral preparation in the LCMS.

Full-time residency, however, is somewhat out of fashion today, at least in some education circles. Quick, online-only, competency-based education models are the latest trend. Last summer, I heard a presentation by Paul LeBlanc, the president of Southern New Hampshire University, one of the fastest growing universities in the world with over 170,000 online students. LeBlanc advocates primarily online competency-based education. In making his case, LeBlanc gives the example of a single mother, with a full-time job, who was able to get her bachelor’s degree through his university *in less than one year*.² That sounds great, doesn’t it? And maybe it is for certain degrees and fields of study.

But the learning and the growth needed for the shaping of a person who will proclaim the Word of God and care for human souls takes **time**.

C.F.W. Walther, the first president of Concordia Seminary, once described the seminary in this way: “In this house,” Walther declared, “neither the word of man nor the wit and wisdom of man, but rather the Word of God and the entire Word of God, and that which serves the elucidation and application of that

¹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV:2.

² LeBlanc presented at the Biennial Convention of the Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 22–23, 2022. This example of a single working mother is given in Paul LeBlanc,

Students First: Equity, Access, and Opportunity in Higher Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press, 2021), 27.

Word, shall be studied with unwearied diligence, day after day, from the first rays of the morning until late after nightfall.”³

The investment of time needed for the formation of our students is important for the life of the Church. This includes the discipline of daily chapel, the deep study of Christ’s Word in classrooms, and the ongoing conversations and relationships outside the classroom. These form a certain habitus and character and become a foundation for a lifetime of pastoral ministry in Christ’s church.

Within our seminary communities, **daily chapel** is a particularly important aspect of personal formation. The rhythm of daily worship instills a humility before the Word of God. Each day in chapel we submit to our Lord and to the hearing of His Word. Each day, we sit shoulder to shoulder under this life-giving Word—faculty, staff, students, families, visitors. Each day, we confess together not ourselves as Lord, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Each day, we pray for one another, for the whole church, and for those who don’t yet know Christ.

Such Spirit-worked humility before the Word of God then flows outward from our shared chapel life to our classrooms, submitting to God’s holy Word, knowing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all true wisdom.

The Word of God alone shapes pastors. Our congregations don’t need the “gut sense” or the brilliant insights of their pastors. The church needs *Jesus Christ and His heavenly Word*. The church needs pastors who will declare the whole counsel of God as revealed in His Word. Knowing the sacred Scriptures takes time and work and well-formed habits, habits formed and nurtured patiently and persistently during their time at the seminary.

This hearing and study of God’s Word at the seminaries takes place **in community**. Our annual theme at the seminary this last year was “Sharing the Gospel—Sharing Our Lives.” We share life together on our campuses, forming lifelong bonds between the future pastors of the church.

As I travel, I routinely ask pastors, “What formed you the most at seminary?” They mention that they learned a lot in their classes. But almost to a man, they also mention conversations and relationships with professors and fellow seminarians. Residential education creates and facilitates these opportunities. Unplanned discussions during coffee time after chapel, walking across campus, in the dining hall, in faculty offices, on faculty porches, and around town.

Our **seminary faculties** play an *essential* role in forming pastors and servants for the church. Many advocates of the new education will say directly that faculties are not crucial. Anyone can convey information. But as I look back on my seminary days, I came to love the confession of the faith, in part because of the confessors of that faith, who shared it with me and taught it to me. I loved my teachers. I trusted them. The faculty truly forms bonds with our students as they teach—and as they share life together—and this contributes to the harmony, unity, and shared mission of our church.

Face-to-face learning in community establishes deep and enduring connections, bonds—

- between the students and the confession of the faith being taught;
- between the students and the faculty;
- between the students themselves, future fellow pastors in our church;
- and between the students and the broader church.

We know it is not easy to be a pastor. And it’s not getting any easier. As we prepare future pastors, we owe it to them to ground them deeply in Christ, in His Word, and in the community of His whole Church.

Residential seminary education helps form a personal vocational identity as a part of a place that has trained generations of Lutheran pastors, at a location where world Lutheranism learns together. We thank God for our online programs and for the dedicated men and women who are preparing to serve the church through them. Real bonds are also forged among these online cohorts, and personal faith and identity in Christ is nurtured. We must recognize, however, that these crucial bonds are established *more profoundly* through in-person formation.

Some think the changing times mean we should make seminary education quicker, cheaper, and easier. But the challenges of our times make deep theological formation in the Word of God more necessary, not less. Christ’s faithful lambs—and lost and wandering sheep—need well-prepared shepherds.

Some point to the expense of residential seminary education as reason to adopt other models. Expense is a valid concern that we continue to address. Let me pause here to thank God for the **generosity** that so many of you and our whole church have shown to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and to Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. In a day when seminaries of other denominations are closing their doors, our seminaries have been able to guarantee free tuition for residential ministerial formation students. *Thank you for your continuing support and generosity that makes such student support possible.*

Yet our students do make sacrifices. In some ways, the sacrifice of moving to the seminary is itself formation for ministry. It is an experience of the reality of a life lived in service to the Gospel, which will often require a willingness to go where the Lord calls. Students and their families must make sacrifices to move to Fort Wayne or St. Louis—that’s certainly true. But I would encourage you to *ask our graduates* whether the sacrifices have been worth it.

Finally, let me briefly note the great benefit the church receives from the faculties at our two seminaries, who possess a depth of expertise in various areas of theology and practice. These doctors of the church shape not only our future pastors, missionaries and deaconesses, but, working together in community, they also shape and enrich one another in significant ways. Our seminary faculties provide the church with theological guidance and theological resources:

- Service on the CTCR.

³ From C.F.W. Walther’s address at the Sept. 9, 1883 dedication of the newly-constructed Concordia Seminary campus on Jefferson Ave,

cited from Friedrich Bente, “Walthers Verdienst um das Sola Scriptura,” *Lehre und Wehre* 57 (1911): 167–68, my translation.

- Preaching and lectionary resources to guide the church's preaching.
- Counseling resources to guide the care of souls.
- The Concordia Commentaries.
- Studies in the Church Fathers, in Luther, and in the Lutheran Fathers.
- Resources in our Catechisms and Confessions.

I can tell you without exaggeration that the faculties of the seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod serve as valuable resources and encouragement to Lutheran churches **throughout the entire world**, who hold them in the highest regard. Our partner churches and friends are sending gifted scholars and leaders to study in Fort Wayne and in St. Louis—students from Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Macao, Australia, India, Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Madagascar, Sudan and South Sudan, Germany, Latvia, Norway, and more. Our faculties also accept invitations to lecture abroad, all around the world, as church bodies and pastors on every continent say, “Come over and help us!”

As we look to the future, we are excited and committed to creatively exploring ways to do what we do better and to be constantly in conversation with the church to respond to the many challenges before us. As Dr. Rast emphasized, the seminaries don't pretend that we have everything all figured out or that the status quo is perfect. We want to do more. We want to do it better. In every school and in every pastor's

confirmation class, there's always a sense of, “Boy. It could be done better. It should be done better.” The proclamation of Christ and Him crucified is worth the constant effort to serve God to the best of our abilities. We are constantly seeking to adapt and improve.

But in seeking to improve, our seminaries don't look to gurus or trends. We are aware of what's going on today. We evaluate new as well as old ideas. We embrace new methods, technologies, and opportunities when they truly serve the faithful preparation and resourcing of pastors. But we place our confidence in God's Word as that which forms and prepares faithful, wise, resilient servants of Christ. We gather as brothers and sisters in Christ to be shaped by that Word. *And that formation happens especially well in a fraternal seminary community, gathered daily around God's Word, interacting inside and outside of the classroom, as a rich experience of the church at large.*

For these reasons, in-person seminary formation should continue to be the centerpiece of our church's shared work in forming pastors for a lifetime of Gospel ministry. Both seminaries thank **you**, the people of the LCMS, for your strong support of this endeavor. Your convictions regarding the ministry and the Word of God have provided us the *time*, the *place*, and the *experienced faculty* for this joyous work of preparing pastors, missionaries, and deaconesses. For the sake of the church's confession and mission, here and throughout the world. In the Lord's name, *thank you*. God bless you.

Persecuted for Your Faith, Part I

Päivi M. Räsänen

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is an honor to be here today with you. It is a great pleasure to bring you greetings from my dear and beautiful home country, Finland.

(My husband, who is with me here today, is a doctor of theology and the principal of the Finnish Lutheran Mission Bible College. We have five grown-up children and 10 grandchildren. I am extremely grateful for the steadfast support of my husband and family during these years.)

On Freedom House's 'world freedom index,' Finns top the charts as the 'most free' country in the world. Finland has also just recently been named the happiest country in the world for the sixth year in a row.

It is paradoxical that in a country that ranks so well in these evaluations, has a good reputation regarding free speech internationally, and has long, historical roots in the Lutheran confession, I have been criminally charged for voicing my deeply held beliefs that are based on classical Christianity. This means that the same is possible in any country.

For all my long career as a member of parliament (MP), I have been open about my Christian faith, but the last couple of years have been surprising. In 2021, the Prosecutor General of

Finland brought three separate charges against me, and I have been in the Helsinki District Court twice last year.

The Helsinki District Court issued a unanimous, clear acquittal, but the prosecutors appealed that decision to the Appellate Court. The hearings will take place this August.

“Has somebody occupied Finland?” This question was asked in June 2019 by my six-year-old grandson when seeing a giant rainbow flag, the biggest we have had in Finland, in our home city. He continued that this flag certainly is not Swedish, because he recognizes the Swedish national flag.

At that same time, the majority church of our country, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, officially published its support to the pride event, which was a deep disappointment and even shock to me, and to many others.

I had a deep concern about the church teaching against its own confession, and that this will undermine people's trust in God's Word and lead especially young Christians astray. The question would then not be any more only about marriage, but also of salvation.

I published a tweet, targeting the church leadership and asked: “How can the church’s doctrine be compatible with an ideology, which raises what Bible calls sin and shame as a matter of pride?”

I accompanied my post with a photo of a Bible passage, from the Book of Romans, chapter 1, verses 24–27, where the apostle Paul teaches about same-sex relationships.

A citizen made a criminal complaint against me, and the police started a criminal investigation about the tweet. When the investigation came into public, there became more criminal complaints. The second charge was about an old pamphlet I had written already in 2004, “Male and Female He Made Them: Homosexual relationships challenge the Christian concept of humanity.” It takes a stand on sexuality and marriage from a classical Christian perspective. Also, Bishop Pohjola was prosecuted because he is responsible for publishing the pamphlet. Earlier, the police released a decision that the pamphlet based on the statements in the Bible gave no cause for criminal investigation and noted: “If any of the viewpoints contained in the Bible would be considered (sufficient to fulfil the criteria for) the crime, then the distribution of the Bible or rendering it available would be (considered a crime and thus) punishable.” The third charge was about my views presented in one radio interview, titled, “What would Jesus think about homosexuality?”

In these two latter cases, the Prosecutor General ordered the investigation against the police’s recommendation. The filing of the charges was preceded by one and a half years of police investigation and several long police interrogations, altogether 13 hours. The situation felt absurd, even unreal. Just few years ago I was in charge of the police as a minister of the interior and then I was sitting in the police station, being interrogated, having the Bible on the table. The questions were mainly about the Bible and its interpretation. I was asked, what is the message of the Book of Romans and its first chapter. What do I mean with the words *sin* and *shame*? In social media there was a joke about me once again going to have a Bible study at the



police station. The police asked each time if I would agree, within two weeks, to delete my writings. I answered no, and that I stand behind these teachings of the Bible, whatever the consequences are. I will not apologize for what the apostle Paul has stated.

The possible sentence for the crime of ethnic agitation would have been up to two years imprisonment or a fine. In the Finnish law it falls within the “war crimes” section of the criminal code. But even more dangerous is the possibility of being censored: an order to remove social media updates or a ban on posting. I think the prosecutor is using me as a warning to others that they should not speak and express their convictions freely.

Although the prosecutor at first assured that the trial would not be an inquisition, she surprisingly targeted the core doctrine of Christianity. She claimed that my views represent a doctrine, which (she summarized as “love the sinner, hate the sin”). This doctrine she regarded as insulting and defaming, because according to her, you cannot make a distinction between the person’s identity and his or her action. If you condemn the act, you also condemn the human being and regard him or her as inferior.

This is an egregious statement. It goes against the Christian view of man and common sense. God has created all human beings as His own image and we all have equal value, but we all are also sinners. No one’s human dignity decreases because of sin. God so loved all the people, that He gave His only Son to die on the cross to suffer the punishment that belonged to us because of our sins.

The thought that you could not make a distinction between the person’s deeds and his or her identity or human dignity is unfamiliar to life and to the rule of law. I answered in the court that as I was raising my five children, I often had to blame some of them for bad behavior, but it never diminished my love or respect to any of them. And even the most notorious criminals do not lose their human rights or human dignity if they get a punishment for their deeds. Especially in court this principle should be very clear.

The most stressful and difficult thing in this process have been the prosecutor’s false accusations. The District Court made it very clear they did not find any such statements in my pamphlet or in the radio programs that the prosecutor had argued me to have said, for example that some people would be inferior compared to others.

I encountered this same kind of limited understanding of religious freedom when I was the minister responsible for church affairs and had a discussion with the Chinese minister in charge of religious matters. He said that in China you can believe in your own mind whatever, but it is necessary to restrict the freedom to express your faith if it increases tensions in the society.

In public, the prosecutor general has stated that “although Räsänen was convicted, it does not mean that the Bibles should be removed from the libraries. You can refer to the Bible, Koran, or *Mein Kampf*, because it is not forbidden to discuss historical texts. But what is essential is that do you agree with it.” This is an absurd statement. It is essential for Christians to be able to agree with the Bible.

Dear friends, my case involves wasting taxpayer money and reallocating scant resources away from actual crimes and towards thought crime. And this is happening across Europe.

Finland's criminal justice system and laws about incitement are similar to those of most other countries in Europe. But it is strange that we have gone so far in Finland. Nowadays it is politically incorrect to say anything negative about for example gender ideology or to defend the human rights of unborn babies.

Last spring, the Finnish parliament passed the "Trans Act," which means that individuals can legally change their legal gender by self-declaration alone without changing the gender expression or even the name. The legal gender is removed from medical research and biology. Unfortunately, we lost the vote.

I am worried about the fact that most MPs in Finland are in favour of applying the transgender law to minors. I am concerned that minors with mental health problems will change their gender too easily. Instead, I pleaded for mental help to treat gender dysphoria for these people, but my proposals were rejected.

Defending the life of unborn children has been my top priority as an MP. It was the reason I went into politics. Finland's abortion legislation is very liberal, and it does not allow doctors to act according to their own conscience and convictions in cases of pregnancy termination.

In the past decades I have involved in several rigorous public value debates. Ten years ago, when I was Finland's interior minister I spoke at a Lutheran event about Christian values, abortion and marriage and argued that we should have the courage to act contrary to public opinions or norms and sometimes even the law if these contradict the Word of God. "We must obey God rather than men."

Over 40 complaints about my speech were made to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, accusing me of inciting to break the law. The Parliamentary Ombudsman ruled, however, that these comments are a matter of my religious freedom. In a democratic country, we must have the possibility to disagree about controversial issues. Otherwise, the development is towards a totalitarian system.

I am prepared to defend freedom of expression and faith at all necessary levels of justice, even, if necessary, before the European Court of Human Rights.

For me, the victory we achieved in the District Court would have been adequate, but the acquittals of the higher courts have a broader significance. The extension of the trial will allow the establishment of legal precedent on freedom of expression and faith from even a higher court. This would then serve as a legal guide regarding any similar charges in the future. I firmly hope no one else will be subject to similar accusations in the years to come.

We are living at a time when the effect of Christian culture to the society is narrowing. The breaking of the Christian

worldview is visible whether we think of the protection of life at the very beginning or at the end of life or defending marriage as a union between man and wife. The battle between values is largely fought with language, by capturing the concepts like *love, freedom, equality*, and even *rainbow* in new interpretations.

This four-year process with all the investigations, interrogations and court sessions has in practice narrowed freedom of faith and free speech by creating self-censorship. Sadly, many young people have told me that they are afraid they are labelled as a Bible-believing Christian, and that it will hinder their career and social acceptance.

If we do not now use our right to speak freely, the space to use our rights will eventually get even smaller. The more we keep silent about the teachings of the Bible on the painful issues of our time, the more powerful is the rejection. We are especially called to stand firm in those parts of the Scriptures which challenge the current ethos and thinking.

Martin Luther handled the issue of "consequences of faith" aptly: "If you believe, you speak. If you speak, you must suffer. For faith, confession and Cross belong together and are the part of a true Christian."

Warning the Thessalonians about difficult times, apostle Paul gave them an exhortation (2 Thess. 2:15): "Stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you."

I feel privileged to have this calling and honor to defend the foundational rights and everlasting biblical values. I am happy to fight together with such a brave and wise bishop, Juhana Pohjola. I trust that the entire process is in God's hands and that this all has a purpose. I pray that this process would still open chances to testify about Jesus and the message of the Gospel in public. There were several live broadcasts and press conferences from the courthouse to Finnish homes, and I had many chances to tell what the solution to the problem of sin in the Word of God is. I have been so glad about the thousands of messages I have received from Finland and abroad, in which people have told how God has through this case encouraged them to pray and trust God's Word. I want to thank you all, dear Lutheran friends, for support and prayers.

As we prepare for the proceedings at the Court of Appeal with our legal team, I am thankful for all the people who stand with me and Bishop Juhana and keep this case in prayer.

Queen Esther was encouraged to speak up and act on behalf of God's people, the Jews, with the question: "And who knows, you may have been chosen to your royal position for just such a time as this." The same question can be asked from us today. We have not ourselves chosen the time in which we live. But exactly for such a time as this you were born to love your neighbors, to act when seeing injustice, and to hold up the Gospel.

I wish you all courage and blessing. Thank you for your attention!

Persecuted for Your Faith, Part II

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese Bishop Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola

68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • August 1, 2023

Have you insulted homosexuals as a group on the basis of their sexual orientation? Are you willing to take the pamphlet away from your website in two weeks? Do you follow the Finnish national law or the words of the Bible?

As a pastor I'm used to many kind of questions, but I could have never imagined that I would have to answer these and many other questions in police interrogation and in the courtroom to the state prosecutor. When we published the pamphlet "Male and Female He Made Them: Homosexual relationships challenge the Christian concept of humanity" with the help of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation year 2004 we could not have imagined how fast our society would change for Christians from neutral to negative and hostile. This long legal process has been an eye-opening experience. Mrs. Räsänen, a wonderful Lutheran lady, has carried the heaviest load but the case is really not about us. It is not about possibility that we are found guilty and we have to pay fines. It is not even about the precedent case this might become on European level for future hate speech trials. It is not even question about this punitive legal process, which has already had a chilling effect in our society: watch out what you say. I'm even more worried about the cultural trend to value higher right not to be offended rather than the freedom of expression. What happens to our ability to function as free society if the driving force become victimhood, fear, and censorship instead of open and free argumentative debate.

The irony is that we are accused of discrimination but what is the title of the booklet: "Male and Female He Made Them." That everyone possesses an inherent worth has its origins not in French Revolution, nor in the Declaration of Independence but in the creation narrative of the Bible. Every human being is an image of God. This is the basis that we are all equal and share the inherent dignity no matter what one's sexual life may be.

However, I am convinced that this is not only a legal case nor a cultural battle but a spiritual one. The pamphlet addresses specifically the question of homosexuality, but that is not the real issue. It goes deeper to the question what is marriage and even more what is a human being and eventually who is God. Not only every individual human being, body and soul united, is an image of God, but marriage reflects the equal and complementary loving union of the Holy Trinity. The question is who is the Incarnated Son, true God and true man with soul and body united in one person. The Gospel of Christ is at stake! Mrs. Räsänen writes in the Booklet: "The Church is guilty of discrimination against homosexuals if they are not allowed to hear the full truth of the Word of God, which includes both the Law and the Gospel." We all need in our broken sexuality to

hear the Law and the Gospel of forgiveness of sins! We are called to share the wonderful news that we have our true identity as baptized children of God! But we see how the rainbow flag divides church bodies one after another. We must understand how this great deception wipes over whole Christendom and act accordingly and be ready to pay the price joyfully. So dear brothers and sisters in the LCMS: Stand firm in Christ and in His Word!

We stand here neither as victims nor as heroes but as your fellow servants of Christ. This case has been our Lord's doing from the day one. After all it is about His created order and His revealed Word. The court case has not been a curse to us but a blessing. Our Good Lord has allowed it to happen and it has been His favor toward us. We have received so much encouragement and prayers from the member churches of the International Lutheran Council and beyond from many Christians from different denominations. I have received personally so much encouragement from the LCMS individuals, congregations and seminaries, letters, emails, postcards—thank you! I want to express my gratitude also to President Harrison for his unwavering support. We have received assistance from organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom. In this disordered world we have been given opportunity to speak in media of the good order of creation and in this guilt driven and power struggle centered time witness about true forgiveness in Christ Jesus! Maybe we have been able to encourage someone in their struggle to stand firm on the biblical ground. We pray that this legal process would serve His good purpose and we would be faithful in His service!

A few days before we had to appear at the district court I was a bit nervous and yes, even fearful because I did not know what to expect. First time in court! Then a friend came and gave me a card, which had this passage written from prophet Isaiah: "Behold all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded, those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. ... Those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I the Lord your God hold your right hand: it is I who say to you: Fear not I am the one who helps you" (Isaiah 40:11–13).

Fear is the first enemy in this fight and silencing the truth the first casualty.

Dear brothers and sisters, why should we be fearful? What should we be afraid of? If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)? So let us all boldly and joyfully, in love and truth keep on confessing Christ crucified!

The Lord be with you all!

RESOLUTIONS

1. NATIONAL WITNESS

To Stimulate Training for Witness

RESOLUTION 1-01A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 15–16)

WHEREAS, Christians as God’s people are to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9) and to maintain constant preparation “to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15); and

WHEREAS, As Martin Luther observed, it might seem “best for God to take away our breath and let us die as soon as we are baptized and have begun to believe. But He lets us live here in order that we may lead other people to believe, doing for them what He has done for us” (*What Luther Says*, [CPH, 1959] § 3021; WA 12:267); and

WHEREAS, Christians know and interact with many non-Christians and unchurched people through their vocations and daily lives (e.g., family, coworkers, classmates); and

WHEREAS, Most people who attend church for the first time or for the first time in a long time do so at the invitation of a member who has a relationship with them; and

WHEREAS, In this sinful world, Christians often fear to speak of Christ with others; and

WHEREAS, Such fear can be addressed through teaching and learning not only the biblical message of the Gospel but also particular ways to become conversant concerning it; and

WHEREAS, There are resources for learning such as Synod’s *Every One His Witness* (E1HW), both its core module and a growing number of context modules that help prepare Christians for witness to people from various specific backgrounds; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its congregations and its institutions of higher education to make diligent and widespread use of E1HW; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its pastors and other church workers to inculcate a desire in people to witness, consistent with the Lutheran Confessions, particularly to unchurched people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage all the baptized members of her congregations to recognize they are Christ’s witnesses wherever they are; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its congregations, their pastors, and other church workers to take serious and realistic stock of how often and how well they employ

recurring parish education opportunities (including, but not limited to: Bible and catechism classes, youth ministry, retreats, etc.) to teach church members key witnessing skills (such as listening discerningly to unchurched people, beginning a spiritual conversation, making a simple statement of the Gospel, defending the resurrection), including the provision of opportunity to practice such skills; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod instruct its districts to encourage and assist congregations as they train their members to tell the Good News about Jesus, Christ crucified for sinners; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod’s districts and its institutions of higher education be required to include in their reports to the 2026 Synod convention the steps they have taken to implement this resolution.

Action: Adopted as amended (3)

It was moved and adopted by consent to amend the second last resolve to add the appositive “Christ crucified for sinners.” Upon closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted as amended by voice vote.



**Committee 1 Vice-Chairman David R. Nehrenz (right)
and Committee Member Dien Ashley Taylor (left)**

To Aid Small Congregations and Multi-Congregation Pastors and Parishes

RESOLUTION 1-02A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 16); Overtures 1-01–03 (CW, 255–56); Report LR68 (TB, 1:37–40)

WHEREAS, The Office of the Public Ministry is indispensable for the church as an office God instituted in order to provide theologically apt preaching and teaching, the proper administration of the Sacrament of the Altar, and regular pastoral care for the faithful (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:24; 2 Tim. 2:2); and

WHEREAS, Many congregations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) are facing declining membership to the point that they are no longer financially able to support the cost of compensating a full-time pastor, especially considering healthcare costs and the rising cost of living; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations face these issues more acutely and are in danger of closing, leaving major urban centers and rural areas devoid of an LCMS presence; and

WHEREAS, There is a shortage of ordained pastors in the LCMS and as of April 2023 there were over 500 calling congregations; and

WHEREAS, In recent years individual congregations, circuits, and districts have been forced to deal with this problem through multi-congregation parish relationships; and

WHEREAS, There are resources that already exist to aid small congregations, multi-congregation parishes, and their pastors, such as The Partnership Project (Kansas District, www.kslcms.org), *re:Vitality* guided self-assessment (LCMS), and MissionInsite reports (Lutheran Church Extension Fund), Rural and Small Town Mission resources (LCMS); and

WHEREAS, In an opinion dated April 2023, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) addresses the practice of laymen reading sermons and conducting worship services in churches unable to support a pastor and recommends “more formal discussions in the next triennium to address the larger issue of Lutheran theological foundations for mission and ministry, especially as those foundations are being challenged in a post-Christian culture, where religious participation is on the decline and where demographics are also rapidly changing” (LCMS CTCR, *President of Synod Request for Opinion on Lay Reading of Sermons and Conduct of Worship in the Absence of a Pastor* [adopted April 13, 2023], 7); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Office of National Mission (ONM) to work through districts to gather and share any applicable resources that aid small congregations and multi-congregation parishes and identify best practices in arranging and conducting such ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend The Partnership Project resources and direct ONM to make them

available on the Synod website and be further developed; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR expeditiously to prepare a document on Lutheran theological principles for mission and ministry that would address the theological and practical issues faced by small congregations and multi-congregation parishes; and be it finally

Resolved, That these principles be disseminated to the Office of the President, the Council of Presidents, and the Pastoral Formation Committee as a basis for considering how the Synod might provide for the ongoing pastoral needs of small congregations and multi-congregation parishes.

Action: Adopted (3)

After discussion, the resolution was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

To Plant More Churches

RESOLUTION 1-03A

President’s Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has planted 468 new churches since 2000, as reported to LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services; during that same time period, 903 LCMS congregations closed (including failed church starts); and

WHEREAS, About one-third of the 468 church plants closed before becoming sustainable congregations (the above statistics obtained from a soon-to-be-released church planting study gathered by the Office of National Mission [ONM], with the assistance of LCMS districts); and

WHEREAS, Large financial grants from the district or the Synod have often not tended to result in sustainable congregations; that is, the model of calling a mission pastor and giving him a large financial grant to start a church has not consistently produced sustainable congregations; and

WHEREAS, Population shifts have resulted in a large number of people residing where the LCMS does not have a presence, especially in the western United States and the “Sunbelt”; and

WHEREAS, The most effective church planting model is mother/daughter congregations, though other ways may prove to be more feasible (e.g., sister congregations where congregations from elsewhere support a mission plant); and

WHEREAS, Opportunities for new church starts are best identified at a local level instead of at the district or Synod level, that is, individual congregations or circuits making the identifications; and

WHEREAS, ONM is currently developing a systematic approach to planting new churches through a church planting initiative; and

1. NATIONAL WITNESS

WHEREAS, The Bolick Foundation has granted \$2 million to the LCMS for the church planting initiative; and

WHEREAS, Successful plants involve a group of committed laity as the sustaining core, sustained with the help of a neighboring pastor; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the Bolick Foundation's generous support for the church planting initiative; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct ONM to work with districts to develop and implement resources for the LCMS church planting initiative, and encourage congregations to make use of the resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage pastors and lay people to identify and initiate local opportunities for starting new churches; and be it further

Resolved, That ONM, in partnership with the districts (2019 Resolution 1-02, "To Encourage the Planting of Churches"), provide training, support, and, as available, funding for locally identified new church starts; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to support new church starts locally, within their districts, and across the Synod.

Action: Adopted (3)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by hand and voice vote.

To Continue to Address Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues

RESOLUTION 1-04A

Overtures 1-06–07 (CW, 257–59)

Preamble

Over the course of the 2019–2023 quadrennium, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Office of National Mission (ONM) staff reflected on how best to respond to the Synod's ongoing desired goals, objectives, and possible beneficial actions pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity issues. ONM leadership especially considered 2019 Resolution 11-03A, "To Encourage Synod to Develop Resources to Aid Congregations and Schools regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues" (*Proceedings*, 216).

ONM eventually determined to establish an ad hoc task force to undertake further study and to initiate feasible actions and the development of recommendations aimed at future Synod actions and initiatives to address sexual orientation and gender identity issues. ONM is grateful for the direct participation of the following individuals on the ad hoc task force, chaired by Rev. Christopher Esget (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Va.); Rev. Kevin Robson (Chief Mission Officer); Deac. Dr. Tiffany Manor (ONM); Dr. Mark

Rockenbach (faculty member, Concordia Seminary); Ms. Nicole Chappell (ONM); Dr. Gifford Grobien (faculty member, Concordia Theological Seminary); Rev. Kevin Karner (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bristol, Conn.); Rev. Jonathan Lange (St. Paul Lutheran Church, Kemmerer, Wyo. and Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evanston, Wyo.); Rev. Brian Barlow (Resurrection Lutheran Church, Quartz Hill, Calif.); and Rev. Jared Melius (Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Denver, Colo.).

The ad hoc task force sought to study, summarize, and articulate the current state of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity resources available to Synod's people and institutions; determine the preferred means of elevating awareness and increasing the use of such resources in the mission and ministry of our congregations, schools, and families; identify and prioritize additional resource development according to current and future needs; and outline learnings, recommendations, and future planned work emerging from these outcomes. Pandemic constraints did not allow the task force to complete all of these objectives during the quadrennium.

In view of the still-applicable whereas statements of 2019 Res. 11-03A (*Proceedings*, 215–16), which are entrusted to delegates of the 2023 Synod convention for additional reflection, and the ongoing criticality of the work described above, this ad hoc task force commended, through the LCMS Board for National Mission, the following resolution to the 2023 Synod convention.

Proposed Action

WHEREAS, In the beginning God created man in His own image, "male and female, he created them" (Gen. 1:27); and

WHEREAS, As the Small Catechism (SC) teaches, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members" (SC II, First Article); and

WHEREAS, After humanity's fall into sin, Jesus again affirmed God's continuing work: that from the beginning He created them "male and female" (Matt. 19:4); and

WHEREAS, All sexual corruption and confusion result from humanity's fall into sin and often lead to rebellious and sinful acts against God's will (James 1:14–15); and

WHEREAS, All sexual acts outside of faithful, biblical marriage, which is between one man and one woman, are sinful and contrary to God's will (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–11); and

WHEREAS, Being made male and being made female, a physical reality created by God, is now considered by many in our culture to be a social construct; and

WHEREAS, The federal government of the United States has ruled that marriage is no longer exclusively the lifelong union of one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, The Body of Christ has been called to proclaim His saving Gospel to all the world, including those who are uncertain whether they are "truly" male or female (with regards to intersex individuals, see excursus in LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations [CTCR],

1. NATIONAL WITNESS

Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective), those who present themselves as members of the opposite sex in dress and physical appearance, and those who participate in hormonal and/or surgical procedures in an attempt to modify their anatomy from male to female or from female to male; and

WHEREAS, We are called to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins with clarity and compassion to all; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS parochial schools, congregations, seminaries, the Concordia University System (CUS), church workers, parents, children, and other individuals in our Synod are experiencing mounting pressure and intimidation to affirm viewpoints contrary to clear teaching in Holy Scripture as a result of media propaganda, cultural, and legal changes; and

WHEREAS, LCMS church workers and laity have asked for guidance in pastoral care for individuals and families struggling with matters of same-sex attraction and sexual identity issues; and

WHEREAS, The Church is called to support and proclaim the Gospel to all those who struggle with the corrupting power of concupiscence, including those with the propensity toward a myriad of sexual sins and identity confusion; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has produced resources such as the following CTCR reports: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective* (adopted September 2014); *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective* (adopted September 1981); *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (adopted April 2012); *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church* (adopted December 2009); and *A Chaste and Decent Life: An Update to Human Sexuality (1981)* (adopted December 2022); as well as the treatment of these matters in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House [CPH], 2017); and

WHEREAS, ONM has already established an ad hoc Created Male and Female task force in response to 2019 Res. 11-03A which has begun work on these and related issues; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod direct the continuance of said task force during the new triennium, consisting of the current ad hoc task force members (which include parish pastors, commissioned church workers, representation from the Council of Presidents, ONM, and the seminaries), and also add to the existing membership as necessary, to include but not be limited to one CTCR member or staff person and representation from LCMS Communications, CUS, and CPH; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force conduct field research; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force recommend and advocate for strategies and structural approaches to serve the Church better and address the challenges posed by contemporary sexual ethics, recommend and coordinate implementation with Synod entities and organizations that will best deliver

resources to the Church, and encourage congregations to raise awareness of media propaganda, cultural intimidation, and mounting pressures upon all people to affirm viewpoints contrary to clear teaching in Holy Scripture, responding to those influences by the study of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (particularly the Small Catechism) and further encouraging support for those persecuted for their faithful confession of human sexuality and marriage; and be it finally

Resolved, That the task force report to the next Synod convention its work and further recommendations.

Action: Adopted as amended (3)

Three amendments were adopted by consent: in second resolve, to strike the word "consider" before "conduct[ing] field research"; in the second-last whereas, to add "A Chaste and Decent Life"; and in the first resolve, to add "one CTCR member or staff person." Upon closure of debate suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted as amended by hand and voice vote.

To Increase Mission Efforts to Immigrants and Various Cultural Groups in North America

RESOLUTION 1-05A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 15–16); Overture 1-04 (CW, 256)

WHEREAS, The Lord has obliged His Church to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name to all nations (Luke 24:47); and

WHEREAS, Many immigrants who have come to the United States and Canada from all over the world are not Christians; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has a rich history of reaching and assimilating new immigrants; and

WHEREAS, The United States and Canada contain a variety of cultural groups not only as a result of recent immigration but also due to various non-Christian religious and spiritual influences (e.g., "Mormon culture" in several places within western states); and

WHEREAS, The Synod's Office of National Mission (ONM) has resources to locate and call the Synod's attention to the whereabouts of groups currently underserved with the Gospel of Christ; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod recognize and actively promote the fact that the United States and Canada form a mission field with many unreached immigrants, ethnic groups, and non-Christian religious groups; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct ONM to assemble an inventory of existing efforts to bring the Gospel to various immigrant, ethnic, and non-Christian religious groups, whether these efforts have been undertaken, e.g., by the Synod and its agencies, auxiliaries, or recognized service

organizations, or perhaps by parachurch groups that work at least in coordination with the Synod and its congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That ONM make this inventory available and communicate its availability; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the *Set Apart to Serve* initiative to give attention to recruiting professional church workers among present Lutherans who grew up in these immigrant, ethnic, and non-Christian religious groups, as these people can serve as a vital resource in reaching such populations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage its seminaries to ensure that students enrolled in ethnic immigrant or multicultural programs leading to ordination, for example the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology or Center for Hispanic Studies, or any other similar program, receive financial aid that covers a percentage of tuition equal to that received by M.Div. students. This should be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible without depriving the M.Div. or other pastoral formation programs of current financial aid resources; and be it further

Resolved, That ONM work to make available grants to provide short- and longer-term internships and other training for those preparing to do mission work amid these populations; and be it further

Resolved, That ONM conduct demographic research to specify the locations of larger immigrant, ethnic, and non-Christian religious groups who are currently underserved with the Gospel; and be it further

Resolved, That ONM work especially with districts, providing information to help these districts pinpoint where they can begin new ministries among people of various ethnicities and cultures in the United States and Canada during the next triennium; and be it finally

Resolved, That ONM work to make church planting grants and guidance available to those beginning new ethnic/cultural ministries.

Action: Adopted as amended (3)

The resolution was amended by voice vote to add the fifth resolve, its having been rendered, by consent, an encouragement instead of the direction originally proposed. The resolution was adopted as amended by voice vote.

To Direct Districts and Council of Presidents to Provide Strategic Plan for Addressing Wellness of Church Workers

RESOLUTION 1-06A

Reports R1.2.1, R6 (CW, 11–12, 49–50);

Overture 1-08 (CW, 259–60)

WHEREAS, One of the objectives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is to “Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and *provide opportunity for their continuing growth*” (Constitution Article III 3); and

WHEREAS, Another objective of the LCMS is to “Provide evangelical supervision, counsel, *and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers* of the Synod in the performance of their official duties” (Const. Art. III 8); and

WHEREAS, Another objective of the LCMS is to “Aid in providing for the welfare of pastors, teachers, and other church workers, and their families in the event of illness, disability, retirement, special need, or death” (Const. Art. III 10); and

WHEREAS, 2016 Resolution 18-02A tasked the Board for National Mission to develop policies for assessing worker wellness and make recommendations for worker care; and

WHEREAS, A report was made to the 2019 Synod convention stating the progress of such policies, which includes a webpage on worker wellness on the Synod website; and

WHEREAS, Worker wellness and health—physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational—continues to be a significant issue for the church, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, and in light of a March 2022 Barna report indicating that 42 percent of pastors considered quitting full-time ministry in the past year, and 46 percent of pastors under the age of 45 considered the same (Barna Group, www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being, Nov. 16, 2021); and

WHEREAS, Such statistics indicate the need to continue to prioritize these Synod objectives indicated above, which led to the formation of a Worker Well-being Alliance Group consisting of leaders from Concordia Plan Services (CPS), the Office of National Mission (ONM), and members of the Council of Presidents (COP); and

WHEREAS, A significant aspect of ecclesiastical supervision is “evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel ...” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [j]), a responsibility intentionally given to district presidents to be administered more effectively on a local level; therefore be it

Resolved, That the COP, ONM, and CPS be commended for their work on attending to the wellness of church workers and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That the COP prioritize the matter of the wellness of church workers and their families through the

development of a strategic plan for worker care that can be disseminated to and replicated by the district presidents; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2023 Synod in convention direct the district presidents and district boards of directors to establish such plans for the care of workers and their families, utilizing resources available to the COP and resources made available by ONM and CPS to this end.

Action: Adopted (3)

The resolution was read and introduced by the committee and adopted by voice vote.

To Address Mental Health among Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers

RESOLUTION 1-07

Report R1, R1.2.1, R6 (CW, 1–3, 11, 49–50);
Overtures 1-09–13 (CW, 260–63)

WHEREAS, The world is in a fallen state (Genesis 3) and sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2), corrupting creation as it groans for freedom from its state of decay (Rom. 8:21–22), with negative ramifications, including for our mental health; and

WHEREAS, Constitution Article III 8 states that “The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall ... provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers of the Synod in the performance of their official duties”; and

WHEREAS, As reported in *Reporter Online* on Oct. 22, 2021, “50 percent of the Synod’s current, active pastors are 55 years or older” and predicts that “if seminary enrollment and pastor retirements continue at their current rates, the Synod could go from 6,000 to 3,000 pastors in the next 15 years,” a total that does not include pastors resigning from their calls due to mental health concerns or “burnout” (Cheryl Magness, “Set Apart to Serve: Church Worker Recruitment Initiative gets new name,” reporter.lcms.org/2021/set-apart-to-serve-church-worker-recruitment-initiative-gets-new-name); and

WHEREAS, According to Barna research conducted in 2021, 40 percent of America’s pastors rated themselves as average and below in emotional well-being (Barna Group, www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being, Nov. 16, 2021); and

WHEREAS, The results of a Barna research poll conducted in March of 2022 (Barna Group, www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry, April 27, 2022) found that 42 percent of American pastors have “given real, serious consideration to quitting being in full-time ministry within the last year,” which is a 13 percent increase from January 2021 (Barna Group, www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being, Nov. 16, 2021), further indicating mental duress; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the mental health of pastors and other professional church workers is consistent with the eighth objective of the Synod (Const. Art. III 8) and the fifth mission priority of the Synod as both are intended to promote the care and the well-being of pastors and other professional church workers so that the workers may continue serving in the Church’s ministry (R1.2.1, CW, 11); and

WHEREAS, Pastors and other professional church workers can be instrumental in addressing the stigma associated with mental health issues by addressing their own mental health and educating their congregations about mental health challenges; therefore be it

Resolved, That all rostered church workers be encouraged to use the resources available through Concordia Plan Services (such as the Employee Assistance Program) or other similar programs not in conflict with our confession, to obtain mental health care as needed; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations, circuit visitors, and district presidents of the Synod be encouraged to support the mental well-being of pastors and other professional church workers so that the workers may continue serving in the Church’s ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to support their pastors and other professional church workers in times of mental distress; and be it further

Resolved, That each district of the Synod be encouraged to make available a paid or volunteer district mental health advocate for pastors and other professional church workers; and be it finally

Resolved, That the district mental health advocate for pastors and other professional church workers seek to support and encourage them in addressing mental health concerns and to communicate mental health-related educational opportunities, resources, and grants to support the mental well-being of pastors and other professional church workers.

Action: Adopted as read (3)

The resolution was read and introduced by the committee, with the words “seek to” replacing the word “provides” in the final resolve. An amendment failed [Yes: 337; No: 524] to add a resolve: “That the Synod establish a perpetual resource pool from which local congregations and districts can request financial support and grants for church worker sabbaticals, the Synod to establish a process as to how local congregations and districts can request these funds.” The resolution was adopted as read [Yes: 846; No: 33].

To Promote and Commend the Synod's Digital and Online Resources

RESOLUTION 1-08A

Overture 1-14 (CW, 263)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and its entities have many wonderful online/digital resources for individual, group, and congregational study; and

WHEREAS, Many of these resources, including resources in multiple languages, can be found at Lutheran Hour Ministries (*lhm.org*), LCMS School Ministry (*LuthEd.org*), LCMS Youth Ministry (*YouthESource.com*), Concordia Publishing House Faith Courses (*cph.org/faithcourses*) and the Office of National Mission (*makingdisciples.lcms.org*); and

WHEREAS, Many of these resources have options to request a resource or topic; and

WHEREAS, Many of these resources have options to submit resources (including online videos, podcasts, etc.) or topics; and

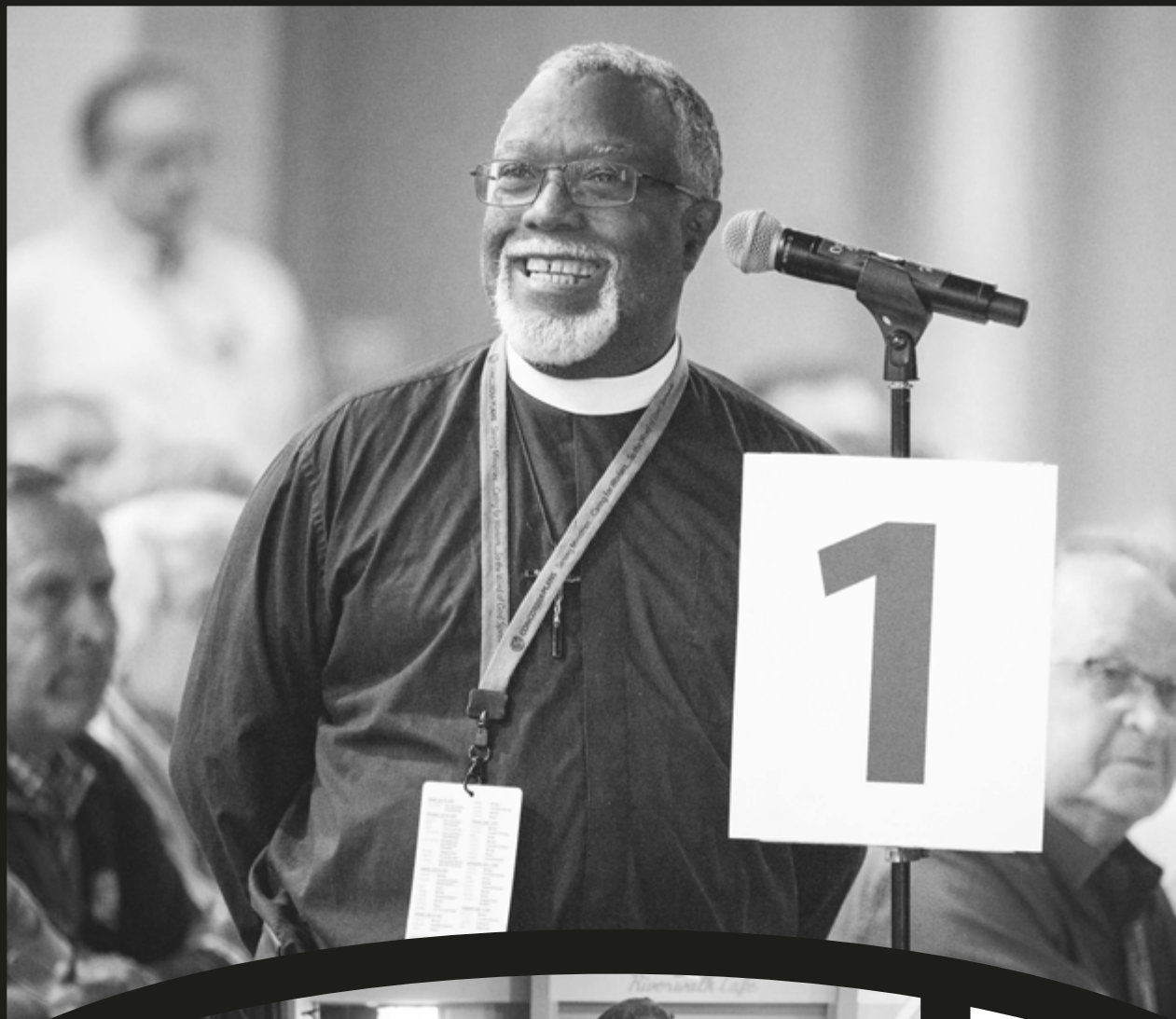
WHEREAS, *Makingdisciples.lcms.org* provides doctrinal review for submitted resources; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend these resources to districts, congregations, church workers, and lay people for use; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the many ways that His Word continues to be spread.

Action: Adopted (3)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.



WE PREACH
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2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

To Commend, Strengthen, and Give Thanks for Alliance Missionary Program

RESOLUTION 2-01

Overture 2-02 (CW, 265–66)

WHEREAS, The Alliance Missionary Program of the Office of International Mission (OIM) is an initiative crossing decades of the Synod's recent history, under which church workers on rosters of the Synod's international Lutheran church partners are called and sent by their own church bodies into foreign mission areas of the Synod, with administrative and financial support and supervisory coordination provided by the OIM; and

WHEREAS, Over the past quadrennium, the Alliance Missionary Program notably has been expanding with respect to the number of church workers called, sent, and supported as they spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, and show mercy in the foreign mission areas of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Alliance Missionary Program currently embraces active alliance missionaries called and sent from Lutheran church partners (located in Brazil, Kenya, Nigeria, Paraguay, Taiwan, and Venezuela), working in mission fields such as: Belize, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Macau, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Uganda, and Uruguay and proclaiming the Gospel in four languages (English, French, Mandarin, and Spanish); and

WHEREAS, Two of these currently serving alliance missionaries began their work in 2003 and 2008; and

WHEREAS, The Alliance Missionary Program draws on long-held generational relationships between the Synod and partner churches, in which accumulated and mutually shared histories and experiences are directly applied to contemporary mission opportunities facing global Lutheranism; and

WHEREAS, The Alliance Missionary Program expands the capacity of the Synod as we jointly take the Gospel into foreign mission areas; and

WHEREAS, Alliance missionaries strongly complement and enrich the work of Synod-called or appointed missionaries; and

WHEREAS, The Alliance Missionary Program affords numerous opportunities for excellent stewardship of collective resources (i.e., funds, materials, manpower, administration) shared between the Synod and partner churches; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod commend OIM for its comprehensive work in continuing, developing, and

expanding the Alliance Missionary Program and for its ongoing efforts to improve the same; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct OIM, working under established policies and oversight provided by the Board for International Mission, to continue to identify and address new opportunities in the Synod's foreign mission areas where alliance missionaries might be appropriately called and deployed to carry out the Church's mission; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage congregations and districts to continue to support the Alliance Missionary Program with gifts, prayers, and coordinated efforts under the supervision of the OIM; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the expansion of the Church's global mission resulting from the Alliance Missionary Program and for all of the Synod's partner churches involved in the Alliance Missionary Program to date; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod give special commendation and thanks to the *Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil* (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil) for its close partnership and engaged codevelopment and strengthening of the Alliance Missionary Program, including its committed investment in the calling, deployment, and continuing support of its pastors in the furtherance of the preaching of Christ crucified.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.



Committee 2 Chairman R. Lee Hagan

To Promote and Collaborate with the Office of International Mission

RESOLUTION 2-02A

Overture 2-01 (CW, 265)

WHEREAS, The Office of International Mission (OIM) carries out its work under the trifold framework of spreading the Gospel, planting Lutheran churches, and showing mercy; and

WHEREAS, Since the 2019 convention, the Synod has been blessed with pleasing progress and outcomes realized by OIM in close collaboration with the Synod's partner churches, congregations and congregation members, contributors, districts, universities and seminaries, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations (RSOs), and synodwide corporate entities, all working to advance key international mission initiatives both ongoing and new; and

WHEREAS, Such pleasing progress and outcomes with respect to these key international mission initiatives have been frequently recorded and joyously reported through various Synod publications, such as the founding of regional seminaries on three continents; establishment of ongoing theological conferences worldwide; deaconess training in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Eurasia regions; and renewed church planting efforts through OIM in Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, and Moldavia; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God and commend and direct the Board for International Mission (BIM) and OIM over the coming triennium to continue to establish and refine policies, strategic and operational plans, and budgets and further develop, expand, and strengthen implementation of the Synod's international mission work inclusive of, but not limited to, the following categories:

- pastoral and diaconal formation and continuing education;
- Lutheran church planting, including collaboration with partner churches;
- the Alliance Missionary Program, deploying pastors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) church partners to LCMS mission fields, with OIM supervision and financial support;
- network-supported missionary funding and other direct support for missionaries called or appointed by the BIM and deployed and supervised by OIM;
- collaboration in partnership and engagement in international mission efforts with direct involvement of the Synod congregations, congregation members, and church workers;
- short-term volunteer mission teams;
- Ministry to the Armed Forces;

- mercy initiatives, including international disaster response, in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry; and
- missionary recruitment;

and be it further

Resolved, That when districts consider support of foreign mission work (i.e., through funding and human resources), they give intentional priority to the work of OIM as a reflection of our walk together; and be it further

Resolved, That districts promote the work of OIM and RSOs working internationally through district communications and, when possible, with representation at district conferences and events; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage congregations and congregation members, contributors, Concordia University System schools, seminaries, auxiliaries, RSOs, and synodwide corporate entities to promote and collaborate with the work of OIM working internationally as a reflection of our walk together.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Strengthen Pastoral Care of Missionaries and Clarify Ecclesiastical Supervision

RESOLUTION 2-03

Overture 2-03 (CW, 266–67)

WHEREAS, The Office of International Mission (OIM), as an expression of unity in Christ and His love, intentionally provides for pastoral and spiritual care and visitation to all Synod missionaries (that is, rostered Synod church workers and laypersons called or appointed and sent by the Board for International Mission [BIM]) by considering carefully their placement and service in proximity to regularly available Word and Sacrament ministry, often through congregations of partner churches, or alternatively through locally available OIM chaplains; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's missionaries face exceptional circumstances related to the nature of their unique work and the effects on their families in residing and working in locations far from their originating U.S.-based support; and

WHEREAS, It must be acknowledged that it is difficult for home congregations and pastors based in the U.S. to provide Word and Sacrament ministry, pastoral and spiritual care, and visitation to the Synod's missionaries; and

WHEREAS, The OIM is thankful to God for the ongoing prayers and active expressions of love and visitation provided by home congregations, pastors, and districts based in the U.S. to the Synod's missionaries; and

2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

WHEREAS, The provision of ecclesiastical supervision to the Synod's missionaries likewise presents practical challenges and ambiguities in roles and responsibilities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod, reflecting a desire for expeditious and continuous improvement wherever feasible, encourage the BIM and OIM in collaboration and consultation with the Council of Presidents (COP) to identify and implement measures to improve the pastoral and spiritual care of the Synod's missionaries working in the foreign mission areas of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the BIM, working over the 2023–26 triennium in collaboration and consultation with the Chief Mission Officer, the OIM, and the COP, to assess and revise current policies, procedures, and practices pertaining to the Synod's ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod's missionaries who are called or appointed and deployed to work in foreign mission areas of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Commend Synod Seminaries for Work in International Witness

RESOLUTION 2-04A

Reports R1, R13.1–2 (CW, 1, 61–64); President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24)

WHEREAS, Many current opportunities to expand the reach of confessional Lutheranism have made this a time of great mission potential for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), as requests from Lutheran church bodies worldwide for seminaries and programs of theological education and pastoral formation continue to grow; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW) provide theological education not just to future pastors and deaconesses of the Synod, but also to pastors, theological educators, and other servants from LCMS partner churches and other emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies; and

WHEREAS, CSL and CTSFW work in foreign mission areas of the Synod is carried out in close coordination and collaboration with the LCMS Office of International Mission, LCMS Church Relations, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; and

WHEREAS, Synod President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison stated in his President's Report, Part 1, "Without our strong faculties, confessional Lutheranism would be horribly crippled globally," since many students "come to our seminaries and return to their home countries making vital contributions to their churches in doctrine and life"; and

WHEREAS, President Harrison also noted that "our faculty travel the globe, bringing the solid biblical teaching of the LCMS and strengthening the mission of the Gospel exponentially" (Report R1, "President," *Workbook*, 1); and

WHEREAS, CSL and CTSFW have current working relationships supporting theological education in Taiwan, Dominican Republic, Latvia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Brazil, Ethiopia, Norway, Finland, and, more generally, across all four of OIM's global regions (Eurasia, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean); and

WHEREAS, CSL and CTSFW have graduate students from 25 different countries where the Synod has partner churches or emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies; and

WHEREAS, CSL has established, as one of the components of its current strategic plan, to "[r]esource international Lutheranism with clear biblical and confessional Lutheran teaching" (Report R13.1, "Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri," Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger, *Workbook*, 62); and

WHEREAS, CTSFW has experience in providing theological education worldwide and has established an accredited extension site in Gothenburg, Sweden, which offers a Master of Sacred Theology for students from Scandinavia and Europe; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod commend CSL and CTSFW, their presidents, and their boards of regents for the commitment and support of theological education among LCMS partner churches and other emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies; and be it further

Resolved, That faculties of both seminaries be commended for their faithfulness and dedication to confessional Lutheran teaching at Lutheran seminaries, conferences, and other venues worldwide; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries be commended for continuing to assist in training theological educators from partner churches and other emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies through their respective graduate schools; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage her congregations to support and give thanks to God for CSL and CTSFW in the work of theological education and pastoral formation worldwide.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Provide Resources for Discerning Validity of Requests to Support International Mission Work

RESOLUTION 2-05

Overture 2-04 (CW, 267)

WHEREAS, The Synod's church workers, congregations, congregation members, districts, universities and seminaries, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations (RSOs), and synodwide corporate entities are regularly approached by organizations or individuals requesting consideration for support—in the form of financial contributions, materials, or manpower, volunteer or otherwise—for various international mission initiatives, objectives, and actions; and

WHEREAS, Certain requests for such support have little or no discernable connection or coordination with the Synod's confessional and scriptural standards, with Synod mission objectives and priorities, or with boards and staff authorized by the Synod to carry out the same or similar international mission initiatives, objectives, and actions; and

WHEREAS, Those receiving requests for such support sincerely desire to expand the church's mission and ministry of the Gospel in a manner that (1) exhibits faithful stewardship of God's graciously provided resources for such worthy endeavors; (2) reflects a continuing determination to walk together as a Synod in unity of confession, purpose, and action; and (3) demonstrates such unity in an intentional and praiseworthy manner; and

WHEREAS, Where proper guidance is not available to those acting on such requests, it may cause confusion in our common work and life together, and protocols established with partner churches may be breached, resulting in unintended offense against partner churches (Bylaw 3.8.3) regarding mutually acknowledged rights and work in fellowship with the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod direct the Office of International Mission (OIM) to prepare practical resources to assist church workers, congregations, congregation members, districts, universities and seminaries, auxiliaries, RSOs, and synodwide corporate entities who are approached by organizations or individuals requesting consideration for support (i.e., in the distribution of literature or other media, provision of opportunities for presentations to individuals or groups, financial contributions, materials or manpower, volunteer or otherwise) of international mission initiatives, objectives, or actions; and be it further

Resolved, That in the preparation of these resources, OIM develop and disseminate tools such as guidelines, frequently asked questions, survey questions, or other assessments; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod direct districts and encourage church workers, congregations, universities and seminaries, auxiliaries, RSOs, and synodwide corporate entities to make full use of such resources.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Study Synod Relationships with Independent Lutheran Congregations in Foreign Mission Areas

RESOLUTION 2-06A

President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has a long history of working relationships (provision of church workers and/or funding) with independent Lutheran congregations located in its foreign mission areas; and

WHEREAS, Some of these congregations have expressed interest in becoming members of the Synod with the intention of strengthening their confession, mission, and ministry while enjoying the privileges of membership in the Synod (ability to call rostered LCMS members, accessing the services of synodwide corporate entities, etc.); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for International Mission (BIM), in collaboration and consultation with the Council of Presidents, study the Synod's relationship with independent Lutheran congregations in foreign mission areas; and be it further

Resolved, That the BIM, as a part of its study, provide recommendations to the 2026 Synod convention regarding the possibility and advisability of developing a mechanism to receive independent Lutheran congregations in foreign mission areas into membership in the Synod.

Action: Adopted (6)

With the chair's explanation and upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Commend Use and Attendance of FOROs

RESOLUTION 2-07A

President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24)

WHEREAS, A FORO, Spanish for *forum*, is a model for collaboration in which congregations, pastors, districts, and institutions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) partner with the Office of International Mission (OIM) in spreading the Gospel, planting Lutheran churches, and showing mercy; and

2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

WHEREAS, The FORO includes discussion and dialogue of the plan for planting Lutheran churches in that field through finances, short-term teams, and vocational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, We are directed by the Lord Jesus to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20), and in Acts 1:8, “... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”; and

WHEREAS, Districts and congregations support Synod’s partner churches through FOROs such as Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela and LCMS missions, such as Belize, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Uganda; and

WHEREAS, A FORO invites districts and their congregations to participate and build partnerships through a FORO to support OIM with the planting of Lutheran mission churches through mission education, short-term teams, and financial opportunities; and

WHEREAS, These small Lutheran church plants are encouraged through the FORO visitation and are joyful to witness that the Church (the Body of Christ) is larger than themselves in this place and time; and

WHEREAS, In these countries OIM supports FOROs and this furthers the mission; and

WHEREAS, Participation of districts and congregations in these FOROs helps the district and their congregations to witness and support the spread of the Gospel of Christ crucified; and

WHEREAS, Church planting is furthered through FOROs, and districts and congregations are enlightened and strengthened through their visitation in supporting preaching Christ crucified; and

WHEREAS, OIM aims to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, and show mercy to the ends of the earth; therefore be it

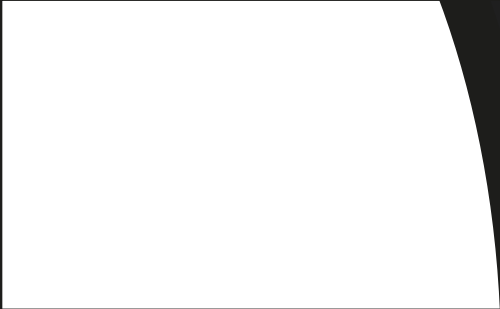
Resolved, That OIM be commended for the development of the FORO model; and be it further

Resolved, That OIM apply the FORO model in other regions; and be it finally

Resolved, That districts and congregations be encouraged to participate in a FORO in order to strengthen our walk together as “We Preach Christ crucified” to all nations.

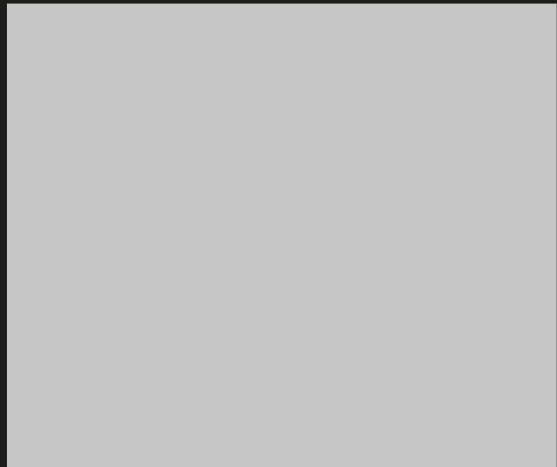
Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.



WE PREACH
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1 COR. 1:18-25



3. MERCY

To Encourage and Support More Fervent Teaching, Proclamation, and Efforts to Promote Culture of Life among God's People

RESOLUTION 3-01

Overtures 3-01, 04 (CW, 269–70)

WHEREAS, All life is valuable to God especially the most vulnerable (John 3:16–17; Psalm 139:13–16; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44; Psalm 31:14–15; Job 10:9–12; Matt. 6:26; 18:10; Psalm 82:3–4; Small Catechism [SC] III, First Article); and

WHEREAS, God created us to care about other people and to help them in their times of need (SC I, Fifth Commandment); and

WHEREAS, Mothers, fathers, and children are a gift from God entrusted to each other's care to form a family and serve Him through their love for each other (Gen. 1:27–28; Eph. 5:22–6:4; Psalm 127:3); and

WHEREAS, For the last 50 years the United States of America has dealt with the reality of legalized abortion, which is murder and transgresses God's law in the Fifth Commandment, which teaches that we are “not to hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need” (SC I 9–10); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has long worked to promote a culture of life; and

WHEREAS, A one-million-dollar grant has been established by the LCMS available as matching funds for congregations to support local life issues; and

WHEREAS, There are many pro-life organizations which work to build a culture of life, such as Lutheran Family Service, A Place of Refuge, Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, Lutherans For Life, and many others like these; and

WHEREAS, Establishing a culture of life begins in our churches and communities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for His unending mercies, especially in overturning *Roe v. Wade*, thus preserving the lives of many unborn children; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry continue to support congregations in establishing new mercy ministries that support a culture of life; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry provide support and training materials for congregations, districts, and recognized service organizations (RSOs) to write grants and support their efforts; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod continue to extend life ministry support and training materials, including but not limited to resources for policy manuals, guidance to life ministry agencies, and encouragement to access grants from allied institutions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod leadership encourage congregational involvement with life ministry in ways such as education, advocacy, and human care efforts (e.g., forming a life team, participating in sidewalk counseling, contacting legislators); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod, its congregations, districts, and RSOs work to provide care for those suffering from the effects of abortion and encourage God's people to show mercy by providing options to abortion such as adoption, pre- and postnatal care, housing support, etc.; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage all pastors and congregations to teach and proclaim human life as sacred and, in word and deed, live out mercy, life, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ our Savior (John 10:10).

Action: Adopted as amended (2)

It was moved and adopted to amend by inserting the first resolve. It was moved but declined to amend to add a second-last resolve as follows: “That the Synod expand its definition of life ministry to include a whole life approach to include support for gun violence prevention initiatives, abolition of the death penalty, advocacy for proper health care provided to all people, etc.” At the orders of the day and without objection the chair put the resolution as amended to a vote. The resolution as amended was adopted by voice vote.



Committee 3 Chairman Brady L. Finner

To Increase Awareness among Synod Congregations of Human Trafficking

RESOLUTION 3-02A

Overture 3-03 (CW, 269–70)

WHEREAS, God created all life and sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem all life, and He desires that all people come to the knowledge of Him, be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and have abundant life in Him (John 10:10); and

WHEREAS, St. Paul called the church to repent of sexual immorality of all kinds (1 Cor. 5:1–2; 6:12–20) and God repeatedly worked repentance in His people and saved them from physical and spiritual prostitution (Exodus 32; Deut. 23:18; Judges 2:17; 1 Kings 11:5; Hos. 1–14; Ezekiel 16); and

WHEREAS, God is able to forgive and restore all who are in bondage to any slavery and sin (1 Sam. 7:4; 2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 23:3; Psalm 51; Luke 8:1–2; John 8:1–11, 31–36; Heb. 11:32), and we by God’s grace are taught to repent of all sins of which we are aware and unaware (Small Catechism V 16); and

WHEREAS, God, the Father of mercies, has called us to comfort all with the comfort He gives us (2 Cor. 1:3–4) and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 19:19; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:29); and

WHEREAS, Human trafficking, including forced labor and sex trafficking, affects an estimated 24.9 million victims worldwide at any given time; and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission (ONM) and recognized service organizations (RSOs) have addressed human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, Many people in Synod congregations are unaware of the magnitude of this deplorable act against humanity; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct ONM to research and share synodwide—through publications, social media, and other sources—churches, schools, and RSOs who are having an impact on their communities plagued by human trafficking, as a witness to the Synod of ministries for implementation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its church workers and lay people to become educated regarding this issue and be proactive in their response; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commit to pray that almighty God would by His power bless and direct all law enforcement agencies in their fight against human trafficking and that He would through His Church and other relief organizations provide healing, support, and ministry to the victims of human trafficking and that He would bring an end to these deplorable acts.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Continue the Synod’s Efforts to Address Mental Health and Mental Illness

RESOLUTION 3-03A

Overture 3-05 (CW, 270–71)

Preamble

Over the course of the 2019–23 quadrennium, the Office of National Mission (ONM) staff reflected on how best to respond to the Synod’s ongoing desired goals, objectives, and possible beneficial actions pertaining to mental health and mental illness. Mental illness is considered the most severe yet diagnosable form of a mental health problem, with diagnosable mental illness affecting 20+ percent of the U.S. population in any given year. As ONM leadership considered 2019 Resolution 3-04A, “To Encourage Training of Our Pastors, Church Workers and Congregations to Recognize and Provide Pastoral Care for Those Suffering from Clinical Depression, Mental Illnesses, and Other Mental Disorders” (*Proceedings*, 131), particularly its four resolves,

Resolved, That our seminaries, universities, and recognized service organizations be encouraged to continue to strive for improved training in mental illness, health, and wellness for those studying to be pastors and church workers; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the seminaries and universities to include continuing education opportunities and resources regarding the topic of mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod districts work to provide additional training to all workers through partnerships with our seminaries, our Concordias, and other trusted experts in the field; and be it finally

Resolved, That we encourage our pastors, church workers, and congregations to actively advocate for mental health and wellness in their congregations, among their people, and provide Christ-centered compassion and ministerial supportive care to those in need through prayer, private confession and absolution, and the means of grace,

ONM eventually determined to establish an ad hoc task force to undertake further study, immediately feasible actions, and the development of recommendations aimed at future Synod actions and initiatives to address mental health and mental illness issues among both church workers and laity. ONM is grateful for the direct participation of the following individuals on the ad hoc task force, chaired by Rev. Steven Briel, D. Litt. (chair, LCMS Board for National Mission [BNM]);

3. MERCY

Mr. Steve Gruenwald (Concordia Plan Services); Deaconess Dr. Tiffany Manor (ONM); Dr. Richard Marrs (faculty member, Concordia Seminary); Ms. Jenna McMiller (ONM, task force secretary); Dr. Gerhard Munding (Chair, Concordia University System Board of Directors); Rev. Daniel Ognoskie (Zion Lutheran, Wilton, Iowa); Dr. Todd Peperkorn (faculty member, Concordia Theological Seminary); Dr. Stephen Saunders (faculty member, Marquette University); Ms. Martha Ulmer (Augsburg Lutheran, Shawnee, Kan.); Rev. Wayne Palmer (Concordia Publishing House).

Following the diminishment of the COVID-19 pandemic, over the past two years this ad hoc task force has subsequently undertaken a number of considerations and actions, including but not limited to:

- preparation of various mental health and mental illness resources (textual and audiovisual)—most notably resources aimed to assist in the recognition of mental illness—for distribution to the Synod’s church workers via print and electronic means (commenced and continuing), i.e., those available at the Synod’s website:
 - www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/church-worker-wellness;
 - www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/health-ministry;
- preparation of accessible reference tools pointing church workers, congregations, and congregation members to additional useful resources pertaining to mental health and mental illness (commenced and continuing); and
- an issue of *The Lutheran Witness* (February 2023) devoted to the topic of mental health and mental illness.

Proposed Action

WHEREAS, Mental health issues are distressing, disabling, common, and costly; and

WHEREAS, Mental health issues include diagnosable mental illnesses and less severe but distressing and disabling mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, Decades of research show that mental illness affects one in five persons of all ages in any given year; and

WHEREAS, Many persons experience mental health problems that are very distressing but are not serious enough to warrant diagnosis of mental illness; and

WHEREAS, Families, spouses, siblings, children, and friends are impacted by mental health issues of loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Mental health issues are similar to physical and medical issues in that they affect Christians as well as any other person; and

WHEREAS, Persons seeking help for mental health issues face stigma and bias against them; and

WHEREAS, Research clearly shows that persons with mental health issues are likely to seek help from their church; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that persons with mental health issues have a preference to seek help from their church rather than from a health professional; and

WHEREAS, Individuals seeking help from their pastor are likely to receive vital ongoing and spiritual care and counsel; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ commands His followers to show mercy to those in need and to carry one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2); and

WHEREAS, Members of the Body of Christ throughout the Synod desire to use their personal and professional abilities to identify and to serve the souls within our families and communities who have mental health needs; and

WHEREAS, Those wanting to provide such help should never take the place of mental health professionals but will desire to assist through recognition of potential mental health problems, providing mercy and spiritual care at every opportunity, and referral to mental health professionals as necessary and appropriate; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s church workers, congregations, schools, and congregation members have limited capacity and training to help for reasons related to inadequate awareness and understanding of mental health issues; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm 2019 Res. 3-04A, “To Encourage Training of Our Pastors, Church Workers, and Congregations to Recognize and Provide Pastoral Care for Those Suffering from Clinical Depression, Mental Illnesses, and Other Mental Disorders”; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God and commend ONM, in particular, for their efforts to date, forming its ad hoc task force, to address the broad spectrum of issues related to mental health and recognizing mental health needs among the Synod’s church workers, as well as members of congregations and schools, encouraging effective Christian mental health education initiatives in service of those goals; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the continued furtherance of such intentional efforts by leadership and coordination coming from within the ONM Health Ministry program unit (housed under ONM’s Human Care and Ministerial Support area) under established policies and oversight provided by the BNM; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod discourage its members and congregations from attaching stigma to or being biased against persons seeking help for mental health issues; and be it further

Resolved, That these intentional efforts include the identification of potential opportunities for easily accessed and widely available mental health resources and programs already existing and the development of new and distinctly Christian mental health resources and programs for use by

3. MERCY

church workers, congregations, schools, congregation members, families, communities, districts, and the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That all efforts to serve souls with mental health needs will also consistently recognize and honor the need to provide vital spiritual resources and gifts available only with the provision of spiritual care; and be it further

Resolved, That these intentional efforts be focused on the overarching goal of equipping and caring for our church workers, congregations, schools, and congregation members to better help persons both within and outside the Church who are directly and personally or indirectly, through family and other connections, affected by mental health problems or mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM Health Ministry program unit, in identifying and coordinating such intentional efforts and providing such resources and programs, consider and employ all reasonable means available to the Synod for the promotion of mental health, including the provision of textual and audiovisual media distributed by print and electronic means, conferences, and other training events, and closely coordinated collaboration within and between the Synod's agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations; and be it finally

Resolved, That the ONM Health Ministry program unit provide a standalone report on its progress against the above-listed objectives over the 2023–26 triennium to the 2026 Synod convention.

Action: Adopted as amended (6)

An amendment was allowed and adopted by consent at the closure of debate, to add the seventh whereas and the fourth resolve. Thereafter the resolution was adopted by an immediate and unanimous voice vote.

To Commend and Give Thanks for Synod Work regarding Disaster Response

RESOLUTION 3-04A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 12–13)

WHEREAS, Our gracious Heavenly Father richly and daily provides us with all that we need to support this body and life (Small Catechism I) and continues to provide for us, especially in the midst of disaster, through various God-pleasing vocations; and

WHEREAS, God calls us to recognize our neighbors' needs and to love them by showing mercy; and

WHEREAS, Jesus says, "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39); and

WHEREAS, We are blessed that we might bless others, especially in times of disaster; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has for many years focused on supporting its members and all of God's people during disaster; and

WHEREAS, The Church at large has been faithful in supporting such disaster response across the United States and the world with financial, physical, and spiritual support; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Disaster Response has continued to grow and learn to be more effective in its response from its inception; and

WHEREAS, In the last four years, the LCMS has responded to many disasters nationally and internationally, including Hurricane Dorian; Hurricane Laura; Hurricane Sally; Hurricane Ida; Hurricane Ian; North Alabama spring 2021 tornadoes; DOXOLOGY fire respite in California; medical supplies and clothing for Native American Reservations, Texas/Mexico border missions, and the Appalachians; pantries; food shelters; and Veteran Services; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks for the faithful, diligent, and responsible actions of the church, its auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations (e.g., Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Orphan Grain Train) as it partners in response to disasters with the many different organization and individual congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Disaster Response continue to produce training, resources, and grants to serve the Synod and our communities and continue to provide to those in need; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its members to continue to support the mercy work of LCMS Disaster Response with prayer for all those who suffer from all manner of disasters, to participate in Lutheran Early Response Team training, to offer volunteer assistance when there is the opportunity, and to provide financial resources to assist those in need, as we show Christ's love through our acts of mercy.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Recognize and Thank the Synod for Mercy Shown to God's People through COVID-19 Pandemic

RESOLUTION 3-05

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 10); Overtures 3-06–07 (CW, 271–72)

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic was catastrophic to all people in their vocations; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily ended in-person schooling in the middle of the school year, furloughed workers, caused them to pivot towards a digital presence for which they were unprepared, and created stress upon the financial well-being of many of their workers; and

3. MERCY

WHEREAS, Many of our teachers and school workers were without the additional tuition or budget income needed to support the immediate response to the transition and additional regulations that were placed upon them; and

WHEREAS, Frontline workers, first responders, and healthcare workers went above and beyond their regular vocational obligations in serving those in need; and

WHEREAS, Congregations, church workers, and related organizations were challenged with providing spiritual care and the extension of mercy during this difficult time; and

WHEREAS, Many recognized service organizations (RSOs) of our Synod were also without the means to adapt to these additional burdens and struggled financially; and

WHEREAS, Many of our congregations and church workers bore a great financial burden in adapting to new realities and maintaining ongoing care for the members of our churches; and

WHEREAS, The need for compassionate support and financial assistance was great; and

WHEREAS, The districts of the Synod, the Office of National Mission (ONM), and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund worked together to identify funds for immediate assistance for all who served in Lutheran ministries; and

WHEREAS, Many of our church, school, and child development workers, rostered and non-rostered, benefited from this generous act of compassion; and

WHEREAS, In response to the pandemic, ONM provided the following grants of mercy and care: 221 Esther 4:14 national grants totaling \$244,767 to congregations in 35 districts, \$1.5 million for clergy and commissioned minister “Take Heart!” respite retreats, 976 Soldiers of the Cross-Amplified grants in 28 districts totaling over \$1.6 million, and 15 district pandemic resiliency grants totaling \$29,000 in support of district-led pandemic care for non-clergy workers; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention publicly give thanks to God for His mercy, faithfulness, and love to His people during the pandemic; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention thank the Lord for all of His people serving in their vocations during the pandemic, the congregations, districts, recognized service organizations (RSOs), and agencies of Synod for their works of mercy, and for the generosity of His people for supporting all who serve in our churches, schools, childcare centers, and RSOs.

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1 COR. 1:18-25



4. LIFE TOGETHER

To Commend and Encourage Continued Use of the *Koinonia* Project and Give Thanks to God for the Sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.

RESOLUTION 4-01A

Overture 4-14 (CW, 279); Resolution 4-01 (TB, 1:101)

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach us to love one another and seek unity (1 Peter 1:3–8; Col. 3:12–14; Eph. 4:3); and

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35); and

WHEREAS, In a fractured society, where division and discord are sinfully celebrated and encouraged, the church has the privilege to give witness to Christ and His undeserved mercy and grace for all; and

WHEREAS, The members of the church, including the workers, are to be the light of Christ and the example of forgiveness, restoration, and love; and

WHEREAS, The *Koinonia* Project materials were written by the sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr., are available for review (lcms.org/about/leadership/president/koinonia-project), and are currently used by the Synod’s Council of Presidents (COP) at each meeting; and

WHEREAS, The *Koinonia* Project provides members of God’s church with a means through which we pray God will give greater harmony in our Synod’s “Life Together” by showing where there is agreement and disagreement, and identifying how we as a church can move toward greater unity in teaching and practice; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage the spirit of *koinonia* (fraternal conversation) throughout all the members and entities of Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the COP to continue the use of the *Koinonia* Project among our professional church workers and laity; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod and district leadership encourage all professional church workers, lay leaders, and others across the Synod to gain competence in their ability to address conflict and promote biblical reconciliation for God’s purposes in congregations, schools, and families in our nation and the world; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention gives thanks to God for the sainted Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr., for his indefatigable service to the Synod as a pastor, district president, and Synod first vice-president and particularly for

his work writing, producing, and implementing the *Koinonia* Project, by rising to sing stanzas 4 and 5 of “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” found on page 75 of the 2023 Synod convention *Daily Worship* booklet.

Action: Res. 4-01 referred as amended (1); Res. 4-01A adopted as amended (9)

Res. 4-01 was introduced in Session 1 and amended to add two whereases and one resolve (see minutes), whereupon it was referred to committee. The committee returned in Session 9 with Res. 4-01A, which was accepted by general consent as a substitute. Its being corrected as to stanzas to be sung upon its adoption, it was adopted by voice vote.

To Affirm and Continue *Making Disciples for Life* as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–26 Triennium

RESOLUTION 4-02

Overture 4-01 (CW, 273)

WHEREAS, The Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20) is our Lord’s mandate and is at the center of the Church’s mission and ministry; and

WHEREAS, Disciples of Jesus are baptized repentant sinners who believe in Christ for salvation by faithfully



Committee 4 Chairman Christopher S. Esget

4. LIFE TOGETHER

receiving the Lord's preaching, catechesis, and Sacraments in the fellowship of the Christian congregation; trust in His Word for all aspects of human life; confess faith in Christ before the world; and live in Christ and His forgiveness in Christian vocation toward others; and

WHEREAS, The apostle Peter encourages the disciples of Christ to always be prepared to make a defense of their faith with gentleness and respect to anyone who asks of them about the hope they have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15); and

WHEREAS, The Small Catechism's Table of Duties describes how being a disciple of Christ touches every station in which Christians find themselves, such as civil authorities and citizens, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, children and youth, employers and workers; and

WHEREAS, *Making Disciples for Life* was first adopted in 2019 (Resolution 4-03A) as the triennial mission and ministry emphasis of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS); and

WHEREAS, The current triennial mission and ministry emphasis *Making Disciples for Life*, established in 2019, has only just begun to serve our Synod and give direction to districts and congregations and to guide the policymaking work of mission and ministry through the Board for National Mission (BNM) and Board for International Mission (BIM); and

WHEREAS, The BNM and BIM under Bylaws 3.8.2.2 and 3.8.3.2 began conversations with the leadership of every district of the Synod to gather information and input to help facilitate the assessment and evaluation of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphasis with the plan to continue ongoing fraternal communication with district presidents and staffs over the next triennium toward enhancing Synod *koinonia*, unity, and cooperation in the Synod's mission and ministry; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm *Making Disciples for Life* as its mission and ministry emphasis for the 2023–26 triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Office of National Mission (ONM) and Office of International Mission (OIM), in response to fraternal discussions with the districts regarding their unique contexts, challenges, and opportunities, and consistent with policies established by the BNM and BIM, to support congregations, schools, circuits, and districts to:

- plant new congregations and schools;
- strengthen existing congregations and schools;
- evangelize the lost;
- retain the faithful;
- care for church workers;
- engage in international mission in partnership with the OIM; and

- engage in domestic mission with the support of the ONM through the district offices;

and be it further

Resolved, That the BNM and BIM increase opportunities for conversation and collaboration with the districts of the Synod toward greater “walking together” under the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphasis; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage all LCMS districts, congregations, and schools to ground their local mission and ministry upon the Synod's emphasis of *Making Disciples for Life* to the glory of God and for the extension of Christ's kingdom; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention directs the Synod's mission boards, under Bylaws 3.8.2.2 and 3.8.3.2, to continue to assess, clarify, and further refine the process whereby a recommendation for the triennial mission and ministry emphasis is brought before the Synod in convention for consideration and adoption; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod's mission boards, after fraternal discussions with districts and members of the Synod over the next triennium, recommend a new mission and ministry emphasis for consideration at the 2026 Synod convention (Bylaws 3.8.2.2 and 3.8.3.2).

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Affirm and Continue Mission Priorities for 2023–26 Triennium

RESOLUTION 4-03

Overture 4-05 (CW, 274–75)

Preamble

The Board for National Mission (BNM) and the Board for International Mission (BIM) give thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the blessing of mutual conversation, encouragement, and insight shared between representatives of the BNM, the BIM, and the Synod's 35 district presidents along with members of their respective staffs over this past quadrennium. This expression of walking together was a powerful reminder that the Synod must always continue to foster and strengthen its unity through face-to-face meetings, flowing out of a salutary commitment to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith” (Constitution Article III 1). One of the main goals of these meetings was to discuss and evaluate the current mission and ministry priorities of the Synod. From these and other considerations, the BNM and BIM recommend affirming and continuing the Synod's current seven mission priorities for continued development and implementation into the Synod's coming triennium (2023–26).

4. LIFE TOGETHER

WHEREAS, Our commitment as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations and workers is to walk together with the Word of God as the only norm and guide for doctrine and practice; and

WHEREAS, Bylaws 3.8.2.2 (BNM) and 3.8.3.2 (BIM) direct the Synod's mission boards "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 develop accordingly a joint overture to the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto"; and

WHEREAS, Invaluable feedback was gathered from the Synod's two mission boards' meetings with the Synod's 35 district presidents along with members of their respective staffs, which demonstrated a spirit of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration; and

WHEREAS, Synod district presidents, along with members of their respective staffs, had a mixed reaction to the Synod's current mission priorities. Many recognized them as a self-evident description of the Bible's theology and practice of mission and ministry. Others indicated that, while faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, the priorities did not play a significant role in giving direction to their work at the district level; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's Constitution states that we shall "1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) ...; 6. Aid congregations by providing a variety of resources and opportunities for recognizing, promoting, expressing, conserving, and defending their confessional unity in the true faith; 7. Encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith" (Const. Art. III); and

WHEREAS, The Synod's current mission priorities are contemporary applications of the Synod's Article III objectives; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's current mission priorities were previously affirmed at two preceding Synod conventions (2016 Resolution 4-02A; 2019 Res. 4-03A); and

WHEREAS, The Synod and the baptized faithful were wearied and distracted by an exhausting worldwide pandemic for over two years together with escalating threats of war, internal domestic violence, ongoing disasters brought by fire and flood, and a growing left-hand kingdom divide, all of which combined to challenge our ability to further promote, develop, and inculcate the Synod's current mission priorities; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's current mission priorities clearly uphold both the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28) to make disciples of all nations as well as the Great Commands of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 22) to love the Lord our God and our neighbors; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to each district president and staff who met with the BNM and BIM for such collegial conversations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the Synod's current seven mission priorities as they exemplify our fervor in being faithful to the Lord and loving our neighbor, and also encourage their use to affirm our unity as Synod as lived out by congregations, national servant-leaders, district servant-leaders, and circuit servant-leaders in accord with the Synod's current mission priorities:

- plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches;
- support and expand theological education;
- perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries;
- collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness;
- promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers;
- enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry; and
- strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design;

and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage servant-leaders of the districts and national mission boards to commit to regular, frequent, and fraternal meetings in keeping with our shared *koinonia* at all levels of Synod, so that our walking together consistently demonstrates our common confession, especially as plans are carried out under the Synod's mission priorities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod's mission boards and mission offices serve, challenge, and inspire the Synod's districts to identify the best ways to implement the Synod's mission priorities in the cultural contexts, challenges, and opportunities for the Gospel in each district for the best possible provision of services and resources for congregations, schools, and circuits; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Synod's mission boards, after fraternal discussions with districts and members of the Synod over the next triennium, to recommend possible revisions to the mission priorities and possible bylaw revisions that would articulate both the process for developing mission priorities and how those priorities would function in the mission and ministry of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Give Thanks for Spanish Language Hymnal *Himnario Luterano* and Commend Its Use

RESOLUTION 4-04

Overture 4-11 (CW, 278)

WHEREAS, Over the past quadrennium, the Office of International Mission (OIM) Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, in mutually supportive planning, financial contributions, extensive collaboration, and intensive work assignments jointly with the *Iglesia Luterana Confesional de Chile* (Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile, ILCC), the *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana del Paraguay* (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay, IELPA), the *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Argentina* (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina, IELA), and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF), and with additional generous financial support from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, has completed required major tasks in the codevelopment, testing, and production of the first edition of a new Spanish language hymnal, *Himnario Luterano*; and

WHEREAS, *Himnario Luterano* was submitted to and passed The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) doctrinal review (described in Bylaw section 1.9); and

WHEREAS, An initial print run of 19,000 copies of the first edition of *Himnario Luterano* resulted in the distribution of approximately 3,000 copies to LCMS congregations and individuals located in the U.S., with the balance of approximately 16,000 copies distributed to congregations and individuals located elsewhere globally (20+ countries), with most of these copies distributed in the LAC region of OIM; and

WHEREAS, In preliminary testing and in the subsequent distribution of copies from the initial print run, *Himnario Luterano* has been received by its users with joy, thanksgiving, and strongly positive general acclaim; and

WHEREAS, A second edition of *Himnario Luterano* has been prepared and a corresponding second print run has been completed, correcting typographical and printing errors, most of which were of a minor housekeeping nature; and

WHEREAS, Complimentary digital media (i.e., phone app, Kindle) versions of *Himnario Luterano* are under development, with the objective of making the hymnal accessible to an even wider global audience; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the newly completed Spanish language hymnal, *Himnario Luterano*, and commend its use; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod's congregations, agencies, and church partners, as well as other Synod-related entities, be encouraged to make extensive use of the new hymnal in Spanish-speaking contexts; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for all partners involved in the development and production of *Himnario Luterano*, especially the *Iglesia Luterana Confesional*

de Chile, the *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana del Paraguay*, the *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Argentina*, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, and the OIM LAC region.

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

To Encourage In-Person Corporate Worship

RESOLUTION 4-06

Overtures 4-06–08 (CW, 275–77)

WHEREAS, God's people are called to "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Third Commandment; cf. Ex. 20:8); and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture exhorts us: "... let us consider how 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, Numerous epistles are written to the saints in certain places and were read publicly when they gathered together, for example, "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2); and

WHEREAS, Paul exhorts Timothy to focus upon the public reading and teaching of God's Word: "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:13–16); and

WHEREAS, Our Savior comes to us through His Word and Sacraments as means of grace to forgive, strengthen, comfort, and guide us as His people as He bids us to do in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted corporate worship; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention urge its pastors and congregations to uphold the Third Commandment by gathering together weekly for worship in celebration of the Lord's Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the Synod be encouraged to prioritize in-person, embodied corporate worship, and membership in the local congregation; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations produce a study of the Third Commandment that addresses its understanding in the Old Testament, in the New

Testament, and in the Lutheran Confessions, especially in Luther's catechisms, as well as its application to Christian worship today, and includes a Bible study for congregational use.

Action: Adopted (9)

The resolution was read and introduced by the committee, it being noted that the contemplated study would be distributed electronically. It was moved but declined to amend to strike the first resolve. It was also moved and declined to add a resolve, "That the LCMS in convention repent for having forsaken gathering together in corporate worship during 2020 and not taking a strong stand of encouraging congregations to physically gather." Upon closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 790; No: 72].

To Give Thanks for Preservation of the Gospel in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

RESOLUTION 4-07

Overture 4-18 (CW, 280–81)

Preamble

On Feb. 19, 1974, a schism in the life of the Synod culminated in what some refer to as the "Walkout" or "Exile" from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. At the heart of the controversy was the authority and interpretation of Holy Scripture and the truthfulness and objectivity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The controversy divided families, congregations, and every institution of Synod. It impacted brotherly love and fraternal discourse. It resulted in the formation of Christ Seminary-Seminex ("Sem-in-Exile") and the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), which eventually helped form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

WHEREAS, The 50th anniversary of these events will be observed in the next triennium of the Synod, on Feb. 19, 2024; and

WHEREAS, At its 1973 convention, the Synod adopted *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* (1972) as an official doctrinal statement to address the theological errors present at the time; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) and Concordia Publishing House (CPH) have initiated projects to advance the study and understanding of the historical and theological factors that culminated in the events of February

1974, including *Seminex in Print* and *Rediscovering the Issues*, along with two forthcoming books: *Walkout or Exile?* and *The Bad Boll Conferences*; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries of Synod continue to produce resources and hold conferences to educate members of Synod about this controversy and its implications for our life together; and

WHEREAS, God, by His divine providence, has worked all things for good, richly blessing the Synod with light from above; and

WHEREAS, The controversy has continued to have effects upon relationships and our life together in Synod as brothers and sisters in Christ; and

WHEREAS, The call to repentance, doctrinal fidelity, and fraternal love remains necessary even today and will remain so until our Lord's return; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks for the preservation of the Gospel in our midst, "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3); and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks for the faithful teaching and theological leadership of our seminaries; and be it further

Resolved, That we remain faithful to God's Word, rejoicing with confidence that Christ is the Lord of the Church and the Lord of the world, and that He will accomplish His purposes; and be it further

Resolved, That members of Synod would study this period in our history and avail themselves of the resources made available for us by CHI, CPH, and the seminaries, as well as *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*; and be it further

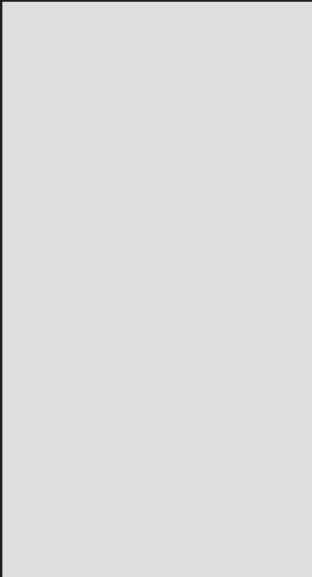
Resolved, That we "endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10); and be it further

Resolved, That we commit ourselves to a life of repentance "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2–3); and be it finally

Resolved, That the assembly sing, upon adoption, the first stanza of "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (LSB 655).

Action: Adopted as amended (9)

An amendment to add the final resolve was adopted by consent. Upon closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted as amended by a voice and hand vote.



5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan

RESOLUTION 5-01

Report R12 (CW, 58); Overture 5-02 (CW, 284–85)

Preamble

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan (ELCSS/S) was established as an independent church body in 1993 in Juba, Sudan, under the leadership of a layman, Andrew Mbugo Elisa. Mr. Elisa had encountered Luther's Small Catechism and the Book of Concord through the efforts of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF). In 1999 Mr. Elisa was ordained as the church body's first pastor and later became its first bishop in 2006. Despite severe political instability, civil war, and economic turmoil, the ELCSS/S grew rapidly in the years after 1999 as it planted churches throughout South Sudan and Sudan. That same year a working agreement between the new church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) was signed. LCMS assistance was instrumental in the planting of churches in war-torn areas of South Sudan, especially in the Nuba Mountains. A seminary for training pastors and other church workers was established in 2000. The seminary, Concordia Lutheran Institute for Holy Ministry (CLIHM), was established in Khartoum together with the headquarters for the ELCSS/S, which had relocated from Juba because of political turmoil. Various visiting LCMS professors and pastors have assisted in the preparation of the ELCSS/S church workers since the beginning of CLIHM.

After a promising first decade of history, the ELCSS/S suffered a serious blow in 2008, when Bishop Elisa was stricken with a number of health problems, including brain cancer. The Lord called him home on Dec. 31, 2008. An interim bishop was appointed in 2010, and in 2011 the church elected Rev. Wilson Noah Rule as bishop. Unfortunately, in subsequent years there was considerable internal controversy concerning the leadership and governance of the ELCSS/S.

Throughout the subsequent years, however, ELCSS/S and the LCMS continued to work together in educational and other ministry endeavors. Cooperation between the two churches and various Synod entities (such as LHF, LCMS mission personnel, and LCMS districts) stimulated numerous conversations about a formal recognition of fellowship between our church bodies. As early as 1999, Bishop Elisa wrote to ask the LCMS to consider fellowship. Bishop Elisa renewed that same request in 2005, and in 2013 the request was again extended by Bishop Rule. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) discussed this request in 2013 and requested further information from the ELCSS/S. A meeting between LCMS officials and ELCSS/S representatives took place in April of 2015, followed by

consultation between CTCR committee members and Dr. Robert Rahn of LHF.

In 2016 Rev. Peter Anibati Abia was elected bishop. Bishop Abia renewed the ELCSS/S request for fellowship with the LCMS on Oct. 25, 2018. A visit by Bishop Abia to the US for meetings with LCMS personnel was proposed. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, however, the meeting was delayed until April 2021 when Bishop Abia met on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary with the executive director of the CTCR, Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, and the chairman of the CTCR's church relations committee, Dr. Naomichi Masaki. The meeting included discussion of the ELCSS/S's constitution, faith statements, congregational practices, educational and mission endeavors, and ecumenical relationships. Bishop Abia then met face to face with the CTCR and LCMS President Matthew Harrison in September 2021 for formal discussions regarding church fellowship.

At its December 2021 meeting, the CTCR unanimously adopted a motion recommending the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the ELCSS/S. That recommendation was sent to President Harrison for his consideration and for consultation with the Praesidium. In a letter dated Aug. 28, 2022, President Harrison wrote: "I am very pleased to inform you ... that by virtue of the authority vested in the President of the Synod, I am in a position to declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between our two churches. Praise God!" The President then invited Bishop Abia to participate in a celebration of fellowship during a joint Divine Service held by LCMS partner churches in Kisumu, Kenya. The joyful event was held on September 18, 2022, during the Divine Service with participation by President Harrison, Bishop Abia, and



Committee 5 Chairman Brian S. Saunders

Rev. Joseph Ochola Omolo, Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya.

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan (ELCSS/S) was established in 1993 as a confessional Lutheran Church with significant assistance from the LHF, a recognized service organization; and

WHEREAS, Despite the challenges of civil war and great turmoil, the Holy Spirit enabled the ELCSS/S to evangelize effectively in South Sudan and Sudan, beginning some 150 congregations with over 150,000 members, establishing a seminary and training school, ordaining 60 pastors, and preparing over 100 evangelists and other church workers—all in less than a decade under the leadership of the Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa; and

WHEREAS, Despite the untimely death of Bishop Elisa, internal dissension, and other challenges, the ELCSS/S weathered another decade of difficulties and emerged with a continuing firm commitment to the theology and practice of scriptural and confessional Lutheranism; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the ELCSS/S, the LCMS in its various entities has continued to support, enable, and encourage the ELCSS/S to be and remain committed to theology and practice that is faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The ELCSS/S accepts all the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments as the inerrant, revealed Word of God; and

WHEREAS, The ELCSS/S accepts the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, compiled in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of the sacred Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, On October 25, 2018, Bishop Peter Anibati Abia, on behalf of the ELCSS/S, renewed a long-standing request for the LCMS to recognize fellowship between our churches; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c) says, “When a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission [CTCR], such recognition may be declared by the President of the Synod subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention”; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has examined the pertinent documents of the ELCSS/S and found them to be faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, President Matthew C. Harrison declared the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between our two church bodies in a letter to Bishop Abia on Aug. 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS, The fellowship between our church bodies was publicly announced and celebrated in a joint service held on Sept. 18, 2022, in Kisumu, Kenya; therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks that, despite violence, civil war, significant cultural and ecclesial challenges, God, by His grace, has equipped and prepared the ELCSS/S to give a faithful, confessional Lutheran witness in South Sudan and Sudan; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God that doctrinal discussions between official representatives of the LCMS and the ELCSS/S have resulted in recognition of complete concord and agreement; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention endorse the President of the Synod’s declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCMS and the ELCSS/S; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage and walk with the ELCSS/S as they proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in East Africa; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God’s blessings in the coming years on our agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner churches, and for the blessing of the Lord upon the members and leaders of the ELCSS/S; and be it finally

Resolved, That in thanksgiving for this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly celebrate its approval by rising and singing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (2)

A delegate having requested that the vote be taken by the convention’s saying, “yea, yea, it shall be so,” the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. The Rev. Peter Anibati Abia addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Today’s Business 3.

To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland

RESOLUTION 5-02

Report R12 (CW, 57–58); Overture 5-01 (CW, 283–84)

Preamble

The Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF; in Finnish, *Suomen evankelisluterilainen lähetysliittopakunta*) was born from within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), which is the national church of Finland. Unlike the ELCF, however, the ELMDF is unreservedly committed to maintaining and upholding the orthodox Lutheran faith and practice that had prevailed in Finland since the sixteenth-century Reformation.

Over time, the ELCF experienced decreasing theological fidelity, accepting the results of historical critical views of Holy Scripture, unbiblical practices such as the ordination of women to the ministry, and an unwillingness to adhere fully

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

and faithfully to the Lutheran Confessions. In response, the Luther Foundation was established in 1999 by individuals within the Finnish national church. The purpose of the Luther Foundation was to support confessional Lutheran pastors and congregations in teaching and practice that remained faithful to the Scriptures and Confessions.

In 2003, the Mission Province of Sweden was formed. Its purpose was to support confessional Lutheran pastors and congregations and to restore the possibility of ordination for future pastors who either could not be ordained or would not be properly supervised in the increasingly liberalized and radicalized Nordic national churches. In 2006, the Mission Province was expanded and renamed the Mission Province in Sweden and Finland. Eventually, in 2013, the ELMDF was formed as an independent church body. Formed by congregations under episcopal oversight, the ELMDF describes its purpose as follows: “We want to keep the legacy of the Reformation on display and lead people deeper into the scriptures and the Lutheran tradition” (www.lhpk.fi).

Thus, the Mission Diocese confesses the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired and infallible Word of God. It subscribes to the entire Book of Concord as a faithful exposition of the Word of God in all its articles. The ELMDF thereby holds that all doctrine, practice and life must be examined, carried out, and directed on the basis of God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions.

The aim of the ELMDF is to proclaim the Gospel, to establish new congregations, to deepen the knowledge of the Christian faith, and to revitalize and support the devotional life of its members.

The member congregations of the ELMDF are the setting for its work. Each congregation is individually named and its members are organized according to a congregational constitution. Each congregation gathers for liturgical worship around the Word and the Sacraments, led by an ordained pastor called to serve that congregation. At the same time, the practical life of congregations relies heavily on the work of lay volunteers.

The pastors of the congregations and elected lay delegates together form a Diocesan Assembly. A Diocesan Council, elected by the Diocesan Assembly, then plans and executes the administration of the Diocese and the practical matters of its work.

The ELMDF upholds all the teachings of Scripture without fear or compromise. It willingly addresses controversial topics and allows no concession with unbiblical teachings. It has held fast to the Bible’s understandings of man and woman, marriage, the ordination of only qualified males to the ministry, and other matters. This steadfastness has also led the church to publish writings that defend the Bible’s teachings and encourage faithful conduct and life. The ELMDF’s willingness to promote biblical teachings about human sexuality resulted in charges of hate speech against the ELMDF’s Bishop Juhana Pohjola and Dr. Päivi Räsänen, the author of an ELMDF pamphlet on sexuality. Although the charges were initially dropped, threats of legal prosecution

remain. Nevertheless, the ELMDF remains faithful to God’s Word.

The Augsburg Confession (AC), Article VII, defines the Church as the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is purely preached and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. By this measure, the ELMDF is a church that stands firm in the right teaching and administration of the means of grace.

Representatives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and ELMDF began formal correspondence and discussions concerning the possibility of fellowship between our two church bodies in 2017. In 2018, the ELMDF was accepted into the International Lutheran Council as a full member. At that same time, the ELMDF formally requested a recognition of fellowship with the LCMS.

As required by LCMS Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2, the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) engaged in careful and thorough consideration of pertinent theological documents, reports on face-to-face discussions between LCMS and ELMDF representatives, correspondence regarding specific theological and ecclesial issues, and a face-to-face meeting with then-Bishop Risto Soramies in a February 2020 meeting of the entire commission. As a result, the CTCR unanimously adopted a motion recommending the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the ELMDF on Feb. 21, 2020. Having received that recommendation and after consulting with the LCMS Praesidium, President Matthew C. Harrison wrote to Bishop Soramies on Oct. 5, 2020, declaring the “recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between our two churches.”

The ELMDF is a vibrant part of the Nordic and worldwide community of confessional Lutherans. The ELMDF is in altar and pulpit fellowship with other biblical and confessional Lutheran churches such as the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC), the German Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE). All three of these church bodies are also in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS.

WHEREAS, The ELMDF is a confessional Lutheran church consisting of over 40 congregations in Finland; and

WHEREAS, The ELMDF emerged from the ELCF due to doctrinal disagreements and over ethical questions addressed clearly in Scripture such as the ordination of women, same-sex marriage, and the ordination of practicing homosexuals; and

WHEREAS, Pastors of the ELMDF have made public confessions of faith not only in churches, but also before “kings” (governing authorities, see Psalm 119:46 and AC Preface), making a defense for their position on the Holy Scriptures and the Book of Concord; and

WHEREAS, Many of these confessors of the faith were defrocked because of their faithful witness to Christ and His Word; and

WHEREAS, The ELMDF bears witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a country where about 2 percent of the population attends church on a weekly basis; and

WHEREAS, The ELMDf accepts all the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments as the infallible, revealed Word of God and the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, compiled in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of Holy Scripture; and

WHEREAS, The ELMDf is in altar and pulpit fellowship with several partner churches of the LCMS in Europe and Canada; and

WHEREAS, The ELMDf has requested altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c) says:

When a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, such recognition may be declared by the President of the Synod subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention;

and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has recommended the recognition of fellowship with the ELMDf as a faithful Lutheran church body, after having carefully and thoroughly considered this matter by means of extensive correspondence, meetings with ELMDf representatives, and the examination of pertinent documents that describe the doctrine and practice of the ELMDf; and

WHEREAS, President Matthew C. Harrison, by virtue of the authority vested in him according to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c), wrote to then-Bishop Risto Soramies on Oct. 5, 2020, stating: “I am able to declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between our two churches. Praise God!”, therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our church bodies under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention formally endorse the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the ELMDf and the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the faithful and courageous Lutheran witness the ELMDf provides within its own country, to the Nordic world, and beyond; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage and walk with the ELMDf as they proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God’s blessings in the coming years on this agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner church bodies; and be it finally

Resolved, That in thanksgiving for this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly celebrate its approval by rising and singing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (2)

The resolution being put to a “yea, yea, it shall be so” voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having read a commemorative plaque, Bishop Juhana Pohjola addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Today’s Business 3.

To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Uganda

RESOLUTION 5-03

Report R12 (CW, 58); Overture 5-03 (CW, 285–87)

Preamble

Work to establish a Lutheran mission in Uganda began in early 1993 in Jinja town. This work was initiated by five local Ugandans, who—dissatisfied with divisions and infighting in local Bugosa dioceses of the Anglican Church—were yearning for a church that truly proclaimed the Word of God and that could worship and work together in peace.

In early 1993, these five lay Christians (three men, two women) visited Kenya and urged the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) to initiate Lutheran mission work in Uganda. The ELCK, then under the leadership of Rev. Francis Nyamwalo, was not able to fulfill the request due to logistical challenges. Soon thereafter, contact was made with the Rev. Dr. Paul Kofi Fynn, then-president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG), a longtime partner church of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). In July 1993, President Fynn sent Rev. Isaac Gyampadu to Uganda to assess the possibility of beginning mission work there. Rev. Gyampadu returned with a positive report, which was followed by a visit of Bishop Fynn to Uganda in February 1994.

In September 1994, the ELCG sent two missionaries, Rev. Gyampadu and Evangelist John Donkoh (bishop of the ELCG since 2018), to establish the Lutheran mission in Uganda. They organized the first training session on Lutheran doctrine and teaching, which was attended by 200 individuals from 30 Bible study groups that had already been organized by the lay pioneers of these mission efforts. The two missionaries presided over the first Lutheran worship service on Oct. 30, 1994, in Jinja town.

In November 1994, President Fynn invited a delegation of leaders from the LCMS to visit Uganda. This delegation included Rev. Allan Buckman, Rev. Robert Roegner, and Rev. Bryant Clancy. This visit officially marked the beginning of LCMS mission efforts in Uganda.

On April 27, 1995, the Lutheran Church Mission in Uganda (LCMU) was officially established and registered with the government of Uganda. A nine-member board of directors was formed, and additional missionaries from both the ELCG and the LCMS were sent in subsequent years. As a result, by God’s grace, the LCMU experienced significant numerical growth.

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

In 2011, despite (and perhaps partly because of) the steady and significant growth in this young mission church, the LCMU experienced serious internal strife and division over leadership, organizational, and financial issues. Although matters of doctrine were not involved, the strife was serious and nearly divided the church. Strong and persistent efforts to restore order and harmony were led by Bishop Fynn of the ELCG, Dr. David Tswaedi (then-Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, an LCMS partner church), Dr. Michael Rodewald of LCMS World Mission, and local LCMU church elders.

At the conclusion of a series of meetings in the fall of 2011 that included all factions of the LCMU, there was full agreement that a new constitution was needed that would more clearly address the issues that had contributed to the internal tensions and divisions. This agreement led to the convening of the 4th LCMU Delegates Conference on Oct. 21–23, 2011, which was attended by 330 delegates representing all LCMU congregations. At this conference, a new constitution was approved with the goal of reorganizing the LCMU as a national synod under the leadership of a presiding bishop. At the Delegates Conference in November 2015, the LCMU officially transitioned from being a mission field under the auspices of the ELCG to a self-governing church body named the Lutheran Church of Uganda (LCU).

The LCU accepts without reservation the following:

- justification is by God's Grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone;
- the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice; and
- all the symbolical books (confessional documents) of the Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.

Despite the many challenges it has faced as a young and growing church, God has richly blessed the LCU. The LCU has planted congregations in all four regions of the country, with a still-growing membership of over 50,000. The LCU has over 150 congregations organized under seven deaneries (regions or districts), served by around fifty pastors. Congregations meet mainly in rented halls, classrooms, members' homes, or under trees in the open country. There are also, of course, many needs—including a need for translation of theological literature and resources, as there are around 42 spoken languages in Uganda (the LCU currently serves in 10 language areas), but most of the materials used by the LCU are in English.

In 2010 the LCU established a theological seminary to train men as pastors and to equip both laymen and laywomen in various vocations of church work. In addition, there are nine mission training centers operating in the seven deaneries of the LCU that seek to equip lay people for work in evangelism, mission, and human care. The LCU is engaged in a wide variety of human care efforts, including agricultural projects, provision of clean water and sanitation, health care initiatives,

educational efforts, AIDS care and support, and provision of food to the hungry.

In September 2016, Bishop Charles Bameka of the LCU, writing on behalf of the entire church, requested altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS, stating that while “we are a small, emerging confessional Lutheran church body at the formative stage, without extensive structures or organizations,” we are “committed to the full authority of the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God and subscribe without reservation to the Book of Concord.” Bishop Bameka noted that during its entire existence the LCU has been served by missionaries from both the LCMS and the ELCG, and covets “support, encouragement and theological guidance from the LCMS, convinced it will help the Lutheran Church of Uganda in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments among the people of Uganda, as we together conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17) and heresy.” Bishop Bameka also indicated in his request that “we fully understand that Altar and Pulpit Fellowship is a relationship that has as its basis agreement ‘in Doctrine and all its Articles.’”

Various informal discussions took place over the years between LCU leaders and LCMS officials, including reports to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) about the theology, practice, and polity of the LCU and its organizational challenges and status. Finally, in October 2022, Bishop Bameka and several other key leaders of the LCU met face to face with the CTCR and LCMS President Matthew Harrison for formal discussions regarding church fellowship.

Following these discussions, and at this same meeting (October 2022), the CTCR unanimously adopted a motion recommending the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCU in keeping with Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b), which states:

When a church body applies for formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, such recognition shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after the approval of the commission (CTCR).

WHEREAS, The LCU (growing out of the LCMU, formed in 1995) was established in 2015 as a confessional Lutheran church with significant assistance and direct support from the ELCG and the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Despite various internal and organizational challenges, the Holy Spirit enabled the LCU to evangelize effectively in Uganda, planting congregations in all four regions of the country with a still-growing membership of over 50,000 in over 150 congregations, establishing a seminary and nine mission training centers, ordaining more than 50 pastors, and preparing numerous laity for church work in various vocations; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the LCU, the ELCG (a partner church of the LCMS) and the LCMS itself have provided direct assistance and support that has helped enable the LCU to be and remain committed to theology and practice that is fully faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The LCU accepts all the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant, revealed Word of God; and

WHEREAS, The LCU accepts the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, compiled in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of the sacred Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, On Sept. 21, 2016, Bishop Charles Bameka, on behalf of the LCU, formally requested altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) says, “When a church body applies for formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, such recognition shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after the approval of the commission”; and

WHEREAS, In face-to-face discussions with Bishop Bameka and other key leaders of the LCU, the CTCR has examined the teachings and practices of the LCU and found them to be faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and has proposed the recognition of fellowship between the LCU and the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our church bodies under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks that despite various challenges, God, by His grace, has equipped and prepared the LCU to give a faithful, confessional Lutheran witness in Uganda; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God that doctrinal discussions between official representatives of the LCMS and the LCU have resulted in recognition of complete concord and agreement; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod formally declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCU and the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage and walk with the LCU as it continues to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in Uganda; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God’s blessings in the coming years on our agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner churches, and for the blessing of the Lord upon the members and leaders of the LCU; and be it finally

Resolved, That in thanksgiving for this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly celebrate its approval by rising and singing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (2)

The resolution being put to a “yea, yea, it shall be so” voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having noted a plaque commemorating the fellowship being consummated by the convention today, Bishop Charles I. Bameka addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Today’s Business 3.

To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine

RESOLUTION 5-04

Report R12 (CW, 52–60); Overture L5-51 (TB, 1:49–51)

Preamble

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine (ELCU) has its roots in the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine (GELCU). Lutheranism had come to Ukraine near the end of the eighteenth century, with a mass migration of German farmers and craftsmen invited by the Russian czar to help develop Ukraine. Because many of these immigrants were Lutherans, congregations were formed, and churches built. In the twentieth century, with the Russian Revolution and the rise of atheistic communism (especially under Stalin in the 1930s), Lutheranism was nearly wiped out. But after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a new era began, and Lutheranism had an opportunity to re-emerge.

The GELCU was established by 1992, even as many ethnic Germans living in the former USSR were allowed to repatriate back to Germany. Nonetheless, from 1992–2014, GELCU continued to be led by German bishops and was supported financially by partner German churches affiliated with the state church of Germany, namely, the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD, Evangelical Church in Germany). It was also supported at that time by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Before Rev. Serge Maschewski was installed as the bishop of GELCU, the bishop of GELCU was also a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia (ELCROS) Bishops’ Council (also affiliated with LWF).

Rev. Maschewski (who is Ukrainian and German but was raised in Kazakhstan) was elected as Bishop of GELCU in 2013 and took office in 2014. He was allowed to repatriate to Germany in the 1990s and was able to enroll in the Russian Project of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), where he was introduced to historic confessional Lutheran theology. After returning to Germany, he was viewed as an ideal candidate in the continuation of the German line of bishops of GELCU. He was also the first bishop of GELCU who was not only a German speaker, but also fluent in Russian (from his upbringing in Kazakhstan) and in Ukrainian.

With his newly found confessional Lutheran convictions, however, Rev. Maschewski and GELCU soon came into conflict with the theology of GELCU’s sponsors from Germany and the LWF. When directed to receive ordained women pastors to work within GELCU, for example, Bishop Maschewski refused to allow it, as did his synod in convention. The same was true when GELCU was pressured to embrace the LGBTQ agenda in the church’s life in Ukraine.

The conflict escalated to the point that, in 2015, GELCU severed its fellowship with its heretofore German partner churches, dropped its membership in the LWF, and left the ELCROS Bishops’ Council, leaving GELCU alone and isolated.

With newly found confessional Lutheran friends from the CTSFW Russian Project and elsewhere, GELCU reached out to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). By 2016 the process of seeking to formalize church fellowship with the LCMS began. At the same time, some of the more liberal-oriented members of GELCU left the church and sought support from the old partners, calling themselves GELCU as well. To avoid confusion, it became necessary for the church body to change its name from GELCU to ELCU (dropping the *G*, for *German*). During the years 2015–2017 a new liturgy in Ukrainian and Russian was developed and approved (previously there was an Agenda only in German). The Liturgical Commission continues to work on a new hymnal.

The ELCU was officially established by convention on Sept. 20, 2019, but the new name was not officially recognized by the Ukrainian state until Feb. 11, 2021. This was due partly to a slow governmental bureaucracy, the COVID-19 pandemic, and political machinations surrounding the church's severance from the EKD and LWF.

Beginning in 2017, the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM) in Eurasia began mission work with this newly emerging Lutheran church body. Monthly weeklong seminars on a variety of theological topics were offered to the Ukrainian clergy by OIM missionary theological educators as well as by regional partner churches from Europe, Russia, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic states. An LCMS missionary couple moved to Odessa as English as a Second Language teachers, especially for Ukrainian pastors, in order to broaden their access to important Lutheran literature, which was not available in Russian or Ukrainian. An LCMS pastor and his family was called to live and work in Ukraine with the pastors of the ELCU. Unfortunately, much of this work, as well as plans for formal discussions pursuing the recognition of church fellowship with the LCMS, were either stalled or postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and then by the Russian war against Ukraine, when all missionaries had to be recalled from fields in Russia and Ukraine. OIM Eurasia plans to resume this work as soon as the war ends, and the LCMS can re-enter Ukraine.

Despite these challenging circumstances, in October of 2022 various leaders of the LCMS—including President Matthew Harrison, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw (Director of Church Relations—Assistant to the President), and Rev. James Krikava (then OIM Regional Director for Eurasia)—were able to meet with Bishop Maschewski in Freising, Germany, for a second live round of formal discussions regarding church fellowship with the LCMS. At that time, plans were already in place for Bishop Maschewski to travel to St. Louis and meet with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to continue those discussions, but ongoing fighting in the war between Ukraine and Russia prevented him from traveling. A thorough report on the October discussions, however, was presented to the CTCR by Dr. Shaw and Rev. Krikava at the CTCR's December 2022 meeting.

Finally, in February of 2023, Bishop Maschewski was able to travel to St. Louis to meet with the CTCR, together with an ELCU lay leader (Mr. Alex Gerzhik). Following a presentation by Bishop Maschewski to the CTCR, and extensive discussion

with a CTCR subcommittee charged with evaluating church relations requests, the CTCR (at its Feb. 16–18, 2023, meeting) unanimously approved a motion to memorialize the 2023 convention to recognize fellowship with the ELCU in keeping with Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b):

When a church body applies for formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, such recognition shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after the approval of the commission [CTCR].

WHEREAS, The ELCU, in the face of severe trials (including the Russian-Ukrainian war) and intense opposition and persecution, has established itself as an independent and self-supporting church body that is firmly committed to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The ELCU has sought and received support and assistance from the LCMS over the years through its participation in the Russian Project of CTSFW and through the work of OIM in Eurasia, which has helped enable the ELCU to be and remain committed to theology and practice that is fully faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The ELCU accepts all the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant, revealed Word of God; and

WHEREAS, The ELCU accepts without qualification all of the symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, compiled in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of the sacred Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, On March 27, 2019, Bishop Serge Maschewski, on behalf of the ELCU, formally requested altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) says, “When a church body applies for formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, such recognition shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after the approval of the commission [CTCR]”; and

WHEREAS, In face-to-face discussions with Bishop Maschewski, the CTCR has examined the official documents, teachings, and practices of the ELCU and found them to be faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and has proposed the recognition of fellowship between the ELCU and the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks that despite serious challenges, obstacles, and opposition, God, by His grace, has equipped, preserved, and strengthened the ELCU to give a faithful, confessional Lutheran witness in Ukraine and beyond; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God that doctrinal discussions between official representatives of the LCMS and the ELCU have resulted in recognition of complete concord and agreement; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod formally declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the ELCU and the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage and walk with the ELCU as it continues to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in Ukraine; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God's blessings in the coming years on our agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner churches, and for the blessing of the Lord upon the members and leaders of the Lutheran Church of Ukraine; and be it finally

Resolved, That in thanksgiving for this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly celebrate its approval by rising and singing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (2)

The resolution being put to a "yea, yea, it shall be so" voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. President Harrison having noted a plaque commemorating the fellowship being consummated by the convention today, Bishop Serge Maschewski addressed the assembly, with his remarks included in Today's Business 3.

To Recognize the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka as a Self-Governing Partner Church

RESOLUTION 5-05A

Overture 5-04 (CW, 287–88)

Preamble

The Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) of Sri Lanka is the fruit of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) mission work dating back to 1925. An LCMS missionary working in southern India with Tamil-speaking people commuted in weekly to lead church services. Nearly 25 years later, the LCMS sent the Rev. Eric Prange to be its first resident missionary in Sri Lanka. Rev. Prange worked primarily with the Tamil-speaking people in the highlands where they worked on the tea and rubber plantations.

Rev. Prange and those who followed him helped the Sri Lankan Lutherans to form their own church body in the 1970s, which they named the Lanka Lutheran Church (LLC). LCMS missionaries continued to serve alongside the LLC even during the civil war in Sri Lanka, which lasted from 1983 to 2009. The LLC was a full altar and pulpit partner of the LCMS as of the 2001 convention, and a member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

The LLC was beset with tragic corruption in the early 2000s, leading to theft, violence, death, and the loss of their government registration as a legal church body. After the return of LCMS resident missionaries in 2013, LCMS personnel assisted the Lutheran church in obtaining a new registration. The church adopted the new name of the CELC to reflect its

renewed identity. The CELC then adopted its revised constitution, prepared by members of their church with LCMS assistance, in May of 2022. At this same convention, they also elected leadership and recognized fellowship with the LCMS, requesting the same from the LCMS.

The CELC joined the ILC immediately upon being reconstituted, but was dropped at an unknown date for non-payment of dues. The CELC is currently an observer member of the ILC, awaiting their opportunity to be recognized as full members of that body, as the LLC once was. They have expressed repeatedly their desire to be faithfully Lutheran, and their commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

WHEREAS, The CELC traces its origin to the efforts of the LCMS missionaries; and

WHEREAS, The CELC has committed itself to be faithful to the inerrant Scriptures and subscribes without reservation to the writings of the Book of Concord; and

WHEREAS, The CELC seeks in every way to be and remain a scripturally faithful, confessional Lutheran church body; and

WHEREAS, The CELC is established as an independent Lutheran church in Sri Lanka and has shared its constitution and other governing documents with the LCMS leadership; and

WHEREAS, The CELC, at its convening convention in September 2022, recognized altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The CELC governing church council delivered a letter to President Matthew Harrison dated Feb. 8, 2023, formally requesting the LCMS recognize altar and pulpit fellowship with the CELC; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate protocol documents guiding interactions between the LCMS and the CELC have been developed and are currently being updated; and

WHEREAS, In the current year 2023, the CELC has applied for full membership in the ILC; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (d) states that "When a mission of the Synod applies for formal recognition as a self-governing partner church, such recognition shall be proposed at convention of the Synod by the Board for International Mission with the approval of the [Commission on Theology and Church Relations]"; and

WHEREAS, In compliance with Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (d), the Board for International Mission has requested and received the approval of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to propose to the 2023 Synod convention that the CELC in Sri Lanka be recognized as a self-governing partner church; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the efforts of its missionaries and Sri Lankan national pastors of the CELC, that God, by His grace, has equipped and prepared the members of the CELC to give a faithful confessional Lutheran witness in Sri Lanka; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod acknowledge with gratitude that His saints have been blessed by the growth of this “daughter church” of the LCMS and its establishment as a self-governing Lutheran church body; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod declare its recognition of the CELC as a self-governing partner church with which the LCMS enjoys altar and pulpit fellowship; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God’s blessings in the coming years on this agreement in the confession of the Gospel, which we enjoy as partner churches, and for the power and blessing of the Lord upon the members and leaders of the CELC; and be it finally

Resolved, That in thanksgiving for this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly celebrate its approval by rising and singing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (2)

The resolution being put to a “yea, yea, it shall be so” voice vote, the resolution was so adopted, unanimously, and the common doxology was sung. Bishop A. Arulchelvan, who could not be present, was represented by Pastor Steven Mahlburg, LCMS Office of International Mission missionary to Sri Lanka, in the reading of the bishop’s remarks to the assembly, these being included in Today’s Business 3.

To Clarify and Simplify Bylaws regarding Routes to Altar and Pulpit Fellowship

RESOLUTION 5-06

Overture 5-08 (CW, 290–91)

Rationale

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has reviewed Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 and proposed consolidation and clarification of the language dealing with its role in recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship. Presently routes to fellowship are presented in four cases (b–e), which are stated in terms of certain presumptions (e.g., that all fellowship requests originate from potential partners and not in the other direction), redundancies (e.g., in each of [b–e], there exists a relatively uniform statement that the convention must approve; [e] seems, furthermore, to be redundant with [b–d]), and potential unclarity. CTCR submitted its proposal to the Commission on Handbook, which consulted with the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM Op. 22-3001, Minutes of Nov. 4–5, 2022) and now presents the proposal for adoption. It understands the change to be *non-substantive*, in that it should allow the same scope of actions under new bylaw language, but *substantial* enough a change of language regarding a critical function of the Synod that it should be presented for the convention’s consideration and for its more prominent historical record.

By way of explanation, existing paragraphs (b–d) are subsumed under a new summary heading as (b)(1–3) and (e) is deleted; situations formerly falling under (e) will be handled under the new (b)(1–3) as appropriate.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 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.

(a) It shall address itself to and evaluate existing fellowship relations for the purpose of mutual admonition and encouragement.

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

~~(b1) When a church body applies for formal~~ Formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship ~~with~~ between the Synod and another church body; ~~such recognition~~ shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after the approval of the commission.

~~(e2) When a Formal 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) ~~requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod~~ may be declared by the Synod President only after the approval of the commission and, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, such ~~Such~~ recognition ~~may be declared by the President of the Synod~~ shall be subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.

~~(d3) When a Formal recognition of a mission of the Synod applies for formal recognition~~ as a self-governing partner church, ~~such recognition~~ shall be proposed at convention of the Synod by the Board for International Mission ~~with~~ after the approval of the commission.

~~(e) When an entity (e.g., a district, mission, group of congregations, etc.) of a self-governing partner church is established as an independent church body in altar and pulpit fellowship with that partner church body, and subsequently requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with Synod, such recognition may be declared by the President of Synod, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.~~

Action: Adopted (4)

With debate closed immediately at the suggestion of the chair, the resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

To Recognize That the Synod Is Not in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Japan Lutheran Church

RESOLUTION 5-07

Overtures 5-05-06 (CW, 288–90)

Preamble

The Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) grew out of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) mission work that began in 1948. The JLC was organized as an autonomous church body in 1968 and became an LCMS partner church in 1971. Over the years, our two church bodies have recognized and given thanks to God for the gift of altar and pulpit fellowship. In recent years, however, questions and tensions about the differing positions of our two church bodies on the ordination of women to the pastoral office have made it necessary for the LCMS to ask whether the scriptural basis for altar and pulpit fellowship—complete agreement “in the doctrine and all its articles” (Formula of Concord Solid Declaration X 31)—continues to exist between our two churches.

In 2008, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick became aware of a proposal introduced at the JLC’s May 2008 convention to consider altering the JLC’s bylaws to permit the ordination of women to the pastoral office. He immediately extended an offer for the leaders of our two churches to meet and discuss this issue, cautioning that “a decision to ordain women would have serious implications for a relationship that our two churches have enjoyed for so many years.” Official representatives of the JLC and the LCMS met face-to-face four times between February 2009 and August 2010 for formal discussions of this and related issues on the basis of the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Topics included the authority of Scripture, scriptural hermeneutics, the service of women in the Church, the Office of the Holy Ministry, and the nature and implications of church fellowship.

Early on in these discussions, the LCMS representatives learned—much to their surprise and dismay—that from the very beginning of the JLC’s history there was a lack of clarity about its position on the ordination of women. In 1966, even before it became a partner church of the LCMS, the JLC had declared altar and pulpit fellowship with the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC), which would start to ordain women in 1971. Also in 1966, the JLC and the JELC agreed to train pastors together at a joint seminary in Tokyo. In 1970 some pastors and congregations of the JLC called on it to publicly protest the JELC’s position on this issue. The JLC eventually resolved at its 1974 convention not to protest the JELC’s position by accepting President Kosaku Nao’s theological opinion that Scripture does not prohibit women to preach and that the ordination of women must be treated as an issue of “adiaphoron,” that is, a practice not clearly commanded or forbidden by Scripture.

Sadly, and for reasons that are still not entirely clear, the LCMS was not fully aware of nor sufficiently attentive to the position taken by the JLC on this issue at its 1974 convention. (This was, of course, a turbulent time for the LCMS also, internally and theologically.) Due to this lack of awareness and/or attentiveness to developments within the JLC, the LCMS did not engage in fraternal dialogue with the JLC on this issue in these early years, as it surely should have. In retrospect, this is deeply regrettable and is a failure for which the LCMS itself must take a large measure of responsibility. At the same time, from its inception until its 2021 convention, the JLC continued to ordain only men, as its constitution and bylaws included the word “male” as a necessary qualification for called and ordained pastors.

During the years of 1974–2002, there were some JLC pastors who continued to advocate for the ordination of women. For example, at the Hokkaido District convention in October 2001, Rev. Tatsuomi Yoshida (current JLC President) presented a paper which took the position that Scripture allows female pastors. At the conventions of 2002, 2005, and 2008, the attempt was made to move toward the ordination of women, but the motions were tabled each time. This was the immediate context that prompted the LCMS under President Kieschnick to hold face-to-face meetings with the JLC leadership as described above. However, one important fact is to be noted. At the national convention of 2002, the JLC did establish an office of deacon—as an ordained office—open to both male and female. Hence, the JLC had de facto opened the door for women’s ordination at that time. As a result, in 2006, the first female was ordained as a deacon in the JLC.

As the formal discussions that took place in 2009 and 2010 drew to a close, the LCMS representatives were hopeful for a positive outcome—one in which the leadership of the JLC and the JLC as a whole would be led to affirm unequivocally the position of Scripture on the issue of the ordination of women to the pastoral office: namely, that this position and practice is not an adiaphoron. Very late in the process, however, it became clear that the leadership of the JLC was still inclined toward recommending a change in the JLC’s official position which would result in the ordination of women as pastors.

In 2010, newly elected LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, even before he was formally installed into office, wrote to JLC President Yukata Kumei and the members of the JLC expressing his deep “sadness” at the news that the JLC was still considering changing its position on this issue and acknowledging the past failures of the LCMS to bear witness as fully and faithfully as it should have to the position of the Scriptures on this issue. Then, in June 2011, the major earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan in March of the same year brought President Harrison and his team to Japan to bring a love gift of the LCMS to the JLC.

This visit opened the door for LCMS Church Relations to hold a series of conversations with the JLC leadership, starting in April 2013 and continuing through June 2019. Although another attempt was made to propose the ordination of women at the JLC’s national convention in 2011, no such motion was made at the 2014 or 2017 conventions. This was not an indication of a change in their position, however. Over

time, it became clear that the JLC's official interpretation of the result of the official face-to-face meetings in 2009–2010 had been that as long as no women were placed into the office of "pastor," they were keeping their promise to the LCMS not to ordain women into the pastoral office. Their apparent understanding was that the LCMS would not object to female clergy in the JLC as long as the nomenclature of "pastor" was not applied. (As noted above, they first ordained a female deacon in 2006.)

Throughout the time between 2010 and 2021, the JLC continued to pursue the goal of allowing women to serve in the pastoral office proper. They also maintained the practice of open communion and did not question their altar and pulpit fellowship with the JELC.

LCMS Church Relations was fully aware of the JLC's position and practice in these matters. Recognizing how difficult it would be for the JLC to change its official position on this issue, LCMS Church Relations focused its attempt during 2014–2019 on assisting the JLC leadership in obtaining further resources for understanding the problem theologically. As in many Lutheran churches around the world, a lack of sound and substantive theological teaching and understanding in the JLC was a major challenge. Efforts were made to obtain opportunities for the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions on this and other issues to be presented and heard.

No less than four meetings took place in Japan from 2017 to 2019 between LCMS and JLC leaders in an effort to continue theological discussions (August 2017, January 2018, October 2018, and June 2019). During these meetings, plans were contemplated, and it was proposed to hold a series of discussions on foundational theological issues such as the authority and interpretation of Scripture, Christology and justification, questions related to the doctrines of church and ministry, the Lutheran understanding of church fellowship (including fellowship at the Lord's Table), scriptural approaches to missions and evangelism, and faithful worship and liturgical practices. The list above reflects the fact that the meetings and discussions that took place between 2009 and 2019 revealed other differences in doctrine and practice between the LCMS and the JLC, such as the JLC practice of open communion, differing understandings and practices of church fellowship, and differing understandings of proper principles for interpreting Holy Scripture that had implications for the understanding of the authority of Scripture. Although many of these issues had been discussed previously, it was hoped that careful and fraternal examination and discussion of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions on foundational and intersectional issues such as these might lead to increasing consensus on the issue of women's service in the Church.

Unfortunately, plans for these discussions did not fully materialize, and little or no further progress was made in this regard following the last effort of LCMS Church Relations in June 2019. On June 4, 2021, President Harrison received a letter from newly elected JLC President Tatsuomi Yoshida informing that at its April 2021 national convention the JLC had officially changed its position on the ordination of women

by amending its bylaws to remove the word "male" from the section on the qualifications for called and ordained pastors. By contradicting the clear teaching of Scripture that women may not be called and ordained into the pastoral office, the JLC's 2021 convention thus endorsed false doctrine. Calling and ordaining women into the pastoral office is not an adiaphoron, a matter on which the Scriptures are silent. Rather, it is a doctrinal matter which, where clear disagreement exists, is divisive of fellowship.

In a letter dated July 9, 2021, President Harrison responded with a "heavy heart," indicating that "the JLC's changed confession of faith ... has broken the God-given unity of the faith once celebrated by our church bodies." "I pray for your repentance and your return to fellowship in Christ in the truth of His Word," wrote President Harrison. Should this not occur, stated President Harrison, "I will inform the members of the Synod and the Synod's partner churches of ... the need to place this matter before the Synod in convention." Sadly, subsequent correspondence from President Yoshida, as well as a face-to-face meeting between President Yoshida and the LCMS Director of Church Relations—Assistant to the President at an International Lutheran Council (ILC) meeting in Kisumu, Kenya on Sept. 16, 2022, have made it clear that the JLC has no intention of changing its current position on this issue or amending its current practice of allowing women to be ordained as pastors and to carry out the duties of the pastoral office. Sadly, this assessment is confirmed by the fact that the JLC ordained a second woman into the office of deacon in 2021, as well as by official records of the JLC's April 29, 2021, convention which indicate that there was overwhelming support among convention delegates for approving the ordination of women pastors.

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture clearly teaches that women are not to be called and ordained into, nor carry out the public functions of, the pastoral office (1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34); and

WHEREAS, The JLC officially approves of and practices the calling and ordaining of women into the pastoral office; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS recognizes with deep sadness and regret that differences in doctrine and practice exist between the LCMS and the JLC, not only on the issue of the ordination of women to the pastoral office but also on other issues identified in the foregoing preamble (e.g., differing hermeneutical principles and approaches that have ramifications for scriptural authority; the scriptural understanding of church fellowship; the doctrine and practice of close[d] communion); and

WHEREAS, Ten years of formal and informal doctrinal discussions between the LCMS and the JLC have neither resolved the existing doctrinal differences nor offered any basis for assuming that they will be resolved in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS understands altar and pulpit fellowship to be a gift of God that exists by His grace on the basis of complete agreement in doctrine and practice; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS affirm the inerrancy, inspiration, clarity, and authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19–21); and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS with deep sorrow and regret declare that it can no longer recognize altar and pulpit fellowship with the JLC; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS acknowledges and deeply regrets its own shortcomings and failures in not giving adequate attention to these theological concerns, especially early on in its relationship with the JLC; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS herewith commit itself open and eager to pursuing further doctrinal discussions with the JLC should the JLC at any time be open to such discussions, in the hope that by God’s grace our church bodies might once again attain complete agreement in doctrine and practice and once again enjoy the gift of God-given and God-pleasing altar and pulpit fellowship.

Action: Adopted as amended (4)

It was moved and adopted by consent to add to the first whereas the words “nor carry out the public functions of” and the two scripture references, as well as to add the first resolve. It was moved but declined to strike from the third resolve the words “especially early on in its relationship with the JLC.” The resolution was adopted as amended [Yes: 944; No: 55]. Committee Chairman Saunders offered prayer.

To Affirm In-Person Communion

RESOLUTION 5-08A

Overtures 5-11–20 (CW, 293–300)

WHEREAS, In the wake of the pandemic, congregations throughout the Synod sought to provide spiritual care to their congregations when public health measures prohibited gathering for corporate worship services; and

WHEREAS, The Lord Jesus, with words and actions spoken and carried out by Him in the direct and physical presence of His disciples, instituted Holy Communion as a communal meal through which His body and blood are distributed under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (Matt. 26:26–28); and

WHEREAS, In speaking of the Lord’s Supper, Holy Scripture does not endorse a spiritual or virtual fellowship, but rather a physical, communal gathering as the apostle Paul describes when he writes to the church in Corinth, “So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for your judgment” (1 Cor. 11:33–34a); and

WHEREAS, The Epistle to the Hebrews states, “And let us consider how 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, The Augsburg Confession describes the administration of the Lord’s Supper in the context of a physically gathered assembly (Augsburg Confession [AC] VII 1; XXIV 36–39); and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations and the systematic theology departments of both seminaries issued opinions that unequivocally and unanimously argued against the practice of online or virtual Communion and affirmed the administration of Holy Communion in person by the pastor; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord [FC] Solid Declaration [SD] VII) indicate that the proper use of the Sacrament includes a unified consecration, distribution, and reception, none of which are to be severed from the other:

However, this blessing, or the recitation of the words of Christ’s institution alone, does not make a Sacrament if the entire action of the Lord’s Supper, as it was instituted by Christ, is not kept. (For example, it is not kept when the consecrated bread is not distributed, received, and partaken of, but is enclosed, sacrificed, or carried about.) Christ’s command “This do” must be observed unseparated and inviolate. (This embraces the entire action or administration in this Sacrament. In an assembly of Christians, bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, drunk, and the Lord’s death is shown forth at the same time.) St. Paul also places before our eyes this entire action of the breaking of bread or of distribution and reception (1 Cor. 10:16).

yet the practice of online or virtual Communion would interject a spatial, temporal, and technological gap between the consecration and the distribution and reception; and

WHEREAS, The pastoral office is responsible for oversight of the administration of the Sacrament in accordance with the keys conferred upon the pastor by virtue of his call (AC XIV; *Walther’s Theses on the Ministry V and VII*); and

WHEREAS, The Sacrament of the Altar has been established by our Lord according to His Words of Institution, commanding literally “This keep on doing” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25), which indicates that this use of the Sacrament should be kept according to His institution, and that “nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use” as set forth by those same Words of Institution (FC SD VII 73) and these texts (and all related) require serious study by the church; and

WHEREAS, No theological justification for the novel practice of online or virtual Communion has existed within the Synod or in the Lutheran tradition nor has been advanced in the circles advocating for it on the basis of the principally relevant texts (*sedes doctrinae*) of Holy Scripture or of the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has historically recognized the need for collegial debate, collaborative decision-making, and consensus-building, enshrining “[t]he example of the apostolic church (Acts 15:1–31)” in the Preamble of its Constitution and by adopting a process whereby those principles may be observed with respect to the adoption of doctrinal statements in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b); and

WHEREAS, The practice of online Communion has created confusion and concern whether such observance of Holy Communion is pleasing to God and in accordance with His Word; and

WHEREAS, The uniformity in practice from the foundation of the Synod has long been considered desirable (1847 Constitution Articles I 3, II 4, IV 5, V 14) and remains an endeavor toward which congregations are encouraged to strive (Const. Art. II 7); therefore be it

Resolved, That we commend the desires of faithful pastors to care for their flocks in a time of pandemic, granting charity and latitude to our brothers in the office due to the emergency nature of the situation confronting us all; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod’s district presidents and those who assist them be counseled and urged to instruct our pastors and congregations on the basis of Holy Scripture’s exhortation to gather in person to celebrate the Lord’s Supper and on the basis of the examples of the Augsburg Confession Articles VII and XXIV, to refrain from the practice of online Communion, ensuring that those pastors and congregations who continue to practice online Communion after due fraternal admonition be subject to appropriate ecclesiastical supervision; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention clearly and unequivocally reject and condemn the practice of virtual (online) Communion; and be it finally

Resolved, That those who are hindered for a time from bodily participation in Holy Communion be encouraged to content themselves with the power of the Word, remembrance of their Baptism, and the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Action: Adopted (8)

It was moved but failed to strike the final resolve. Upon closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 842; No: 140]. Pacific Southwest District President Michael Gibson addressed the convention, requesting patience for district presidents as they continue to work with perhaps a dozen churches remaining in the practice of online communion.

To Review Guidance on Admission to the Lord’s Supper

RESOLUTION 5-09

Overtures 5-09–10 (CW, 291–93)

WHEREAS, 1967 Resolution 2-19, “To Take a Position with Reference to Communing Lutherans of Other Synods,” was adopted stating:

WHEREAS, Clarification regarding the administration and reception of Holy Communion has been requested, with particular reference to Lutherans of other synods not now in fellowship with us; and

WHEREAS, The principle of “close Communion” requires that only those who are in altar fellowship celebrate and partake of the Lord’s Supper with each other; and

WHEREAS, The celebration and reception of Holy Communion not only implies but is a confession of the unity of faith; therefore be it

Resolved, That pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, except in situations of emergency and in special cases of pastoral care, commune individuals of only those Lutheran synods which are now in fellowship with us (1967 *Proceedings*, 93);

and

WHEREAS, 1981 Res. 3-01, “To Declare LCMS Not in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with ALC,” was adopted stating:

WHEREAS, The LCMS has long encouraged its congregations and pastors in extraordinary circumstances to provide responsible pastoral care, including the administration of Holy Communion to Christians who are members of denominations not in fellowship with the LCMS; therefore be it (1981 *Proceedings*, 154–55);

and

WHEREAS, 1986 Res. 3-08, “To Maintain Practice of Close Communion,” was adopted stating:

Resolved, That the pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continue to abide by the practice of close communion, which includes the necessity of exercising responsible pastoral care in extraordinary situations and circumstances; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention commend the CTCR’s report *Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper* to the pastors and congregations of the Synod for continued reference and guidance (1986 *Proceedings*, 143);

and

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

WHEREAS, The 1983 Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) report *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* states:

Since fellowship at the Lord's Table is also confession of a common faith, it would not be truthful for those who affirm the Real Presence and those who deny it to join one another. Their common Communion would indicate to the non-Christian community that the last will and testament of Christ could be interpreted in contradictory ways. Indeed, the non-Christian might rightly ask whether it was Jesus's word which determined the church's position and practice or simply a human consensus (LCMS CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* [adopted 1983], 21).

...

Close Communion seeks to prevent a profession of confessional unity in faith where there is, in fact, disunity and disagreement. It would be neither faithful to the Scriptural requirements for admission to Holy Communion (1 Cor. 11:27 ff.; cf. 10:16-17) nor helpful to fallen humanity if the Christian church welcomes to its altars those who deny or question clear Scriptural teachings (LCMS CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* [adopted 1983], 22).

...

In keeping with the principle that the celebration and reception of the Lord's Supper is a confession of the unity of faith, while at the same time recognizing that there will be instances when sensitive pastoral care needs to be exercised, the Synod has established an official practice requiring "that pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, except in situations of emergency and in special cases of pastoral care, commune individuals of only those synods which are now in fellowship with us. [28]" (LCMS CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* [adopted 1983], 22–23).

...

[28] 1967 Res. 2-19. See also 1969 Res. 3-18 and 1981 Res. 3-01. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p. 381. Pieper begins his discussion concerning who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper by stating: "Christian congregations, and their public servants, are only the administrators and not lords of the Sacrament. ... On the one hand, they are not permitted to introduce 'Open Communion': on the other hand, they must guard against denying the Sacrament to those Christians for whom Christ has appointed it." To be sure, a heavy responsibility rests on pastors in making decisions as they evaluate those exceptional

cases of pastoral care where persons who are members of denominations not in fellowship with the LCMS desire to receive the Lord's Supper. However, part of the pastor's responsibility in such situations involves informing individuals desiring Communion also of their responsibility regarding an action which identifies them with the confessional position of the church body to which the host congregation belongs and their willingness to place themselves under the spiritual care of the pastor in that place (LCMS CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper* [adopted 1983], 41);

and

WHEREAS, 1995 Res. 3-08, "To Reaffirm the Practice of Close[d] Communion," was adopted and reaffirmed 1967 Res. 2-19 and 1986 Res. 3-08 and stated:

Resolved, That because we are "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), any members of the Synod who advocate a different practice of Holy Communion be fraternally reminded of the commitment all the members of the Synod make to one another by subscribing to the Constitution of the Synod to honor and uphold its doctrine and practice and, where there is disagreement, to follow the proper channels of dissent as outlined in synodical Bylaw 2.39 c. (1995 *Proceedings*, 122);

and

WHEREAS, 2007 Res. 3-09, "To Address Administration of the Lord's Supper," was adopted, commending the 1999 CTCR report, "Admission to the Lord's Supper," and reinforcing the LCMS position and practice regarding close(d) Communion; and

WHEREAS, 2013 Res. 4-10 "To Encourage Proper Oversight in the Administration of the Lord's Supper by Visitation from Ecclesiastical Supervisors" was adopted and resolved; and

WHEREAS, 2016 Res. 5-15, "To Address Questions re the Sacrament of the Altar," was adopted and resolved "That the LCMS reaffirm that its statements and resolutions with regard to close(d) Communion ... are faithful to Scripture and the Confessions"; and

WHEREAS, 2019 Res. 4-11A, "To Encourage the Study of the Doctrine of Close(d) Communion and Faithful Practice in All Congregations," was adopted and resolved "That Synod in convention encourage the study of God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions by all members of Synod with an eye to teaching and upholding our confession and practice regarding the administration of the Lord's Supper," and "That all pastors and members of the LCMS recognize the Scriptural and practical necessity of adhering publicly to both a professed and functional close(d) Communion practice" (2019 *Proceedings*, 145); and

WHEREAS, Eighty-three percent of the delegates in 2016 and 78 percent of the delegates in 2019 supported resolutions

about close(d) Communion, thus revealing a lack of unanimity; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention recognize the scriptural necessity of adhering publicly to both the professed doctrine and practice of close(d) Communion (recognizing the terms “close” and “closed” as synonymous) as adopted by previous conventions of the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod President and the Council of Presidents in consultation with our Synod’s seminary faculties re-evaluate the specific language of earlier Communion resolutions regarding extraordinary circumstances, providing case studies and examples for study and discussion to be shared within our districts.

Action: Adopted (8)

After the chair offered a word of explanation and the body accepted his proposal to close debate, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 842; No: 105].

To Articulate Theology and Philosophy of Lutheran Education

RESOLUTION 5-10

Reports R1, R1.2.1, R14 (CW, 1–3, 14, 64–69)

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran schools at every level face constant challenges in a world of competing philosophies; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod would benefit from a clearly articulated theology and philosophy of Lutheran education that considers sound principles from the doctrine of justification, biblical creation, first article gifts, right and left kingdom perspectives, and Lutheran anthropology, to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various educational philosophies; and

WHEREAS, A clear, concise, and readable theology and philosophy of Lutheran education could help guide our workers, lay leaders, and families from preschool, grade school, high school, and secondary education as they make curriculum, discipline, and other decisions on a daily basis; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations—in consultation with representatives from Concordia University System universities, Synod education executives, and others—develop principles of Lutheran education rooted in Lutheran doctrine; and be it further

Resolved, That a pamphlet be produced for written and electronic distribution to help guide congregations, schools, workers, and parents in the task of faithfully leading students in their education.

Action: Adopted (8)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 901; No: 66].

To Reaffirm Synod’s Biblical Positions on Marriage and Sexuality

RESOLUTION 5-11

Overtures 5-35–38 (CW, 307–11)

WHEREAS, Scripture declares that God in the beginning created humanity as male and female (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4), and that He has instituted marriage to be an indissoluble union between man and woman (Gen. 2:24) for the purposes of companionship (Gen. 2:18, 20–23) and procreation (Gen. 1:28); and

WHEREAS, Scripture clearly teaches that marriage reflects the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church, whereby husbands and wives carry out their distinct roles harmoniously for good order and mutual edification in the faith and in daily living (Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Peter 2:13–3:7); and

WHEREAS, Scripture also reserves all sexual activity for the marital union between man and woman (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Num. 5:11–31; Matt. 5:27–30) and expressly prohibits all sexual activity between persons of the same sex (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:10; Jude 7); and

WHEREAS, Anti-scriptural views regarding marriage and sexuality continue to proliferate in American society, such as same-sex intercourse and marriage, gender fluidity, pedophilia, acceptance of cohabitation, use of pornography, and other deviations from biblical truth; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), at the direction of 2016 Resolution 14-03A and 2019 Res. 11-03A, has produced a new report on marriage and sexuality, *A Chaste and Decent Life: An Update to Human Sexuality (1981)* (Commission on Theology and Church Relations [St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2022]), that seeks to challenge these new cultural assumptions on the basis of biblical truth; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR report states that “attitudes toward gender identity and dysphoria, homosexuality and homosexual marriage, and societal pressures regarding sexuality, among others, have changed markedly in the last forty years,” yet maintains that “God’s intention for human sexuality does not change” (*A Chaste and Decent Life*, 37); and

WHEREAS, Synod in convention has repeatedly addressed these errors through resolutions confessing scriptural positions on marriage and sexuality (including, most recently, 2019 Res. 3-04A, 2016 Res. 14-03A, and 2013 Res. 2-07A); therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod in convention reaffirm the Scriptural teaching on marriage and sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod in convention commend the CTCR’s *A Chaste and Decent Life* as a resource for pastors to familiarize themselves with the current errors present in society, in addition to other recent resources the CTCR has provided on these topics, such as *The Order of Creation: Theology, History,*

Definition (Commission on Theology and Church Relations [St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2022]), *Marriage between Church and State: A Report on Clergy Serving as “Agents of the State”* (Commission on Theology and Church Relations [St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2021]), and *Gender Identity Disorder and Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective* (Commission on Theology and Church Relations [St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2014]); and be it finally

Resolved, That Synod in convention urge its pastors to preach and teach God’s counsel regarding the biblical design for marriage and sexuality with courage, as well as to exercise compassionate pastoral care to those struggling with sexual sin and misunderstanding.

Action: Adopted (8)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 934; No: 34].

To Address Lutheran Theological Principles of Mission and Ministry in Post-Christian Context

RESOLUTION 5-12

President’s Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24)

WHEREAS, The Church faces many cultural challenges and lives in an environment increasingly opposed to Christianity; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention ask the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to prepare a document on the present challenges to Christianity in the North American context to equip pastors and congregations for faithful ministry and outreach in a post-Christian world.

Action: Adopted (8)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 910; No: 48].

To Address Uses of Online Technology

RESOLUTION 5-13A

Overtures 5-20, 28–29 (CW, 299–300, 304)

WHEREAS, The use of online technology in various formats (i.e., livestreamed and recorded worship, online Bible studies, etc.) has been a great help in keeping congregations united through the hearing of God’s Word and communicating information and a benefit in proclaiming the Word to untold multitudes in the tradition of the Lutheran Hour; and

WHEREAS, The use of online technology also has its negative aspects, such as inadvertently permitting members not to gather physically as encouraged in Scripture (Acts 2:42;

Heb. 10:25) and creating confusion and even conflict with Confession and Absolution, Communion, voting practices, church membership, and more, as to what is proper and beneficial and what should not be practiced “virtually”; and

WHEREAS, These technologies and platforms for “virtual” worship did not exist and were not practiced until recent times and thus have not been specifically addressed by the historical Lutheran church in terms of best practices; and

WHEREAS, Such practice of “virtual” worship has not been discussed by the Synod as a whole, much less considered and commended by it on a scriptural and confessional basis; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has historically recognized the need for collegial debate, collaborative decision-making, and consensus building, enshrining “[t]he example of the apostolic church (Acts 15:1–31)” in the Preamble of its Constitution and by adopting a process whereby those principles may be observed with respect to the adoption of doctrinal statements in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b); and

WHEREAS, The witness of Scripture and the early Christian Church was that “after there had been much debate” (Acts 15:7) on the controverted matter regarding the circumcision of Gentile converts a decision was made; and

WHEREAS, There is great benefit from the debate and discussion as described in Acts 15:7 as πολλῆς (pollēs)—much, multitudinous, plenteous, numerous, a great amount on significant and controverted matters; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of Presidents (COP), the office of the President, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) establish a process as described in Acts 15 of not less than a year that allows for much fraternal discussion and edification with respect to a theology of online technology, including practices of “virtual” worship, Bible studies, and other online ministries, as well as church membership; and be it further

Resolved, That the COP, the office of the President, and the CTCR produce a joint document to be presented in a manner that allows for appropriate theological reflection and study and provides practical guidance to the questions of online technology; and be it finally

Resolved, That this process would preferably involve face-to-face discussions within circuits and districts between leaders that reflect the divergent and diverse positions with the process and the participants to be determined by consensus of the COP.

Action: Adopted (8)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Uphold Proper Elements and Reverential Administration of the Lord's Supper

RESOLUTION 5-15

President's Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:24)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ with words and actions instituted His Holy Supper as a communal meal in the context of the Passover celebration through which His body and blood are distributed in, with, and under bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 1 Cor. 11:23–26); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord [FC] Solid Declaration [SD] VII 86) indicate that the proper use of the Sacrament includes unified consecration, distribution, and reception; and

WHEREAS, The Lord's Supper has been established by our Lord according to His Words of Institution commanding literally "This keep on doing" (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25), which indicates that this use of the Sacrament should be kept according to His institution, and that "nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use" as set forth by those same Words of Institution (FC SD VII 73–74); and

WHEREAS, The Sacrament of the Altar serves to strengthen faith against all doubts (Augsburg Confession XIII) and is "given for a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may

refresh and strengthen itself so as not to fall back into doubt, but become ever stronger and stronger" (Large Catechism V 24) while it is incumbent on all faithful ministers of the Gospel to remove all obstacles that create doubt regarding what Christ offers in this Sacrament or detracts from it (1 Cor. 4:1–2); and

WHEREAS, Concerns have been raised about the regular use of prefilled communion cup and wafer sets in corporate worship; and

WHEREAS, Concerns have been raised about the use of non-wheat hosts and/or grape juice; therefore be it

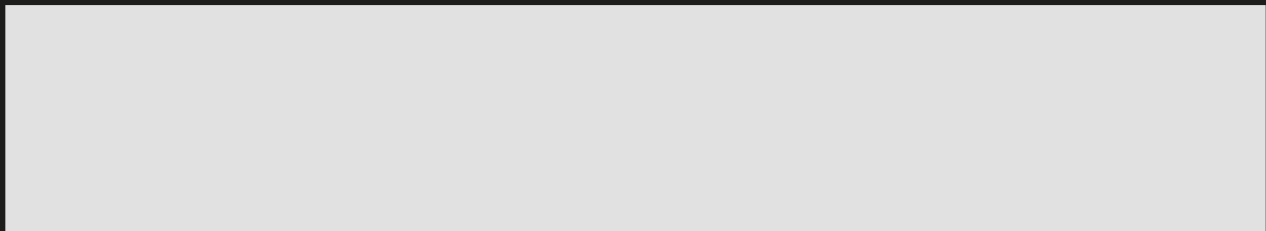
Resolved, That our pastors and congregations give careful consideration to the reverential treatment of the elements in the administration of the Lord's Supper; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention reaffirms 2001 Resolution 3-16, "To Encourage Use of Only Wine in Administration of Lord's Supper"; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be instructed to take up these concerns.

Action: Adopted (8)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 842; No: 193].



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

6. PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SEMINARIES

To Affirm and Strengthen *Set Apart to Serve* in Word and Action

RESOLUTION 6-01

Overtures 6-01-02 (CW, 321-22)

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38); and

WHEREAS, Laborers are few and needed in every generation to the present for the millions of people, both domestic and international, who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and Savior, for new church starts in domestic communities, for the identified need for over 100 new international Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) missionaries within the next several years, and for the need for capable theological educators both here in the U.S. and abroad; and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention adopted Resolution 6-01, “To Support and Participate in the Comprehensive Church Worker Recruitment Initiative,” to:

... commend, financially support, and directly participate in this comprehensive, multi-year church worker recruitment initiative with (but not limited to) the following objectives:

- identifying, catechizing, encouraging, and supporting young boys and girls for church worker vocations;
- instilling church worker vocations as sacred and joyful, a “calling from God,” vocations of integrity and fulfillment, grounded in Christ and baptismal salvation;
- developing the “whole person” throughout this formation process: spiritually, in character, confessionally, physically, emotionally, synodically, and intellectually;
- supporting, encouraging, and caring for existing church workers for the welfare of the workers, for the proclamation and witness of the Gospel, and for workers to be healthy advocates of next generation church workers (*Proceedings*, 158);

and

WHEREAS, This initiative is known as *Set Apart to Serve* (SAS) and encompasses the initial youth phase (infant baptism-12th grade) and a second phase focusing on individuals who may be considering professional church work vocations as a second career; and

WHEREAS, SAS is being developed through the collaboration of key stakeholders, including the two LCMS seminaries (including their *Vocatio* and Christ Academy programs), Concordia university institutions, LCMS Youth Ministry, LCMS School Ministry, LCMS Mission Advancement, LCMS Communications, Concordia Publishing House (CPH), Concordia Plan Services (CPS), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation, all 35 LCMS districts and district presidents, 36 pilot program participants, Higher Things, Wittenberg Academy, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), National Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Association (NLOMA), Lutheran Education Association, Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools, and the St. Louis-based marketing and communications firm, Standing Partnership, as well as others; and

WHEREAS, SAS has received the active attention of beloved Synod contributors who are firmly committed to and engaged in supporting the SAS pilot project, CPH curriculum, the second-career phase, and sustaining a long-term culture of church work formation and recruitment in the Synod; and

WHEREAS, SAS is currently in the midst of its pilot program involving a congregation and/or school from all 35 districts and one NLOMA camp, testing SAS church work recruitment strategies and resources, which will be made freely available synodwide by the end of calendar year 2023; and

WHEREAS, CPH, in partnership with SAS, is developing a four-part church work recruitment curriculum for all ages, which all Synod schools, missionaries, districts, universities, seminaries, and others will receive at no charge through the generosity of LCEF and our Concordia universities; and



Committee 6 Chairman John E. Hill

WHEREAS, SAS is collaborating with the Office of National Mission, CPS, Concordia universities and seminaries, districts and congregations, Standing Partnership, and other key partners to address church worker wellness, which includes student debt, compensation and benefits, care and encouragement of church workers, worker appreciation, and spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod congregation members and families, church workers, congregations, schools, and recipients of the ministry of Synod church workers and institutions be encouraged intentionally to pray for more ordained and commissioned workers in the church, for the continued and increased proclamation of the Gospel of Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That everyone in the Synod, including key influential adults (pastors, parents, teachers, deaconesses, directors of Christian education, youth workers, congregation members, and other church workers) be urged to encourage youth and adults to consider full-time church work; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations, schools, missionaries, and all recipients of the forthcoming CPH curriculum be strongly encouraged to use SAS strategies, resources, and curriculum; and be it finally

Resolved, That all primary agencies of the Synod (i.e., boards, commissions, councils and committees, seminaries and universities, districts, CPS, and each synodwide corporate entity) be requested to endorse, advocate, and engage with SAS as we strive together to accomplish one of the Synod's crucial official objectives, to "Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth" (Constitution Article III 3) in our life together.

Action: Adopted (6)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Encourage Proper Pastoral Formation through Our Synod's Seminaries

RESOLUTION 6-02A

Report R60 (CW, 124–37); Overtures 6-03–04, 08, 11–12 (CW, 322–23, 325–27); President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:24–25); Resolution 6-02 (TB, 1:130–31)

WHEREAS, "The Office of the Holy Ministry has been instituted by Christ Himself (John 20:19–23; Eph. 4:11–16). Through the Christian congregation, as the holder of all churchly authority, God calls qualified men to fill this divinely established office and send them as His ministers to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to administer the Sacraments publicly in the stead of Christ and by His command" (*Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*, 155); and

WHEREAS, The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall—

1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy;
2. Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world;
3. Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth (Constitution Article III 1–3); and

WHEREAS, "The training of men for the Office of the Ministry is retained by the Synod through her seminaries, and not left to the prerogative of individual districts;" (President's Report, Part 2 [TB, 1:24–25]; see also Constitution Article III 3; Bylaw 3.10.4); and

WHEREAS, "Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Const. Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Const. Art. III), which are objectives of the members themselves. While congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Const. Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions" (Bylaw 1.3.4.1); and

WHEREAS, "The LCMS collectively prescribes and maintains the standards by which a man is certified and called into the Holy Ministry according to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions (ACV, XIV). Men receiving their first call into the Holy Ministry in the LCMS must satisfactorily complete a prescribed course of study within one of the Synod-authorized routes and both be declared qualified for a first call and recommended by the faculty of either CSL or CTSFW. They will have thus received a diploma or certificate from either CSL or CTSFW (or have fulfilled the requirements established by the colloquy committee of the Synod)" (Report R60, CW, 126); and

WHEREAS, "In our life together, all Synod members have agreed that every one of our rostered ordained ministers be formally certified for pastoral ministry, either by one of the Synod's two seminaries or the Synod's colloquy committee" (Report R60, CW, 126); and

WHEREAS, According to Bylaw 4.1.1, "The Synod is not merely an advisory body in relation to a district, but establishes districts in order more effectively to achieve its objectives and carry on its activities," and Bylaw 4.1.1.1, "A district is the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod. Resolutions of the Synod are binding upon the districts."; and

WHEREAS, “It is inconsistent with the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws for an LCMS district to develop and/or promote new or amended routes to ministry apart from the procedures and approvals to which the Synod—in its bylaws, policies, and resolutions—has previously committed itself” (Report R60, CW, 126; see also Bylaws 3.10.4–3.10.4.5). Such efforts subvert our shared commitment towards pastoral formation and erode our Synod’s harmony; and

WHEREAS, “Over the course of the Synod’s history, the LCMS has continually developed and refined its residential and nonresidential routes to ordination in order to address the needs of the church as they have arisen and dynamically changed through time” (Report R60, CW, 128); and

WHEREAS, The Master of Divinity route to call, examination, and ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry is the most robust route in terms of academics and additional means of pastoral formation when compared to other approved routes in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is considered “the most complete means of preparing a man for the general responsibilities of the pastoral office” (2016 Resolution 6-03, *Proceedings*, 168), and “the preferred option for the preparation of men for pastoral ministry” (2019 Res. 6-02, *Proceedings*, 159); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to the Lord for His provision to the Church of the Office of the Holy Ministry and commit itself to full and faithful preparation of men for this office; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the blessings He gives to His Church through the men He has raised up to serve in the Office of the Holy Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm the necessity and fruitfulness of Synod-approved alternate routes to ministry to be used in appropriate ministry settings and for appropriately qualified candidates (currently, the Specific Ministry Pastor program, the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology, the Center for Hispanic Studies, the Specific Ministry Pastor-Español/English Program, the Cross-cultural Ministry Center, and the Residential Alternate Route program; previously, DELTO); and be it further

Resolved, “That the district presidents and seminaries be strongly encouraged to direct men to residential pastoral ministry routes [at our Synod’s seminaries] as the preferred option” (2019 Res. 6-02, *Proceedings*, 159); and be it finally

Resolved, That districts and members of the Synod honor, use, and promote Synod-approved programs and not create independent programs of pastoral preparation or direct men to pastoral preparation programs outside of our Synod’s seminaries as such efforts are not in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (Const. Art. III 3; Bylaw 3.10.4).

Action: Adopted (6)

An amendment was proposed but not pursued on the chair’s suggestion that it was germane instead to Res. 6-03A. An amendment was moved but failed to strike from the fourth resolve the word “strongly” and to insert a new resolve as the

fourth, “That district presidents and seminaries be strongly encouraged to direct men to any proper Synod-approved route to ordination that is appropriate for the individual and their context.” With twenty minutes of debate elapsed, debate was closed at the chair’s suggestion and the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Affirm and Strengthen the Synod’s Commitment to Well-Formed Clergy for the Sake of the Gospel

RESOLUTION 6-03A

Overtures 6-03–07, 13–21, 24, 28, 40 (CW, 322–25, 327–32, 334, 337, 344); Resolution 6-03 (TB, 1:131–33)

WHEREAS, “The Office of the Holy Ministry has been instituted by Christ Himself as a gift to His Church (John 20:19–23; Eph. 4:11–16). Through the Christian congregation, as the holder of all churchly authority, God calls qualified men to fill this divinely established office and sends them as His ministers to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to administer the Sacraments publicly in the stead of Christ and by His command...” (*Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*, 155); and

WHEREAS, We confess, “So that we may obtain this [justifying, saving] faith, the ministry [*das Predigtamt* or *preaching office*] of teaching the Gospel and administering Sacraments was instituted” (Augsburg Confession [AC] V 1), and “our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call” (AC XIV; 2016 Resolution 6-02); and

WHEREAS, The Synod is committed to a robust program of formation and education for those preparing for the sacred Office of the Holy Ministry, to which they are held accountable to God (1 Cor. 4:1–5; Heb. 13:17); and

WHEREAS, The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) route to call, examination, and ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry is the most robust route in terms of academics and additional means of pastoral formation when compared to other approved routes in the Synod and is considered “the most complete means of preparing a man for the general responsibilities of the pastoral office” (2016 Res. 6-03, *Proceedings*, 168), and “the preferred option for the preparation of men for pastoral ministry” (2019 Res. 6-02, *Proc.*, 159); and

WHEREAS, Candidates for the Office of the Holy Ministry declared qualified for first calls are those who “will have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of studies and will have received diplomas from their respective educational institutions of the Synod or have fulfilled the requisites of a colloquy or other approved education program of the Synod (Bylaws 2.7.2 and 2.7.3)” (Bylaw 2.8.1 [a]); and

WHEREAS, Despite intervening efforts to address ambiguities in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program route to ordination and Synod membership status, there

remains apparent “confusion regarding the definition of ‘specific ministry’” (2013 Res. 5-04B, *Proc.*, 139–40) among members of Synod; and

WHEREAS, The 2007 Synod convention established the SMP program at both seminaries to develop pastors for “specific ministries” which “include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise” (2007 Res. 5-01B, *Proc.*, 133–38). 2013 Res. 5-04B went on to clarify that “the authority over admission to and administration of the SMP program remains with the seminaries while the respective district president remains responsible for determining the appropriateness of the specific ministry.” This resolution also resolved “[t]hat district presidents not approve specific ministry sites which could reasonably be expected to support a general pastor or sites where a minister of religion—commissioned could fulfill the duties”; and

WHEREAS, Candidates for the SMP program do not apply for the program in isolation, but are raised up by congregations for service. As such, there must be a specific ministry identified before the application is submitted. The applying congregation that intends to call the SMP applicant once he is certified should formally indicate its desire to do so (a congregation vote is recommended). A mentor and a vicarage supervisor must be identified and agree to fill these roles for the application to be processed. Finally, the district president in whose district the applicant will serve must endorse the applicant for the specific ministry where he will serve; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of the Council of Presidents (COP) that the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, Concordia Theological Seminary, Concordia Seminary, and the COP agree on the specific ministry contexts which district presidents are to use in approving SMP applicants; and

WHEREAS, New, non-approved routes to ministerial service in the Synod and the performance of the distinctive functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry are in various instances being encouraged, conceived, developed, and offered to individuals who sincerely desire to serve the church; and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention adopted resolutions (Res. 6-02, 03A, *Proc.*, 158–60) that assigned certain tasks to the Pastoral Formation Committee (as described in Bylaw 3.10.4) concerning routes to ordination; therefore be it

Resolved, That the residential Master of Divinity (M.Div.) route at our Synod seminaries continue to be positioned and understood as the Synod’s strongly preferred route to ordination, supplying Synod congregations with well-formed, highly educated pastors who as members of the Synod (ministers of religion—ordained, Bylaw 2.6.1) are prepared to preach, teach, and care for souls over a lifetime of faithful ministry in any and every context into which the Lord calls them into service; and be it further

Resolved, That fiscally sound actions be undertaken over the 2023–26 triennium by the Synod’s residential seminaries to maintain guaranteed tuition support for all students enrolled in the residential M.Div. programs; and be it further

Resolved, That the SMP route be utilized only for its intended purposes (2007 Res. 5-01B; Bylaw 2.13.1) and strengthened under the following principles and boundaries:

1. SMP pastors and their ministries are valid, appropriate to the current needs of Christ’s Body in certain circumstances, fruitful, and treasured by all, even as the Synod gives thanks to God for such men prepared, called, and placed into the Office of the Holy Ministry under this particular Synod route to ordination;
2. the SMP route be understood and positioned as the exception and not become the principal rule with respect to the Synod’s available routes for the preparation and ordination of her pastors;
3. that there be no change to the timing of SMP vicarage and ordination as currently practiced in the Synod and that biblical languages not become a mandatory part of SMP pastoral formation;
4. SMP students be consistently addressed as “vicar” in the first two years of study and not be addressed as “pastor” until after ordination; and
5. seminaries, districts, congregations, and pastors consistently encourage and strive to make provisions for prospective SMP students to consider entering instead into an M.Div. or Residential Alternate Route (RAR/AR) program;

and be it further

Resolved, That each Synod approved non-residential route to ordination remain independent from the other and not consolidated under the SMP program; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries, in consultation with the Pastoral Formation Committee, retain responsibility for the academic, admissions, and financial parameters for each approved non-residential route to ordination in the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That those involved in the planning and implementation of *Set Apart to Serve*, the Synod’s church work recruitment initiative, in collaboration with recruitment officers from the Synod’s two residential seminaries, explore, develop, and implement means to encourage and assist men “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9) toward residential pastoral formation through the M.Div. program; and be it further

Resolved, That the Pastoral Formation Committee be assigned the following tasks, to be completed during the 2023–26 triennium, for inclusion in the 2026 *Convention Workbook*:

1. to prepare a report that analyzes and assesses ministerial or pastoral formation programs that have emerged within the Synod over the past several years, especially those preparing persons to perform the distinctive functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry, which lack approval of the Synod under its current Constitution and Bylaws and are not included in the current list (i.e., M.Div., RAR/AR, Specific Ministry

Pastor to General Pastor Certification, SMP, Specific Ministry Pastor-Español/English Program, Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology, Center for Hispanic Studies, Cross-Cultural Ministry Center) of Synod-approved routes to ordination;

2. to prepare a report that examines and compares approaches and outcomes of residential (i.e., in-person) and non-residential (i.e., distance learning) routes to ordination as these relate to the Synod's commitment to a well-formed clergy for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and
3. to identify and evaluate options and rationales and prepare a report to the 2026 Synod convention, which proposes a beneficial, clear, and concise definition of appropriate contexts for the ministry of SMP pastors; and
4. to develop and present a comprehensive, uniform, synodwide Specific Ministry Supervision Plan.

and be it finally

Resolved, That all pastors continue to be encouraged and expected to engage in continuing education throughout their pastoral ministry and self-report all continuing education experiences on their Self Evaluation Tool (2019 Res. 6-04, *Proc.*, 160–61).

Action: Adopted (8)

An amendment was proposed but failed to strike from the first resolve the word “strongly” and to modify the second item under the third resolve thus: “2. the SMP route and all Synod-approved routes to ordination be understood as ~~the exception and not become the principal rule with respect to the Synod’s available routes~~ necessary for the Synod and for the preparation and ordination of her pastors.” With twenty minutes of debate elapsed, debate was closed; the resolution was adopted [Yes: 856; No: 92].

To Affirm and Provide Guidance for the Service of Laity

RESOLUTION 6-04

Overtures 6-25–27, 30–33 (CW, 334–37, 338–40)

WHEREAS, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9); and

WHEREAS, The 2018 Commission on Theology and Church Relations report (*The Royal Priesthood: Identity and Mission*, 38–39) reminds us of the blessings of the priesthood of all believers:

1. The royal priesthood is a biblical way to identify, teach and confess the “one, holy, catholic (Christian), and apostolic Church.” That is to say, the royal priesthood

is all believers, “from every tribe and language and people and nation” whom God has made a kingdom and priests (Rev. 5:9–10) by working in them faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Individuals become priests of the royal priesthood, the Church, by the saving promises of Baptism into Christ, where we receive the washing of rebirth, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5; Acts 2:38–39; Titus 3:5).
3. The royal priesthood finds its identity only in Christ, the Great High Priest and only mediator between God and man. Royal priests are in turn called to lives of priestly mediation between God and the world. They offer living sacrifices of thanksgiving—not sacrifices of merit or atonement. In prayer they intercede on behalf of all people. They make known the excellencies of God in Christ—sharing His Word, gifts, and blessings with all nations. (See 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:6; 1 Peter 2:9.)
4. As the people of God, both corporately and individually, we mediate God’s truth of salvation and life to the world around us. Every individual believer is called to confess the faith to others since the mission of the whole church, that is, the entire royal priesthood, is to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20). Members of the royal priesthood share in that calling as they give a defense for the hope that is within them in their daily lives (1 Peter 3:15).
5. Each royal priest is to exercise the functions of the royal priesthood—sacrifice, prayer, proclamation—in a way that accords with his or her vocations within the three estates of home, church, and society. (See Ephesians 5–6; Colossians 3; 1 Timothy 2.)
6. The Holy Spirit is at work wherever the saving work of God in Christ is made known, whether that message is delivered by a layman or a pastor. The Gospel alone is the power of salvation (Rom. 1:16). This means that the proclamation of the Gospel by members of the royal priesthood as they speak of Christ to others, at home, with fellow believers, and in society, is an effective means of grace by which the Holy Spirit creates and nurtures saving faith (Acts 11:19–24).
7. The royal priesthood does not undermine or negate the Office of the Public Ministry, which Christ gives to the Church. Members of the royal priesthood, in various ways, choose individuals from among them who are equipped to teach and called in an orderly manner to hold the Office of Public Ministry and to perform its distinctive functions. (See 1 Cor. 4:1; 12:28–29; Eph. 4:11; James 3:1; Titus 1:5.)

and

WHEREAS, It is “Our Lord’s will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit. 1 Cor. 12:4–31.” (Constitution Preamble 2); and

6. PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SEMINARIES

WHEREAS, The service of laity is distinct from the Office of the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament (Augsburg Confession [AC] V, XIV); and

WHEREAS, The Church has long benefited from the service of laity in the congregation (e.g., chairman, vice chairman, elders, treasurers, committee members, Sunday school and confirmation teachers, youth workers, musicians, commissioned workers, and other areas of service and evangelism) and through other entities (e.g., Lutheran Women's Missionary League and Lutheran Laymen's League); and

WHEREAS, As the Church of Christ flourishes when both the laity and pastors recognize and serve joyfully, sacrificially, and selflessly in their distinct, God-given vocations; therefore be it

Resolved, That our districts and congregations reserve the distinct functions (e.g., preaching, presiding in the administration of the Sacrament of the Altar, private Confession and Absolution) of the Office of the Holy Ministry for pastors and not utilize laity for pastoral service in vacancies, church planting, extension campuses, etc.; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church promote, encourage, and strengthen lay service through the use of Synod, district, and congregational resources and lay training programs, including "a major emphasis on evangelism and the task of outreach, as well as mercy, education, visitation, and so forth in our increasingly diverse and challenging cultural context;" (2016 *Proceedings*, 235–36); and be it finally

Resolved, That the Church gives thanks to God for her laity and their service.

Action: Adopted (9)

An amendment was proposed but ultimately ruled out of order as non-substantive to strike from the first resolve the words "private Confession and Absolution." An amendment was proposed but failed to remove "commissioned ministers" from the list in the second-last whereas. With debate closed at the chair's suggestion, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

To Affirm and Clarify Bylaw 3.10.2.4 by Amending

RESOLUTION 6-05

Overture 6-27 (CW, 336–37)

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.10.2.4 prohibits members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations who have completed a Master of Divinity, or equivalent degree, outside of an LCMS seminary from participating in the colloquy process; and

WHEREAS, The existing Bylaw contains some extraneous wording; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.2.4 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.10 Other Councils, Committees, and Boards

...

B. Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry

...

3.10.2.4 The LCMS laymen and commissioned ministers who ~~receive a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree from a non-LCMS seminary may seek certification for call and placement in the Synod by participating in the Residential Alternate Route program of one of the seminaries of the Synod, if otherwise eligible for admission to the seminary~~ complete a program of study leading to ordination or its equivalent at a non-LCMS seminary are not eligible for colloquy on that basis.

Action: Adopted (9)

A point of order was raised, suggesting on the basis of a permissive reading of the word "may" that the resolution was contrary to the Bylaws; the Secretary explained from the history of the provision (referencing an associated report of the 2013 Res. 5-14A committee's report, 2016 Proceedings, p. 287) that the provision is restrictive rather than permissive. Debate being closed at the suggestion of the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 623; No: 127].

To Support and Participate in Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support and Preach the Word

RESOLUTION 6-06A

Overture 6-38 (CW, 342)

WHEREAS, The Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) program originated in 1998 with the Council of Presidents to assist pastors and their families in their transition from seminary to first call; and

WHEREAS, PALS works through the district president in choosing the PALS facilitators and the implementation of PALS in each respective district; and

WHEREAS, Participation in the PALS program requires no additional district staffing needs; and

WHEREAS, The PALS program is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of all districts and its pastors, recognizing a variety of ministry contexts of our districts and congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That all districts and district presidents be encouraged to carry out and implement PALS and *Preach the Word* in each respective district of the Synod and not replace these programs and initiatives with district substitutes; and be it further

Resolved, That all the Synod congregations and pastors be encouraged to support and participate in PALS and *Preach the Word* in our life together in service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Action: Adopted (9)

After some discussion, closure of debate was called and carried. The resolution was adopted in a unanimous voice vote.

To Recommend and Implement Rigorous Program of Study in Circuit *Winkels*

RESOLUTION 6-07A

Overture 6-39 (CW, 343–44); Resolution 6-07 (TB, 136–37)

WHEREAS, The 67th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on July 24, 2019, adopted Resolution 6-04, “To Support, Encourage, and Expect Continuing Education for all Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Pastors,” nearly unanimously and by voice vote (*Proceedings*, 160); and

WHEREAS, In the press of pastoral life, pastors often find it difficult to maintain a robust study of God’s Word and the teachings of Scripture—along with the necessary tools for that study—and the use of the biblical languages; and

WHEREAS, Traditionally, the pastoral *Winkels* provided for:

- the regular, formal study of the Scriptures, led by pastors for pastors;
- the regular, formal study of the Lutheran Confessions and the Lutheran dogmatic tradition, led by pastors for pastors;
- the regular, formal study of illuminating historical issues and contemporary threats to the teaching of God’s Word and our blessed Lutheran Confessions, led by pastors for pastors; and
- the regular, formal critique of the teaching and proclamation of the pastors in the *Winkel*;

and

WHEREAS, The traditional *Winkel* model generates *koinonia* around the only thing that in Christ’s Church can create it—His Holy Word and our blessed Lutheran Confessions—but the absence of serious study of that Word and our Lutheran Confessions leads to the rupture of *koinonia*; therefore be it

Resolved, That the district presidents provide to all circuit visitors and pastors a template for monthly *Winkels* which provides significant time for:

- the regular, formal study of God’s Word in the original languages led by a circuit pastor;

- the regular, formal study of our blessed Lutheran Confessions and/or the Lutheran dogmatic tradition led by a circuit pastor;
- the regular, formal study of an historical, pastoral-theological, or polemical topic led by a circuit pastor; and
- regular, formal pastor-led critique of the *Winkel* preacher’s sermon;

and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors of the district be encouraged to embrace the traditional *Winkel* model and readily, gladly, and energetically to participate in it, for their own theological growth, to maintain the tools of theology in their midst, and to foster *koinonia* in their midst; and be it finally

Resolved, That each district president in his 2026 Synod convention report comment on the implementation of the traditional *Winkel* model in the circuits of his district and its reception by and benefit to pastors and congregations alike.

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon closure of debate suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Recognize and Honor the Pastor’s Wife

RESOLUTION 6-09

Overture 6-45 (CW, 346–47)

WHEREAS, Genesis 1 and 2 along with many Old Testament references (particularly in Prov. 31:1–31), Jesus in Matt. 19:4–6 and blessing the wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11), as well as 1 Cor. 7:2, 9 and Heb. 13:4, substantiate the God-given institution of marriage between a man and a woman; and

WHEREAS, We confess the divine and natural right of all people, including our pastors, to the marriage of a man and woman in Augsburg Confession and Apology Article XXIII and Smalcald Articles III XI, where the defense of the marriage of pastors has become a defense and confession of God’s gift and institution of our humanity as male or female and of marriage; and

WHEREAS, The year 2025 will mark the 500th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther’s marriage to Katherine von Bora, June 13, 1525, helping to reestablish within the Reformation movement the sanctity of marriage among the Christian clergy in the West; and

WHEREAS, The wonderful blessing of marriage is underlined by both Martin and Katie, even establishing the role model of the pastor’s family and the parsonage for generations to follow; and

WHEREAS, Pastors are to be “examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3), that the flock may imitate their Christian life (Titus 2:7), also in respect to the marital, domestic estate, that they be

6. PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SEMINARIES

husband to only one wife and have believing children in subordination (Titus 1:6); and

WHEREAS, Married pastors are to love their wives by providing for them (Eph. 5:25–33), and congregations are to love their pastors by providing for them and their families (1 Cor. 9:4–5), as they are asked in the Installation Rite:

Will you honor and uphold your pastor as he serves Christ in all his God-pleasing responsibilities? Will you aid him as he cares for his family? Will you be diligent to “put the best construction on everything,” recognizing that “love covers a multitude of sins”? If so, then answer: We will, with the help of God. (Concordia Publishing House [CPH], *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*, 169, 180);

therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in its 2023 convention recognize the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Luther marriage in the year 2025; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS encourage its districts holding pastoral conferences and/or conventions in 2025 to help celebrate this anniversary milestone by recognizing the

wedding anniversaries of their pastors and their wives in whatever manner or custom might be deemed best; and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents and the congregations under their care be urged to give careful attention and commitment to their congregation’s moral obligation not only to love their pastor, his wife, and family, but also to provide the salary, housing, and benefits needed by the pastor to care for his wife and household; and be it finally

Resolved, That in the long standing tradition of Reformation numismatics over six centuries commemorating milestone anniversaries such as the centennials of 1517, the Augsburg Confession, Luther’s birth, and many others, (i.e., a medal featuring Luther and Katherine as early as 1717 followed by other examples), CPH and Concordia Historical Institute consider partnering to commission and produce a worthy commemorative medallion celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Luthers, and made available to districts, institutions, congregations, libraries, and individuals.

Action: Adopted (9)

Upon immediate closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted in a unanimous voice vote.

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

To Recognize and Give Thanks for Work at Concordia College—New York

RESOLUTION 7-01A

Overtures 7-24–25 (CW, 361–62)

WHEREAS, Concordia College—New York (CCNY) was founded in 1881 in what was the Eastern District and is now the Atlantic District when The Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of St. Matthew in Manhattan established a *Sexta* and *Quinta* at St. Matthew Academy, thereby beginning what would be called the “New York *Progymnasium*”; and

WHEREAS, CCNY (referred to as the “*Progymnasium*,” “Concordia *Progymnasium*,” and “Concordia Lutheran Collegiate Institute” before being known universally as “Concordia College”) relocated to the hamlet of Hawthorne, N.Y., on Buttermilk Hill before moving to its last location in the village of Bronxville, N.Y.; and

WHEREAS, CCNY not only has served the East Coast of the United States but people throughout the nation and around the world for over 140 years by giving all people access to quality Christian education and rigorous opportunities to pursue studies in the liberal arts whereby countless young people have been sent out to live their vocations in the name of Jesus; and

WHEREAS, CCNY has been a place for Lutherans and for others to gather for conventions, meetings, concerts, art events, sports events, and other activities for over a century; and

WHEREAS, There is a time for all endeavors of man, which blossom one day and wither the next like the flowers of the field, but the Word of the Lord and His work of salvation endure forever (Ecclesiastes 3; Isaiah 40; James 1); and

WHEREAS, CCNY ceased all academic operations at the end of the 2020–21 academic year but will continue to have great impact upon the Church through all who attended the college; and

WHEREAS, The closure of CCNY has left an enormous hole in the hearts of alumni, faculty, staff, friends, and the Atlantic District; therefore be it

Resolved, That we recognize, remember, and give thanks to God for the good and godly work and ministry the many alumni of CCNY have done and will continue to do in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations and communities; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize, remember, and give thanks to God for all who provided care and support to the faculty and staff members of CCNY who were losing jobs due to the closure of the school; and be it finally

Resolved, That we give voice to our thanks and praise to God for working through CCNY, and pray His continued guidance, as we rise and sing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (4)

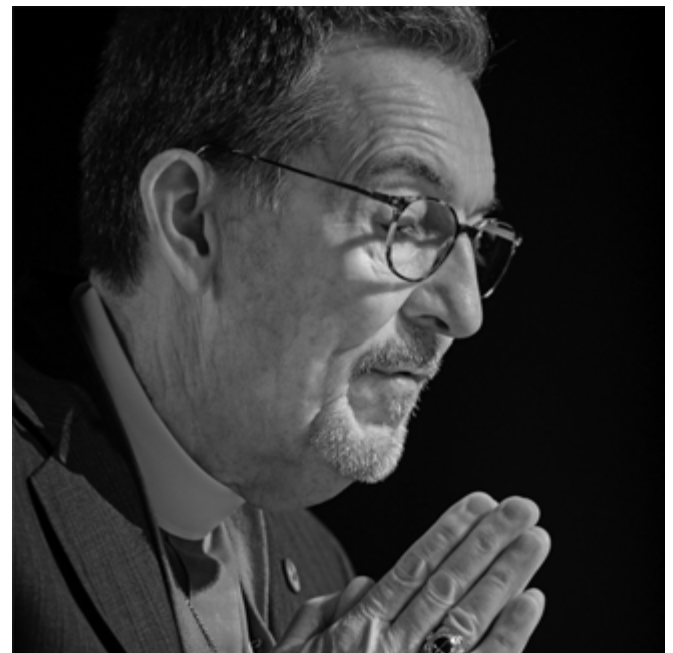
It was moved to amend the resolution by inserting a second-last resolve, “That a study be performed regarding the closures of Concordia College Alabama; Concordia College—New York; and Concordia University, Portland, by an independent investigative source that is approved by the Council of Presidents, and include a determination of the causes of closure for these institutions, analyze commonalities, and make recommendations for changes that will help prevent the future closures of our other Concordia universities.” The amendment was ruled out of order as not germane, a ruling of the chair that was sustained by the body. Debate being closed, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

To Honor and Give Thanks for Ministry of Concordia University, Portland

RESOLUTION 7-02A

Overture 7-26 (CW, 362)

WHEREAS, Concordia University, Portland (CUP), served the mission of the Gospel in the Pacific Northwest for 115 years (1905–2020); and



Committee 7 Chairman Scott R. Murray

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Many ministries across this nation and the world have been impacted by graduates from CUP and many individuals grew spiritually in conversion and/or renewal in faith toward Christ during their time at CUP; and

WHEREAS, The students benefited greatly from the dedicated faculty and staff who served them at the university; and

WHEREAS, CUP became a place where many people were introduced to the Gospel for the first time; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the ministry of CUP—for the faculty and staff who gave of themselves to this ministry over the years; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention gratefully acknowledge the blessing that CUP was to our church and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize, remember, and give thanks to God for the good and godly work and ministry the many alumni of CUP have done and will continue to do in our congregations and communities; and be it finally

Resolved, That we give voice to our thanks and praise to God for working through CUP, and pray His continued guidance, as we rise and sing the common doxology.

Action: Adopted (4)

An amendment was declined to add a second-last resolve: “That the Synod establish a memorial fund to offer scholarships to incoming Concordia University students in memory of the Concordia colleges and universities that have recently closed.” Upon closure of debate as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Call Concordia University Texas Leadership to Repentance

RESOLUTION 7-03

Reports R1, R14, R64 (CW, 1–3, 64–69, 173–79); Overture 7-18 (CW, 359); Report LR67 (TB, 1:30–34)

WHEREAS, Concordia University Texas (CTX), since its founding in 1926 by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), has operated and been governed under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, On Nov. 8, 2022, a majority of the CTX Board of Regents (BOR) voted to take action unilaterally to modify the CTX bylaws and articles of incorporation (the “governing documents”) in an attempt to make the BOR a self-appointing, self-perpetuating board, no longer subject to the Bylaws of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, This purported separation was in direct contradiction to the Constitution and Bylaws, which the officers of the Synod and its agencies are obligated to uphold and implement (see Bylaws 1.4.3 and 1.4.5); and

WHEREAS, The Fourth Commandment requires that we honor our authorities, the Seventh Commandment protects the property of all, and the Ninth and Tenth Commandments protect us from all evil desires which lead to the breaking of all the other commandments; and

WHEREAS, This purported separation has caused great offense and division within the Church body; and

WHEREAS, Many throughout the Synod recognize that this action, if allowed to stand, will deprive the Synod and its congregations of an institution to train and certify men and women for professional church work and to aid the church in its mission to vigorously make known the love of Christ to all students enrolled at the university; and

WHEREAS, The report, “Ecclesiastical Visitation of Concordia University Texas” (Report R64, *Workbook*, 173–79), makes it clear that CTX has undergone significant mission and theological drift away from LCMS doctrine and practice on many issues, including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), especially programs that relate to sex, gender, marriage, and family, leading the university away in significant mission drift from the biblical positions and practices of the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod, Synod Board of Directors (BOD), and Concordia University System (CUS) BOD admonished the CTX BOR that it did not have authority unilaterally to modify its governing documents, and that its purported separation, action was illegitimate, null and void, and contrary to the Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod, the Synod BOD, and the CUS BOD engaged in extensive communications with the CTX BOR, including in-person meetings and multiple correspondences (“Walking Away: Concordia University Texas Holds to ‘Ill-Advised Course,’” *Reporter*, June 2023), in an effort to persuade the CTX BOR to correct its illegitimate and wrongful purported separation and to restore CTX’s governing documents to be compliant with the Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, The Synod BOD submitted to the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) several questions regarding the CTX BOR Nov. 8, 2022, action, and its purported attempt to unilaterally change CTX’s governing documents, both with respect to the process CTX followed and with respect to the action taken; and

WHEREAS, Upon receiving the questions from the Synod BOD, the CCM, pursuant to Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (b), invited input from the President of the Synod, the Synod BOD, the CUS BOD, the boards of regents of all CUS universities, the CUS President, and Synod legal counsel, providing ample time for all of these interested persons and entities to provide input regarding the questions presented by the Synod BOD; and

WHEREAS, The CTX BOR, accordingly, was given notice of the questions submitted by the Synod BOD to the CCM and was given ample time to provide input with respect to those questions before the CCM issued its opinion; and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 23-3006 (“University Board of Regents Unilateral Separation”) concludes, in part, as follows:

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

- Bylaw 3.3.4.10 authorizes the Synod Board of Directors to obtain from any agency of the Synod all records and other information relative to the property of the Synod and to matters over which the Board of Directors has general oversight.
- That every board and every university of the Synod is an “agency” of the Synod as defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (a).
- That every agency of the Synod is bound by the Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions of the Synod (Bylaw 1.4.5) and therefore any action taken by an agency which contradicts the Constitution, Bylaws, or resolutions of the Synod is null and void.
- That a Synod university which wishes to change its articles of incorporation or its bylaws is required to receive advance approval from the CCM under Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 (a) and failure to do so makes any such change null and void and unable to be put into practice.
- That the boards of regents and individual members of the CUS universities have a fiduciary duty to the Synod under Bylaw 3.10.6.4 (i).
- That a board of regents of a CUS university does not have authority to unilaterally change its governance model from that described in Synod Bylaws or to unilaterally amend its articles or bylaws without prior approval.
- That any purported change to the bylaws or articles of incorporation of a CUS university made without the approval of the CCM is “null and void.”
- That individual members of a CUS university board of regents each have a duty to comply with the Synod Constitution Bylaws, and resolutions.

and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) states that an opinion rendered by the CCM “shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, On April 4, 2023, the CTX BOR took action to affirm its illegitimate and wrongful purported separation; and

WHEREAS, Following the issuance of CCM Op. 23-3006, in a letter dated May 9, 2023, the Synod BOD, pursuant to its authority under Bylaw 3.3.4.10, as referenced in the CCM Opinion, requested information from the CTX BOR relating to the Synod BOD oversight responsibility; and

WHEREAS, In a letter from its chairman dated May 17, 2023, the CTX BOR refused to provide the information requested by the Synod BOD, asserting that CTX is not subject to the Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, The CTX BOR, the CTX president, and certain CTX administrators have steadfastly refused to accept the advice and admonition of the President of the Synod, Synod BOD, and CUS BOD, and have overtly and directly defied the final and binding CCM Op. 23-3006; and

WHEREAS, Neither the CTX BOR nor any of its members nor the CTX president and administration have sought to overrule CCM Op. 23-3006; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm CCM Op. 23-3006 in its entirety; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirmatively conclude that the CTX BOR members who voted in favor of the April 4, 2023, action that affirmed the CTX BOR’s purported separation have acted in direct conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws, as well as CCM Op. 23-3006; and be it further

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; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage the appropriate ecclesiastical supervisors to investigate and to determine any appropriate disciplinary action that should be taken against the CTX president and any member of the CTX BOR who is a rostered church worker; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage the President of the Synod, LCMS BOD, the CUS and its board, and the appropriate district presidents to take all appropriate actions to address this situation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention call upon the CTX president, those CTX administrators who have advocated for and supported the purported separation, and the CTX BOR to submit to the governance of the Synod as laid out in the Constitution and Bylaws; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention call upon the CTX president, those CTX administrators who have advocated for and supported the purported separation, and the CTX BOR to repent for having broken the Fourth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments, and to apologize publicly for the illegitimate and wrongful purported separation; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of Synod stand prepared to grant holy absolution to those who repent and want to do better by rescinding their actions resulting in reconciliation and restoration.

Action: Adopted (5)

A motion to divide the question, removing the final two resolves to a separate resolution, was ruled out of order as non-substantive; so was a proposed amendment to the fifth resolve, to introduce the word “all aforementioned appropriate actions.”

The substitute motion in TB, 3:395, was offered but out of order as the Commission on Constitutional Matters (Op. 23-3012[H]) found it to be inconsistent with the Bylaws of the Synod.

An amendment to replace “address” with “seek reconciliation in” in the fifth resolve and to strike the final three resolves failed after significant debate, during which the rules were suspended to allow Concordia University Texas President Don Christian to address the convention for two minutes and,

thereafter, the second closure of debate called under Rule 22 was carried. With closure of debate being carried also on the resolution, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 716; No:283].

The body granted the right, under Standing Rule 29, for votes to be recorded in the minutes, which are as follow:

Yes:

Lay Delegates: Jonathan Baisch (SELC); Keith D'Atrio (MDS); Darik Day (NE); Harry Edmon (NOW); Paul Edmon (NE); Delmar Ehlers (MNS); Paul Gehlbach (MNS); Stephen Hernandez (TX); Matthew Laine (OH); Robert Lustrea (NI); Joshua Mize (SE); Caleb Smith (IN); Steven Timmerman (SD); Philip Vigés (MI);

Pastoral Delegates: Christopher Antonetti (NI); Emmett Bartens (NI); Eric Bednash (SE); Anthony Bertram (MNS); Christopher Brademeyer (ND); Christopher Burger (SE); Joshua Conradt (SW); Theodore Cook Sr. (KS); Jesse Davis (SW); Mark De Young (TX); K. C. Dehning (IN); Phillip Fischhaber (NI); Marshal Frisque (SW); Aaron Hambleton (IE); Peter Haugen (MNS); Andrew Herzberg (CI); Jonathan Hodges (NJ); Christopher Horton (MNS); Philip Houser (MNN); Kevin Johnson (IW); Andrew Kennell (MO); David Knefelkamp (NW); Nathaniel Konkel (MNN); John Koopman (IW); Alan Kornacki (SI); Mark Kranz (MO); Ralph Laufer (SI); Joshua Leigeber (MDS); Gary Markworth (NW); Adam Matheny (MNS); Adam McDowell (IN); Seth Mierow (IN); Matthew Moss (MNS); M. Joshua Osbun (IN); Daniel Redhage (IE); Daniel Ross (OK); Evan Scamman (NE); Michael Schmidt (KS); Michael Schuermann (CI); Christian Schultz (KS); Benjamin Siebert (NEB); Brad Thomas (NW); David Vandercook (MDS); Robert Wacker (OH); David Walsh (MNN); Jody Walter (NNW); Donald Welmer (MDS); Adam Welton (SD); Philip Zielinski (OH);

No:

Pastoral Delegates: John Davis (TX); Alex Hoffmeyer (MI); Derek Klemm (PSW); Joshua Knippa (TX).

To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod

RESOLUTION 7-04B

Overtures 7-01-09 (CW, 349-55); Report LR69 (TB, 1:40-47); Overture L7-27 (TB, 1:52-75); Resolution 7-04A (TB, 2B:310-35)

Preamble

The following proposed convention action, having to do with the Concordia University System (CUS), represents the culmination of the collaborative process set forth by 2019 Resolution 7-03 ("To Direct a Collaborative Process to Propose a New Governance Plan") to propose a new governance plan for CUS that (as the resolution directed) strengthens all CUS institutions' connection to the Synod; strengthens their

confessional Lutheran identity; and reflects intensive and extensive review of the composition, size, and selection of their boards of regents, the process of selecting their presidents, the overall governance of the system by the CUS and the boards, and the financial model for the institutions.

This proposal aims to respond effectively—with realism, faithfulness, and hopefulness—to decades of higher education change. What were once colleges devoted almost exclusively to the training of sons and daughters of Synod congregations for church work have—through a process that began as early as 1947, with the development of the "senior college" concept, and that accelerated with each subsequent decade—completely transitioned to four-year, regional universities, reliant on sources outside the Synod for the vast majority of their material operating inputs. A few details are important:

- The colleges once served a "captive Synod audience" of traditional, residential undergraduate students studying in a limited number of academic programs on campuses oriented principally or exclusively toward church work or final pastoral formation at seminary. Today, the universities offer, to a confessionally diverse student population, dozens of competitive online and on-ground undergraduate and masters, doctoral, and professional degrees and programs in a wide variety of disciplines including health care, engineering, education, criminal justice, etc.
- Across the board today, church work (4 percent) and member-congregation students (11 percent) are a small minority on each campus, and tuition and fees (especially from profitable, largely graduate, almost exclusively non-church work programs), grants, and gifts from the faithful, from alumni, and from surrounding communities have replaced a Synod subsidy as principal financial means. Only approximately 5-6 percent of graduates of Synod congregations attend a Concordia university.
- With the size of the schools' operating budgets, their principal reliance on non-Synod sources of income, their responsibility to those providing those inputs (including the federal government and students seeking degrees in non-church work programs), their expanding but variously structured endowments, and their potential liabilities vastly outweighing the value of the schools' properties, necessitate that any sweeping rearrangement of the CUS be far more complex than a simple application of present Synod bylaw mechanisms (e.g., Bylaw 3.6.6.4) or a simple convention action.
- It is no longer practical to contemplate empowering any single Synod board to coordinate the business and financial operations of the universities as they presently exist and operate as a unitary whole. Even the few existing layers of authorization in left-hand kingdom matters (e.g., administration, finance, real estate, budget, information technology) have engendered uncertainty regarding the relative roles of CUS, the

Synod Board of Directors (BOD), and the boards of regents, although the latter are clearly intended to be the schools' "governing bodies corporate."

- While schools' cash flow and other financial needs were once met with granting by the Synod or lending of funds deposited by other Concordias, this can no longer be the case. Today the CUS no longer manages lines of credit to the schools. Instead, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and other banks finance the borrowing by schools based on their individual financial circumstances. Neither does the Synod have the resources, even if all other activity were ceased, to keep all of its institutions economically viable (institutions in Selma, Ala., Portland, Ore., and Bronxville, N.Y. having been lost to the Synod in the last five years) or to take on the scale of liabilities that could be expected to arise in connection with colleges and universities experiencing severe financial straits. Nor has the Synod the power to insulate them from the theological drift characteristic of religious colleges and universities across the country or from increasing uncertainties about viability of American colleges and universities, generally. Nor, finally, does the Synod have the flow of church vocation and other interested member congregation students or faculty to fill them at anything approximating their current scale. Their survival, flourishing, and usefulness to the church depend on the utmost performance by highly skilled and qualified governing bodies and administrations, committed to the institutions' purpose within the mission of the Synod.
- The uniqueness of our Concordias in an otherwise lost-at-sea higher education landscape, however, has radically increased. Gone are days when public schools advocated basic Judeo-Christian morality and moral principles, and secular society willingly supported Christian churches and schools and maintained Christian pro-life and sexuality standards. Today, churches and schools are left to contend with government and society increasingly antagonistic to Christianity, and the church's universities exist not only in competition with each other or with similar regional institutions but with the unique and valuable opportunity to offer a robust and compelling Christian *contrast* to their secular or *legacy* "Christian" counterparts. In a very real sense, what is "right" is also what "could work." That is to say, the viability and prospering, the "marketable brand" of each university is, in the long view, tied to its performance of a mission that is unique in the field of higher education—as a university that believes, teaches, and confesses the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.
- There is an opportunity—recognizing that our Concordias are not "legacy institutions" but are *institutions of the Church* devoted to faithfully serving the Church and their students as institutions of the Church in their new reality as somewhere between "critical mass" institutions, having enough Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) presence to largely

serve the faithful while inviting others seeking what they provide to be immersed in that environment, and "mission" institutions, drawing faculty and staff to the extent possible from Synod and focusing more on delivering education to unchurched students than to the faithful and on intentionally engaging all students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its application to their vocations in family, church, and state. These simple facts have implications, and shifting from a "broader" institution to a "narrower" one is an extremely challenging prospect. At the same time, a broader institution may be capable of having a broader mission impact if it can chart the challenging course of such an institution well.

This proposal aims to orient the Synod to continue vigorously in common confession and mission with her colleges and universities, providing opportunities for members of the Synod's congregations to attend and hold before the world high-quality and attractive schools that, both in teaching and campus life, faithfully adhere to and advocate the Holy Scripture and the doctrine and practice of the Synod (Constitution Article II). The crucial roles of boards of regents and university presidents are restated clearly, along with appropriate safeguards, and realistic lines of accountability are drawn. These roles will be equipped, empowered, and expected to exercise their duty to the congregations of the Synod (Const. Art. IV; Bylaws 1.2.1 [a], 1.4.5), as the governing bodies corporate of the several institutions (existing Bylaw 3.10.6.4 [i][1, 6]) and their executives, to do the work for which Synod has established the schools, including training professional church workers (Const. Art. III 3) and laity for service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Articles of Incorporation II d), and thoroughly educating and nurturing "others desiring a Christian liberal arts education" (Bylaw 3.6.6.1). At the same time, the complexity and sophistication of the individual schools is recognized, reducing administrative overhead and favoring coordinative and collaborative work that comes "from within" as a means of strengthening the individual institutions while extending their witness and collective influence.

Simply put, the proposal aims to continue thereby the Synod's efforts to uphold the relationship of the schools with its congregations and commending them to their students, while guiding the schools to build on the strength that differentiates them from every other university—the full and pure confession of a Jesus who is never "in the way" but in every sense is "the Way." The institutions will be guided to thrive, not just in any way, but in precisely that way that will sustain and increase their unique and indispensable contributions to the common mission of the Synod.

This proposal desires to build upon the hard and forward-looking work of the Concordia presidents in good standing, boards of regents, CUS Board of Directors (CUS BOD), Synod Board of Directors (BOD), and 7-03 Committee, centered in the following shared convictions:

1. There is great promise and possibility in the Concordias, individually and collectively, maintaining a close two-way relationship and connection with the

Synod through a formal governance structure; supporting the mission and goals of the Synod; strengthening Lutheran identity; accommodating as many congregation-member students as possible; equipping *all* who attend with a Lutheran higher education that prepares them to be a blessing to families, churches, communities, and workplaces; and starting to build a bridge between such students and the life of the Church.

2. There is also great promise and possibility in each of the Concordias working—each with unique influence and impact—in concert, called together by a Synod convener to seek cooperative and collaborative efforts and to support one another, aiming for a shared path forward with collective influence that expands rather than shrinks.
3. The viability and prospering of each university is, in the long view, tied to its performance of a mission that is unique in the field of higher education—as a university that believes, teaches, and confesses the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. As Dr. Luther wrote, “I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young students, are wide gates to hell” (“To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” *Luther’s Works* 44:206–7; WA 6:462). This makes Synod visitation and ecclesiastical supervision—a formal expression of the rich visitation heritage of the Church—invaluable to each institution. As such, each of the Concordias shares a commitment, and welcomes support and accountability, in providing a higher education where the Scriptures are present and prevalent, offering to those within the church and beyond a compelling alternative to secular higher education.

The following proposed amendments to the CUS, reflecting these realities and hopes, have emerged from a series of recent Synod convention actions (2013 Res. 5-01A; 2016 Res. 7-02B; and 2019 Res. 7-03). The culminating 2019 convention action directed the Synod’s BOD—with active involvement of the President of the Synod; the CUS board, advisory council, and president; the institutions’ boards of regents; and others as needed—to propose a new governance plan for consideration and adoption by the 2023 convention. The process directed by 2019 Res. 7-03 required the concurrence of the CUS advisory council and the CUS BOD and a period of review and comment by the entire Synod, which took place between March and September 2021. The following plan—significantly revised by the university presidents and drafting committee while the *Workbook* was going to print—is presented in pursuit of a realistic, sustainable, and transparent framework, satisfying and acting upon the following objectives of the aforementioned resolutions, as summarized in 2019 Res. 7-03, as summarized at the outset.

Each of the following seven sections (A–G) of the proposed governance plan is prefaced by a *rationale* section briefly relating the proposed changes to the above objectives. In

response especially to the thrice-expressed (2013 Res. 5-01A; 2016 Res. 7-02B; 2019 Res. 7-03) desire of the convention for materially *strengthened* connections with the Synod’s colleges and universities, detailed bylaws refocus the CUS on providing concrete mechanisms for continued evaluation and enhancement where the Synod’s strength most lies and where it most matters: confessional Lutheran identity and mission focus. At the same time, responding to the rationale for 2019 Res. 7-03, to the collective desire expressed by the several boards of regents, and to practical necessity, the following proposal aims, so far as an appropriate governance structure can, to foster and facilitate the coordination and collaboration that will help the institutions to succeed, individually and together—as schools committed to the church and her mission—in an increasingly challenging higher education environment.

A. TO REFOCUS CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AS ECCLESIASTICAL VISITOR

Rationale

In keeping with the charge of 2019 Res. 7-03 to “review the overall governance of CUS and the boards of regents of the CUS institutions,” the interaction of the Synod, its President, BOD, CUS, and the various boards of regents was examined from the perspective of the “two kingdoms” in an attempt to be clear about who is responsible for which aspects of the schools’ governance and in what manner.

It is relatively easy to *distinguish* right-hand (doctrine, practice, ecclesial mission) and left-hand (business, property, legal) aspects of a university’s operation and to understand their different realms of Synod supervision and oversight. The two “hands” can hardly be *separated*, however, especially in the work of a board of regents. Of concern have been recent situations in which left-hand realities have overwhelmed the right hand’s ability to continue the mission, or left-hand powers and supposed obligations have distracted a board of regents from its right-hand obligations. To be sure, regents are responsible to keep the ship of their institution afloat (in a business, property, and legal sense)—but their work hardly ends there; they are charged much more to *steer* their ship in the direction of the church’s mission (doctrine, practice, ecclesial mission). A ship afloat but rudderless is as useless to the church as is a well-charted course for a sunken ship. Thus, as a Christian lives *in two* kingdoms but *as one* subject—entrusted at once with material gifts and human relationships, on the one hand, but also with the Word of God, on the other—so these two spheres meet in the board of regents of a Synod university. Subject to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, the ultimate responsibility and independence in operating the institution lie with these regents (2019 Bylaw 3.10.6.4 [i][6]; 3.10.6.5).

Helping the ships of our schools successfully navigate the challenging seas, these days, for universities of any stripe except those with massive endowments while maintaining their freedom to maneuver on the church’s charted course is a grand challenge for each board of regents. They need agility to marshal their institutions’ material resources for mission. They need to be accountable to the Synod in two distinct ways:

first, that they chart, in doctrinal, practical, and mission terms, the right course; second, that they marshal their material resources properly to perform that task, without undue worldly entanglements, and in the long term. Consideration of the right-hand realm and left-hand realm are both absolutely necessary but each calls for different gifts and approaches.

Proposed is moderate and focused change to CUS, *not* to introduce or enhance mechanisms by which it directs the universities or to involve it in their kingdom-of-the-left business decisions, but to *focus and enhance* the Synod's effort in the guidance, encouragement, and provision of accountability for the schools' accomplishment of their churchly purpose. "Left-hand" responsibility of Synod's BOD under Constitution Article XI E 2 remains (see Section C below). The BOD has in its members, in its Chief Financial Officer, and in other experts available for its use, the requisite gifts and expertise to carry out its responsibilities relative to "property of the Synod." Mechanisms for what were always the chief aims of CUS must be sustained and strengthened, namely, to set forth and realize a vision for the schools' role in the mission of the Synod, in pursuit of which CUS has worked with them to establish Lutheran Identity Standards for CUS Institutions (2016 Res. 7-01A, *Proceedings*, 171–72) and to advocate the schools' provision of church workers and preeminently and pervasively *Lutheran* higher education programs and campuses.

Section B, below, elaborates the process of visitation and affirmation by which, chiefly, CUS will guide institutions in the way of expressing *Lutheran identity* in all spheres of university life and accomplishing the Synod's *mission outcomes*, including bold confession (Const. Art. III 1–2), quality Christian education (Const. Art. III 5), and preparation of church workers (Const. Art. III 3) and others (Art. Inc. II d) for exemplary service in family, church, and state. This process falls squarely within the churchly tradition of *visitation and ecclesiastical supervision* (cf. Bylaws 1.2.1 [j]; 3.3.1.1.1; 3.3.1.2; Const. Art. XII 7) as a means of accountability of the Synod's colleges and universities, under the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions, to the whole Synod. CUS, acting in concert with the existing Committee for Convention Nominations, will also have an active role in commending highly qualified potential regents for election and appointment to these boards. The boards of regents themselves are dealt with in Section D, further below.

The function of CUS has changed and will further change to one of Synod theological oversight and coordination. Business and property roles will largely cease and the corporate structure of CUS as a synodwide corporate entity is simplified.

In addition, the intensity and scope of the higher education landscape in which LCMS colleges and universities operate is changing rapidly, which further increases scrutiny on the institutional boards' ability to fulfill their fiduciary duties as agencies of the LCMS. Yet, the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions provide us with clear direction regarding our responsibilities toward civil authorities.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, That existing Bylaws 3.6.6.4–8, regarding the CUS, be deleted, their content being superseded by the following new bylaws; and be it further

Resolved, That with increased antagonism toward the Christian faith and Christian educational institutions, the Synod in convention encourages the Board of Directors of the Synod and the universities to consider options to best preserve both ecclesiastical and secular rights, interests, and responsibilities of the universities and, as appropriate, take actions and institute processes accordingly, or if beneficial, to bring to the convention potential further action; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.6.6 and following, regarding the CUS, be revised as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Concordia University System

3.6.6 Concordia University System, as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Missouri, ~~is operated by its members and board of directors in accordance with~~ is incorporated as provided in its Articles of Incorporation and corporate Bylaws to facilitate ecclesiastical visitation and affirmation of the Synod's colleges and universities (Bylaw 3.10.6 and following) and to assist with their cooperation and coordination further the objectives of higher education within the Synod. Any amendments to these Articles of Incorporation shall be subject to approval by the members. It shall seek to assist them with effective and accountable:

- preparation of commissioned ministers for service in the Synod and of pre-seminary students for study at a Synod seminary;
- raising up of Lutheran laypersons for lifelong, faithful service to Christ and the neighbor; and
- robust, intentional engagement of all students with the faith taught and practiced, with application to their vocations in family, church, and state.

3.6.6.1 ~~The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System has authority with respect to the Synod's colleges and universities. It shall have the overall responsibility to provide for the education of pre-seminary students, ministers of religion commissioned, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education by facilitating prior approval as set forth in Bylaw 3.10.6.7.3 for theology appointments to college/university faculties and by coordinating the activities of the Synod's colleges and universities as a unified system of the Synod through their respective boards of regents.~~

3.6.6.2 ~~The members of Concordia University System shall consist of the Synod and the colleges and universities of the Synod. The Board of Directors of the Synod and the Council of Presidents of the Synod each shall appoint delegates representing the Synod. The boards of regents of the colleges and universities of the Synod shall appoint delegates representing the colleges and universities. The~~

numbers of delegates appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod, the Council of Presidents, and the boards of regents shall be established by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Concordia University System.

3.6.6.1 The Concordia University System Board of Directors shall:

(a) define, after input from the Institution Advisory Council, and adopt the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards ("Standards," Bylaw 3.6.6.4), which shall be the basis of Synod visitation of Synod colleges and universities, including each of their church worker preparation programs; and maintain policies governing, and supervise the performance of, such Synod visitation (Bylaws 3.6.6.4 and following), which shall focus on support and accountability for maintaining and strengthening Lutheran identity. Consistent with the Standards, the Concordia University System shall ensure that each institution receives:

(1) regular ecclesiastical and fraternal counsel and encouragement through annual, informal visitation that involves free exchange among peers;

(2) in-depth ecclesiastical formal visitation and reporting (including affirmation, commendations, cautions, and recommendations for improvement; Bylaw 3.6.6.4) at least once every three years;

(b) review and approve new implementations of and discontinuance, whether actual or constructive, of programs of study leading to professional church work in the interest of the institution(s) and the Synod;

(c) facilitate, together with respective boards of regents, the processes of president selection (Bylaw 3.10.6.8.2) and prior approval for appointments to theology faculties of Synod colleges and universities (Bylaw 3.10.6.9.2); [bylaws as renumbered pursuant to amendments that follow]

(d) create and maintain a *Model Operating Procedures Manual for Faculty and Administration Complaints and Appeal of Termination: Colleges and Universities*, subject to approval by the Commission on Constitutional Matters, regarding the handling of faculty and staff complaints and dispute resolution by college/university boards of regents, to include notification of any relevant ecclesiastical supervisor, and monitor compliance with such;

(e) monitor, inquire into, and report to the President of the Synod regarding the ongoing faithfulness of Synod's colleges and universities to the doctrine, practice, and objectives of the Constitution of the Synod (Const. Art. II and III);

(f) monitor—after input from the Office of National Mission; the Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services; the Council of Presidents; and the Synod's seminaries—and report to the Synod on the enrollment, graduation, placement, and retention rates in programs leading to candidacy for commissioned ministry or to seminary enrollment and advise the schools on the Synod's worker needs and opportunities for coordination;

(g) receive, revise, and recommend to conventions of the Synod for approval any proposals for creating, essentially revising, or renaming programs of study and certification for commissioned ministry;

(h) in addition to providing its own report, review and respond in each Synod convention *Workbook* to a detailed triennial strategic report prepared by the Institution Advisory Council, summarizing the state of and outlook for church worker preparation and confessional Lutheran lay education, campus, and ethos; *Assistive and coordinative roles:*

(i) assist the Synod and its colleges and universities in articulating and advancing the schools' unified public confession and application of the church's doctrine and practice, and, in coordination with the Board of Directors of the Synod, assist in advancing the common defense of their rights to the free exercise of our confession under the Constitution of the United States and other applicable laws;

(j) develop and administer, on behalf of the Synod and subject to policies of the Board of Directors of the Synod, financial resources designated to assist the schools in their pursuit of the Standards, in strengthening of churchly identity, and in their achievement of mission outcomes;

(k) regularly convene the college and university presidents and, as needed, other leadership to facilitate the schools' coordination, cooperation, and consolidation of operations, in part or in whole, wherever prudent and practically feasible, while not itself assuming any operational or financial responsibility for such efforts;

(l) after input from the President and Secretary of the Synod, the Institution Advisory Council, and the boards of regents of Synod colleges and universities, serve as a resource for the recruitment of highly and variously qualified potential regents, offering in nomination (e.g., as in Bylaw 3.12.3.4 [c]) and suggesting for appointment those suitably qualified;

(m) serve as a resource for regents' development of and mandatory training in governance skills, especially as they relate to the carrying out of the mission of the Synod's colleges and universities within the mission of the church, and foster regents' growth in aspects of governance related to the expectations of the Standards;

(n) serve as a resource for the development of lists of potential teaching and administrative personnel;

(o) together with districts, congregations, local boards of regents, and national efforts, promote student recruitment for both professional church work and lay higher education; and

(p) participate with the Board of Directors, Council of Presidents, and respective board(s) of regents, in determinations to consolidate, relocate, separate, or divest a college or university (Bylaw 3.10.6.5).

3.6.6.32 The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System shall be composed of ~~nineteen~~ voting members and ~~five~~~~six~~ nonvoting members (no more than two members

electd by the Synod shall be from the same district, ~~and no executive, faculty member, or staff member from a Lutheran institution of higher education may serve on the Board of Directors of Concordia University System as a voting member and no voting member shall be a regent, executive, faculty, or staff member, as defined in Bylaw 1.5.1.1, of a Synod college or university):~~

Voting Members:

1. Two ministers of religion—ordained elected by the Synod
2. One minister of religion—commissioned elected by the Synod
3. Two laypersons elected by the Synod
4. ~~Three~~Four laypersons appointed by the ~~delegates of the members of Concordia University System elected members listed above, after consultation with the President of the Synod and the Institution Advisory Council; at least two of the four must have background experience in higher education administration or accreditation~~
5. The President of the Synod or his representative

Nonvoting Advisory Members:

1. ~~A~~One district president appointed by the Council of Presidents
2. ~~Up to two persons appointed by One representative designated by the Board of Directors of the Synod~~
3. One representative designated by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
4. The Chief Mission Officer of the Synod or his representative
5. ~~One university president appointed by the Concordia University System Advisory Council who is designated by, and is a member of, the Institution Advisory Council, and whose institution is in good standing, as defined in Bylaw 3.6.6.4.1 (e)~~
6. One university board of regents chair who is designated by the Institution Advisory Council and whose institution is a college or university presently in good standing, as defined in Bylaw 3.6.6.4.1 (e).

The advisory university president and university board of regents chair shall be drawn from different institutions. Neither the advisory university president nor the advisory board of regents chair shall participate in the work or the sessions of the board as they relate to the ecclesiastical visitation of any individual college or university.

- 3.6.6.2.1 Persons elected or appointed to the Concordia University System Board of Directors should have demonstrated familiarity with and support of the institutions—Synod colleges and universities, and shall strongly and demonstrably articulate and support the confession and doctrinal positions of the Synod, and shall possess have demonstrated a high degree of two or more of the following qualifications or background experiences: theological acumen, an advanced degree, experience in higher education administration, higher education accreditation, professional church worker education, administration of or legal counsel to complex organizations, finance, religious nonprofit law, higher

education law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, or fund development or the strengthening of the mission of the Synod's congregations and schools. The Chief Administrative Officer President of the Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that nominees are qualified to serve as stated above.

- 3.6.6.3 The presidents (including interim presidents) of Synod's colleges and universities in good standing shall, along with two nonvoting members designated by the Concordia University System Board of Directors, comprise the Concordia University System Institution Advisory Council. The Institution Advisory Council shall, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws and upon request, provide advice, consultation, and access to information as necessary to facilitate Concordia University System ecclesiastical review, on the Synod's behalf, of the schools' Lutheran identity and mission outcomes under the Standards (Bylaw 3.6.6.1). It shall also, as bylaws elsewhere specify and upon request, advise Concordia University System in its responsibilities as they relate to programs leading to candidacy for commissioned ministry and to seminary enrollment.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.12.3.5 (e–f) and 3.12.3.7 (c) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

- 3.12.3.5 The first meeting of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be at the call of the Secretary of the Synod at least six months prior to the convention of the Synod.

...

(e) In the case of the boards of regents of educational institutions of the Synod, the committee shall consult with the President of the Synod, the Board of Directors of the Synod ~~or, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, and the presidents and chairs of the institutions' boards of regents and receive their input for the committee's consideration. The President of Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that nominees are qualified as stated in Bylaw 3.10.6.2 (8).~~ Only those nominees whose qualifications have been verified as described in Bylaw 3.10.6.2.1 shall be considered to be eligible for selection as candidates for subsequent election.

(f) ~~The Committee for Convention Nominations Secretary of the Synod shall establish and maintain a procedure to generate and publish in advance of the convention a lists of names from all who have been nominated for Synod boards and commissions who meet the qualifications (as certified under Bylaws 3.10.6.2 (8), 1 and 3.6.6.3.2.1) to serve (1) on a Concordia University System board of regents of a Synod college or university or (2) on the Concordia University System Board of Directors. Information on such nominees shall be shared with the Concordia University System Board of Directors for use throughout the following triennium~~

as it appoints further members and assists the districts and Synod colleges and universities, respectively, in identifying potential regents for election and appointment.

...

3.12.3.7 The chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall submit the committee's report in person to the convention at one of its earliest sessions and shall facilitate the amendment of the slate from the floor.

...

(c) Such floor nominations may only be made from the list of names which have previously been offered to the Committee for Convention Nominations prior to the final deadline for the submission of nominations, unless the convention shall otherwise order by a simple majority vote. ~~The President of Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall verify that all floor nominees to serve as a member of a Concordia University System board of regents possess qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.10.6.2 (8).~~ The qualifications of floor nominees for boards of regents of Synod colleges and universities shall be verified as provided in Bylaw 3.10.6.2.1. The ~~Chief Administrative Officer~~ President of the Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that all floor nominees to serve as a member of the Concordia University System Board of Directors possess qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.6.6-3.2.1.

...

and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Synod, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Nominations, the CUS BOD and Institution Advisory Council, and Synod BOD, be directed to prepare specific forms for nomination of regents and CUS directors, whether elected or appointed, that require detailed elaboration of subject matter qualifications as indicated in Bylaws 3.6.6.2.1 and 3.10.6.2.1, which forms shall be used in each election or appointment process; and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS BOD, in consultation with legal counsel, draft new governing documents for CUS to bring it into compliance with the above and with all other applicable bylaws and present them, as soon as practically feasible and in the interest of the Synod, for adoption subject to Bylaw 3.6.1.7; and be it finally

Resolved, that the CUS BOD and its members be directed to facilitate the adoption and, as applicable, filing of the new governing documents and provide a copy of such documents to the Synod's colleges and universities.

B. TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR FORMAL ECCLESIASTICAL VISITATION OF THE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITIES

Rationale

In keeping with the charge of 2019 Res. 7-03 to "strengthen all CUS institutions' connection to the Synod" and to "strengthen the confessional Lutheran identity of all CUS institutions," the

role of CUS as assistant to the President in his *ecclesiastical visitation* (Const. Art. XII 7; Bylaws 1.2.1 [j]; 3.3.1.1.1 [c], 3.3.1.2 [c]; 3.6.6.4 [h]) of the Concordia universities is elaborated, strengthened, and made more transparent. CUS visitation of colleges and universities will focus on their Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes (that is, their effective preparation of church workers, thorough preparation of Lutheran laity for service and leadership in the church, and immersion of all students in a faithful and forthright Lutheran context and curriculum).

2016 Res. 7-01A, "To Adopt Lutheran Identity Statements for CUS Institutions as Prepared by CUS Presidents" (*Proc.*, 171–72), already adopted by the convention and the several boards of regents, provides an initial framework for the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards ("Standards"); the process of visitation set forth in new bylaws aims to provide a context for evaluating and fostering each institution's growth in achieving these mission outcomes. The ecclesial visitation process here set forth assures and fosters growth in the connection of *our* universities with the Church, its confession, and its non-seminary, higher education mission objectives. The process holds college and university boards of regents (and through them, presidents, faculties, and staffs) accountable to the Synod for the governance, administration, and implementation of programs and campus life consistently faithful to the confession of and oriented toward the mission of the church—not as imposition of an external compulsion but as "iron sharpening iron" in pursuit of each college or university's own all-encompassing, sacred purpose.

The visitation process is primarily *formative*, in that it engages institutions in self-study and outside evaluation, relative to the expectations of the Standards. Every institution will be engaged, no matter its present degree of success in pursuing the ideals of the Standards, and challenged to demonstrate concrete plans for such pursuits. While CUS has in the past aimed to state ideals and to work with institutions with identified deficiencies, this model provides a definite process intended accountably and transparently to advance *all* Concordia institutions in their pursuit of the Standards and, therefore, in their service in support of and on behalf of the member congregations of the Synod.

Visitation is also finally *summative*; that is, it can reach the conclusion that the Standards expected have not and cannot reasonably be expected to be reached. While no one desires this outcome, its definite possibility is intended to strengthen the intentional working of all Concordia colleges and universities, taking into account the *possibility* of differences in opinion about objectives or weaknesses in leadership, with CUS in pursuit of the Synod's objectives. The model allows for both quiet and open cautions about weaknesses in a university's accomplishment of the Standards. An institution or program that loses *ecclesiastical affirmation* loses its ability to prepare and declare qualified church workers for rostered service in the Synod as well as some of its rights to participate more broadly in the life of the Synod; it is put on public notice that it is not adequately fulfilling its churchly mission. Such a finding may prompt the removal of a university president for reasons of doctrine and practice as provided in the bylaw revisions proposed hereunder (proposed Bylaw 3.10.6.8.3).

This model recognizes the responsibility, initiative, and creative capacity of local boards of regents and administrations to pursue the high expectations the Synod rightfully has of its colleges and universities. It provides not only for minimum expectations but for individualized, measurable, and reproducible plans for continuous improvement—the development of organic but intentional processes for improvement of each campus, with prescriptions and progress visible to the Synod. It provides a framework for monitoring of and accountability for confessional fidelity, directed and supervised by CUS and carried out with peer input, that can be shared regularly with the members of the Synod, to guide their support and utilization of the institutions.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, That a formal program of Synod college and university visitation be established by the adoption of the following bylaws:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards, Ecclesiastical Visitation

3.6.6.4 The Concordia University System Board of Directors shall, after input from its Institution Advisory Council, define and adopt the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards (“Standards”), a regularly published policy document containing standards for ecclesiastical visitation and affirmation of institutions and of programs leading to candidacy for commissioned ministry or to preparedness for seminary study.

(a) The Standards shall express the Synod’s expectations for its college or university, including fidelity of campus curriculum and culture intended to propagate the faith, strong theology and campus ministry programs having positive and intentional interaction with the entire faculty and student population and with all curricular programs, and success in preparation of church workers for the Synod and of Lutheran laypeople for distinctively faithful lives of service to church and neighbor and in conveying to all students a clear understanding of the essentials of the faith, generally and in specific relation to their particular vocations.

(b) The Standards shall be elaborated to support both formative and summative functions. They shall engender local development and provide for outside monitoring of formative processes, engaging all institutions fully in intentional and measurable programs intended to advance their expression of Lutheran identity and accomplishment of mission outcomes. They shall also enable the drawing of summative conclusions, concretely identifying strengths and weaknesses in institutions and programs, ultimately to provide clear rationale for decisions about continuation or termination of affirmation.

(c) In addition to the standards with institution-wide applicability, the Concordia University System shall

develop and maintain supplemental program standards specific to each type of program intended to result in candidacy for one of the Synod’s categories of commissioned ministry or in preparedness for seminary study. Such program standards shall specify, for example, the instructional and practical curricular requirements expected to be satisfactorily completed prior to qualification for first call or for granting of credit by a seminary for pre-seminary studies. The Concordia University System shall develop pre-seminary curricular standards after input from the seminaries of the Synod.

(d) The Standards shall be made publicly available on the Synod’s website and as otherwise determined by Concordia University System.

3.6.6.4.1 Synod colleges and universities shall undergo Synod visitation with respect to the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards, both comprehensively as institutions and with regard to the specific requirements of each implemented program intended to result in candidacy for one of the Synod’s categories of commissioned ministry or in preparedness for seminary study.

(a) Ordinarily each college or university shall receive a formal institutional and program visitation at least once in each Synod national convention cycle. These regular, formal visitations shall attend to both formative and summative elements, evaluating present performance relative to the Standards but also fostering, monitoring, and advancing initiatives in pursuit of the Standards. A focused review of a specific alleged breach of the Standards, however, may be initiated by Concordia University System at any time.

(b) Concordia University System may, if a regular or focused review finds that an institution or program is at risk of not fulfilling the Standards, place the institution or program under a notice of concern, which may, at Concordia University System’s option, be made public. Concordia University System may lift the notice at any time it determines the risk has been satisfactorily addressed.

(c) Concordia University System may, upon finding an institution to be in breach of the Standards, either on the basis of a regular visitation report or a focused review, place the institution on probation for up to a two-year period. If Concordia University System determines that substantial progress has been made and that verifiable plans and resources are in place to bring the institution into compliance, then Concordia University System may extend probation once for one year, but to no more than three years total. Concordia University System may lift the probation earlier if the institution is brought into compliance. An institution not in compliance at the conclusion of the probationary period is no longer affirmed by the Synod, can no longer declare graduates qualified for placement, and is no longer commended by Concordia University System to the church.

(d) Concordia University System may, upon finding a church work preparation program to be in breach of the Standards, either on the basis of a regular visitation report or of a focused review, place the program on

probation for up to a one-year period. If Concordia University System determines that substantial progress has been made and that verifiable plans and resources are in place to bring the program into compliance, then Concordia University System may extend probation once, each extension by up to one year, but to no more than two years total. Concordia University System may lift probation earlier if the program is brought into compliance. A program not in compliance at the conclusion of the probationary period is no longer affirmed by the Synod and therefore its graduates cannot be declared as qualified for initial placement and the program cannot be commended or acknowledged as a suitable program of pre-seminary preparation.

(e) An institution or program under probation has not lost affirmation is not “in good standing with the Synod” for purposes of these Bylaws.

3.6.6.4.2 After input from its Institution Advisory Council, the Concordia University System Board of Directors shall implement and maintain policies governing, and shall supervise, the process of formal visitation for the Synod’s colleges and universities on the basis of the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards.

(a) In preparation for visitation and affirmation review, each institution and church work program shall provide, on the basis of a thorough self-study, a written report evidencing compliance with the criteria and core components of the Standards, as evaluated by the stated measurable factors, as well as indicating any relevant explanatory factors and initiated or planned efforts to improve specific aspects of performance relative to the Standards. It shall especially address any issues noted in previous reviews or specifically requested by Concordia University System. The self-study shall be delivered to and reviewed by Concordia University System.

(b) A visitation team, assembled by Concordia University System upon review of the self-study report or recommendation of its Institution Advisory Council, shall itself review the self-study report and then visit the institution, interacting with its board of regents, administration, faculty, campus ministry staff, and students. An effective visitation, with broad and unimpeded access to campus program information, policies, and personnel, shall be facilitated by the institution. Each implemented or proposed church work and pre-seminary program shall receive specific attention.

(c) The visitation team shall prepare a report of its visit and associated findings, which it shall provide to Concordia University System and the institution within 60 days of the conclusion of the visit. After allowing 60 days for the institution to respond in writing to the team’s report, Concordia University System shall, with regard to the institution and each of its implemented or proposed church work programs: (1) affirm without concerns; or (2) affirm with concerns (notice); or (3) place the institution or program on probation; or (4) disaffirm, in the case of an initial application, or initiate withdrawal of affirmation; or (5) initiate further investigation, with the same or a new visitation team.

(d) The institution reviewed may within 30 days of being notified of Concordia University System’s visitation determination(s) submit a written appeal and/or response to Concordia University System’s determination. Once Concordia University System has, within 30 days of its receipt, considered and acted upon any such appeal, its determination is final and not subject to further appeal.

(e) Within the above 30-day period for request of an appeal or within seven days of receipt of Concordia University System’s negative action on a requested appeal, an institution may state a corrective action plan and request Concordia University System, acting in its sole discretion, to grant a delay of up to six months in the publication of a negative visitation result to allow initiation of the plan. Concordia University System may at its option require a summary of the action plan, composed by the institution and approved by Concordia University System, to be published with any revised visitation outcome.

(f) At the conclusion of the above, the visitation status of each institution and its programs, together with summary reports of visitation reviews, any imposition(s) of notice or probation, and any withdrawal(s) of affirmation, shall be timely made available to the Synod through a publicly accessible website. The information presented shall be of a depth and character that would allow members of the Synod to evaluate the churchly character, relative value, and mission effectiveness of each institution and program, and to understand concretely the steps being taken to improve the same.

(g) Visitation teams, composed of members of member congregations of the Synod and assembled and organized by Concordia University System, shall include representation from peer boards of regents, administrations, and faculties, and a district president having ecclesiastical supervision of peer institution faculty, all with demonstrated excellence in advancing and achieving the Standards. It shall also include representation drawn from the member congregations and ministerium of the Synod and representative of their interests in the institutions. The Institution Advisory Council, the Council of Presidents, the Board for National Mission, the Synod Board of Directors, members of the Concordia University System Board of Directors, and President of the Synod may nominate visitors. The visitation team will be constituted of not less than four members and not more than seven members.

(h) An institution receiving a visitation team shall be notified in advance of the membership of the team. Either the institution or any member of such a team may challenge the participation of any member on the basis of actual partiality or the appearance thereof. Concordia University System shall have in place a procedure for responding to any such challenge within 30 days. A finding by Concordia University System of actual partiality or the appearance thereof shall disqualify the member from participating in the visitation. Concordia

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

University System may at its option replace any member so disqualified or continue with the reduced visitation team.

(i) Concordia University System, with the assistance of its Institution Advisory Council, shall provide training for members of visitation teams, according to policies established by Concordia University System.

(j) Direct costs of the visitation process shall be borne by the institution visited, regulated according to a schedule devised, after input from the Institution Advisory Council, and published triennially by Concordia University System.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.3.1.1.1 (c) and 3.3.1.2 (a) be amended to clarify the relationship of the President's official visitation with that of CUS as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Powers and Duties – Ecclesiastical

3.3.1.1 As the chief ecclesiastical officer of the Synod, the President shall supervise the doctrine taught and practiced in the Synod, including all synodwide corporate entities.

3.3.1.1.1 The President of the Synod has ecclesiastical supervision of all officers of the Synod and its agencies, the individual districts of the Synod, and all district presidents.

...

(c) He shall at regular intervals officially visit or cause to be visited all the educational institutions of the Synod to exercise supervision over the doctrine taught and practiced in those institutions.

(1) With regard to Synod's colleges and universities, regular visitation shall be conducted through the Concordia University System as described in Bylaw 3.6.6.4 and following.

(2) He may in addition and at any time specially visit or cause to be visited any educational institution of the Synod to exercise his ecclesiastical supervision.

...

Powers and Duties – Administrative

3.3.1.2 The President shall oversee the activities of all officers, executives, and agencies of the Synod to see to it that they are acting in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

(a) He shall at regular intervals officially visit or cause to be visited all the educational institutions of the Synod and thereby exercise oversight over their administration as it relates to adherence to the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

(1) With regard to Synod's colleges and universities, regular visitation shall be conducted through the Concordia University System as described in Bylaw 3.6.6.4 and following.

(2) He may in addition and at any time specially visit or cause to be visited any educational institution of the Synod to exercise his administrative oversight.

...

and be it further

Resolved, That CUS shall, no later than Sept. 1, 2024, on the basis of the Lutheran Identity Statement adopted in 2016 Res. 7-01A and draft materials presented to the convention (see Report LR69, TB, 1:40–47) and after input from its Institution Advisory Council, release the first operational edition of the institutional Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards; and be it further

Resolved, That CUS shall, no later than Sept. 1, 2024, after input from its Institution Advisory Council, release the first edition of uniform standards for the commissioned ministry and pre-seminary programs offered by Synod colleges and universities; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod affirmation be granted herewith to Concordia University Chicago; Concordia University, Irvine; Concordia University, Nebraska; Concordia University, St. Paul; and Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor and their presently approved ministry programs, with a summary of the report of the first visitation and reaffirmation process for each institution and program to be prepared and available to the Synod not later than 20 weeks prior to its 2026 convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS and its universities be instructed to make every effort to complete the process of development, reaffirmation, and reporting as scheduled, with the understanding that the initial implementation is the first step in a developmental process; and be it further

Resolved, That in order to account for the possibility that a school or church work program could be disaffirmed as the result of a negative visitation, Bylaws 2.8.1–2 be amended as follows to become Bylaws 2.8.1–4 (including the division of existing Bylaw 2.8.2 into Bylaws 2.8.2–2.8.3 and the addition of Bylaw 2.8.4) to clarify that only LCMS faculty of colleges and universities currently affirmed by the Synod have the authority to declare church workers qualified for rostered service within the Synod, and then only within programs so affirmed by the Synod:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.8.1 Candidates shall be declared qualified for first calls.

(a) They are those who before the effective date of the first calls will have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of studies and will have received diplomas from their respective educational institutions seminaries of the Synod or in Synod-affirmed programs of colleges or universities of the Synod, or have fulfilled the requisites of a colloquy or other approved education program of the Synod (Bylaws 2.7.2 and 2.7.3).

...

2.8.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Synod's colloquy committees or, subject to the policies of the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry and within programs for which their respective institutions are currently affirmed by the Synod, the faculties of educational institutions of the Synod-Synod colleges and universities to declare colloquy candidates qualified for first calls.

2.8.3 For purposes of declaring candidates qualified for placement and recommending them for membership in the Synod, the Synod considers ~~the such a~~ “faculty” of ~~an educational institution~~ to be defined as follows:

(a) Seminaries: all full-time faculty members who are in good standing on the Synod’s roster of ordained ministers.

(b) Colleges and universities: all full-time faculty members who are in good standing as individual members of the Synod or are members in good standing of a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

2.8.4 Only faculties of such Synod colleges and universities as are currently affirmed by the Concordia University System may declare qualified and recommend candidates for first calls, and each of these, only with regard to programs leading to candidacy for commissioned ministry (Bylaw 2.6.1.1) for which it is specifically and currently affirmed by Concordia University System.

2.8.4.1 A graduate of such a program that was affirmed by Concordia University System at the time of matriculation but no longer affirmed or no longer in existence at the time of qualification for a first call may apply to the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry for examination, any necessary remediation, and certification. The institution offering such a program shall share records with the Colloquy Committee as necessary to assess the candidate’s preparation and fitness for commissioned ministry.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 2.9.1 be amended as follows (subparagraphs [a] and [b] remaining unchanged):

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.9.1 The Council of Presidents, acting as the Board of Assignments, shall regularly assign to qualified graduates of ~~educational institutions of the Synod seminaries and Synod-affirmed programs of Synod colleges and universities~~, and to workers available from colloquy programs, as “first calls” those calls that have been duly extended to fill active member positions as identified in Bylaw 2.11.1 for ordained and commissioned ministers if positions for which candidates are qualified are available.

...

and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.10.3.1–2, establishing the membership and function of the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry, be amended as follows, and Bylaw 3.10.3.3 be added as follows, to reflect the new relation of the Synod and the schools:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.10.3.1 The Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry shall consist of the First Vice-President of the Synod as chairman, a representative of Concordia University System, and ~~two college/university presidents of affirmed colleges or universities of the Synod that operate a program or programs that are affirmed by the~~

Synod to qualify graduates for commissioned ministry appointed by the President of the Synod, ~~two Concordia University System and three faculty members of the same, who are~~ involved in colloquy and appointed by the president of Concordia University System, ~~and one representative from CUEnet.~~

3.10.3.2 The committee shall direct the Synod’s activity in matters of colloquies for commissioned ministers.

(a) The committee shall ~~oversee~~ maintain policies specifying, for each category of commissioned ministry ~~at each college and university of the Synod~~, the prerequisites for colloquy application, required courses of study, and internship expectations.

(b) The committee shall also establish and monitor academic and theological standards for each of the colloquy programs. The committee shall consult the ~~directors of the programs at the Synod’s colleges and universities—Concordia University System and its Institution Advisory Council~~ when establishing or reviewing the standards.

(c) The committee shall render a report on the commissioned ministry colloquy activities to each convention of the Synod.

3.10.3.3 The committee shall additionally facilitate the examination, remediation, and qualification for first call of suitable candidates from disaffirmed or discontinued programs applying under Bylaw 2.8.4.1.

**C. TO CLARIFY RELATIONSHIP
OF THE SYNOD’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO
THE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY BOARDS OF REGENTS**

Rationale

CUS has struggled to give attention both to ecclesial and to financial oversight of the institutions, owing in large measure to a lack of personnel with expertise and time to devote to left-hand kingdom matters. The BOD of the Synod is the “legal representative and custodian of all the property of [the Synod], either directly or by its delegation of such authority to an agency of the Synod” (Const. Art. XI E 2). The removal of business and property responsibilities from the CUS means that the oversight of Synod property (Bylaw 1.2.1 [r]) held by or for the universities will henceforth rest fully on the BOD, which is charged and equipped (for example, with a Chief Financial Officer and Audit Committee) to handle such matters.

Proposed is that the BOD exercise its responsibilities to the Synod under Const. Art. XI E 2 with respect to the financial condition and operations of the Synod’s colleges and universities. It is anticipated this will include the BOD working with the boards and administrations of the institutions to develop appropriate instruments for regular monitoring as well as to address specific challenges that may arise. The Board also is charged to undertake a process, in the current triennium, to ensure that each college and university of the Synod make any and all changes to its governing documents necessary to comply with the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. The boards of regents and

administrations of each college and university are directed to cooperate in this process.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.3.4.10.1 be added as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

3.3.4.10 To carry out its obligations under Article XI E of the Constitution and these Bylaws, the Board of Directors may obtain from any agency of the Synod all records and other information (a) relating to property of the Synod, and (b) pertaining to matters for which the Board of Directors has oversight responsibility under the Constitution and other provisions of these Bylaws, including financial records, records of operations, and information regarding legal affairs of such agency of the Synod. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an agency of the Synod shall not be required to deliver: (i) records or information that an agency of the Synod is legally prohibited from disclosing under applicable federal or state law; and (ii) personally identifiable information pertaining to employees, donors, students, beneficiaries, investors, borrowers, and participating employers and plan members of Concordia Plan Services. If any of the records or information requested by the Board of Directors are subject to a confidentiality agreement, the Board of Directors shall maintain such confidentiality. The goal of this bylaw is to permit delivery of records and information to the Board of Directors to the greatest extent possible, subject to clauses (i) and (ii) above. All agencies of the Synod shall cooperate fully with the Board of Directors when responding to requests to provide records and information.

3.3.4.10.1 Although the Board of Directors does not have supervisory authority over the Synod's colleges and universities and therefore cannot control or direct the management, administration, and governance decisions of the Synod's colleges and universities, it does have responsibilities under Article XI E 2 of the Constitution and these Bylaws. In carrying out its responsibility to the Synod under Constitution Article XI E 2, with respect to each Synod college and university and their subordinate parts, the Board of Directors shall give particular consideration to the financial condition and operations of the institutions individually and collectively to evaluate both short-term and long-term effectiveness and viability in satisfying the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, including the applicable objectives under Article III of the Constitution. To carry out this obligation, the Board of Directors may obtain records and information as described in Bylaw 3.3.4.10. The Board of Directors may bring to the attention of a college or university president and/or board of regents any matters that, in its judgment, exhibit deficiencies and may suggest corrective action. The Board of Directors may also report the same to the Synod in convention. The Board of Directors may appoint a committee, consisting of board members or others, to assist in carrying out this responsibility.

and be it further

Resolved, That the BOD, after input from the Commission on Constitutional Matters, review within the upcoming triennium the governing documents and governance practices of all higher education institutions of the Synod, and all boards of regents and boards of associated foundations be directed to correct any identified noncompliance with the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions; and be it further

Resolved, That each university of the CUS shall acknowledge in a written agreement, facilitated by the BOD of the Synod, the paramount right, title, and interest of the Synod in the name *Concordia*, its value having been established and built through the decades-long contributions of the Synod and its association be inextricable from the Synod, agreeing that in the case of separation or divestiture it shall immediately cease to represent itself as a college or university in any sense associated with the Synod and shall within one year permanently cease using, and transfer and assign to the Synod any rights involving, any name including the word *Concordia* or any derivation thereof; and be it finally

Resolved, That the BOD report to the subsequent Synod convention its progress in achieving the foregoing and any proposed bylaw changes or other action needed to more faithfully steward resources for higher education in the Synod.

D. TO REVISE BYLAWS GOVERNING CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY BOARDS OF REGENTS

Rationale

In keeping with the charge of 2019 Res. 7-03 to “review the composition, size, and selection of boards of regents” and to “review the financial models for the institutions,” the committee reviewed the composition and charge of boards of regents. Existing bylaws dictate excessive governance and even management details for the boards of regents, some of which are severely outdated. New bylaws clarify the relationship between the Synod and the schools, maintaining the essential features of both the regents’ authority as “governing bodies corporate” and their duty to the Synod to govern their respective institutions *in the interest of the confession and objectives of all the congregations of the Synod* (Const. Art. II and III).

While a variety of approaches have been proposed for restructuring the boards of regents, the present structure of the boards, with strong representation elected by the congregational members of the Synod but also the flexibility to appoint needed educational governance expertise, supports boards’ ability to carry out this authority and this duty. While it was generally affirmed that the present election/appointment model provides a helpful diversity of impressions and of gifts on the boards of regents, it was also generally acknowledged that the model is certainly not uniformly effective or efficient. Despite a great deal of discussion, no alternative model achieved broad support.

In addition to continuing the screening of regents for basic qualifications, proposed bylaws add specific training regarding responsibilities to the Synod and the task of governance.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, that Bylaws 3.10.6–3.10.6.3 be revised, Bylaw 3.10.6.4 be replaced, Bylaw 3.10.6.5 be renumbered, and bylaws be added as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**F. Concordia University System Boards of Regents**

3.10.6 Each college and university of the Synod, with its president and faculty, shall be governed by a board of regents, ~~subject to general policies set by the Synod, including those established by the Concordia University System.~~ The board of regents governs the institution consistent with the institution's mission, which expressly incorporates the institution's commitment to conduct all of its affairs according to the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod and policies of the Synod's Board of Directors. The board of regents shall have no authority to and shall never exercise any power contrary to the Constitution, Bylaws, or resolutions of the Synod.

3.10.6.1 ~~In exercising its relationship to the Synod and to the Concordia University System as set forth elsewhere under Bylaw 3.6.6 and following, the board of regents of each institution shall consider as one of its primary duties the defining and fulfilling of the mission of the institution within the broad assignment of the Synod. In fulfilling its commonly understood fiduciary duties owed to the institution, and its governance responsibilities, the board of regents shall:~~

(a) serve as the governing body corporate of the institution, vested with all powers its members may exercise either as directors, trustees, or members of the body corporate;

(b) govern the institution at all times according to the commitment of the institution, in its mission and otherwise, to carry out its affairs as part of the Concordia University System and in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod;

(c) govern the institution with consistent attention to specific ways that the institution is confessing Jesus Christ in full accord with the doctrinal position of the LCMS (Constitution Art. II) and fulfilling His mission in our world as proper to a college or university of the Synod under its objectives (Constitution Art. III), intentionally seeking continual growth as a board in such governance;

(d) as a whole and as individual members, as stewards of the institution on behalf of the congregations of the Synod, embrace and advance with administration, faculty, staff, and students the institution's fundamental purpose as inculcating the faith, as taught in the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions (Constitution Article II), preparing students to live in this faith toward God and by this faith, in their various vocations, in love toward the neighbor;

(e) ensure that all faculty receive appropriate formal, ongoing training in the doctrines of Holy Scripture as rightly taught in the Lutheran Confessions as they relate

to their academic disciplines, to enable faculty to engage in responsible exercise of their academic freedom within the confession of the institution and the Synod (Constitution Art. II);

(f) actively encourage and expect curricula and policies for student life and behavior consistent with the doctrine and practice of the Synod, and commit the institution to the principles of Christian discipline, an evangelical manner, and good order;

(g) maintain and approve an institutional master plan, any modifications to which shall be submitted to the Synod Board of Directors for its approval (Bylaw 3.3.4.5 [e]);

(h) ensure the communication of board-approved strategic plan documents to the Concordia University System Institution Advisory Council;

(i) review and approve academic programs recommended by the administration and faculty, giving due consideration to the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and coordination with other Synod colleges and universities;

(j) participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president, and approve the appointment of faculty members;

(k) ensure that its institution and constituent parts strive to excel in the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards, and to cooperate fully with processes for ecclesiastical visitation by the Concordia University System and for appointment of the institution's president;

(l) ensure that its institution and constituent parts support the proper authorities of the Synod in their roles of ecclesiastical supervision of called workers, placement of graduates, and doctrinal review status appeals, and submit to the Synod's expectations for handling of faculty complaints and dispute resolution, insofar as they apply;

(m) duly consider the common confession, mission, interest, and cooperative strength of the Synod, with its congregations, agencies, and other institutions, as it makes decisions with impact beyond its campus, especially as it plans new programs, discontinues existing programs, cooperates and consolidates operations with other Synod schools, operates in a worldwide online marketplace, cooperates with the Synod Board of Directors in the legal defense of the right to the free exercise of our confession, and interacts with the ministries and partner churches of the LCMS, domestically and internationally, in harmony with its programs and consistent with its protocol agreements;

(n) govern transparently, including, without limitation, providing to Concordia University System in a timely manner minutes of board meetings and board and institution policies adopted or modified, and to both Concordia University System and the Synod Board of Directors proposed revisions of institutional governing documents and policies prior to their adoption, and responsively, understanding inquiries and suggestions offered by Concordia University System and the Synod

Board of Directors to be offered on behalf of the congregations of the Synod, to which the board is ultimately responsible;

(o) develop detailed policies and procedures for governance of the institution;

(p) maintain effective internal controls and operate with financial transparency, annually reviewing and approving a budget and providing, within 30 days of board acceptance and final issuance of the institutional audit, audited financial statements and other information as specified in the policies of the Synod Board of Directors and to congregations of the Synod upon request;

(q) maintain policies and procedures for handling faculty complaints and dispute resolution in compliance with Bylaw 3.10.6.9.6;

(r) exercise its exclusive duty of institutional governance in the interest of the Synod without abdicating its authority to, or commingling its authority with, that of others;

(s) ensure that all governing and other legal documents and policies of the institution conform to and are consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, and modify institutional governing documents only after proposed modifications have been approved by the Commission on Constitutional Matters and with at least 30 days advance notice to the Synod Board of Directors as custodian of Synod's property;

(t) safeguard present and future assets of the institution, making every effort to ensure designation of gifts, whether to the university itself or to any associated foundation, so that they will continue to be available to higher education within the Synod in the event of the closure, divestiture, or separation of the institution;

(u) initiate a performance review of the institution's president upon identification of significant operational deficiencies;

(v) effect the removal from office of the institution's president upon a finding, under the procedure of Bylaw 3.10.6.8.3, that he is not in good standing;

(w) effectively and intentionally govern the institution and its president so that administration and faculty carry out their management and educational responsibilities in a manner consistent with the foregoing;

(x) participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the institution and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of faculty members who meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty development and research;

(y) develop detailed policies and procedures for governance of the institution;

(z) review and approve the institutional budget; and

(aa) take the leadership in assuring the preservation and improvement of the assets of the institution and see

to the acquisition, management, use, and disposal of the properties and equipment of the institution.

3.10.6.2 The board of regents of each college and university shall consist of no more than 18 members, all voting.

1. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the conventions of the Synod.

2. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the geographical district in which the institution is located. If any board is required by its governing documents to include one or more persons holding residence or church membership in a specific locality, the institution is responsible for ensuring (including by appointment, if necessary) that individual(s) meeting such requirements are included among those persons serving on such board, and no such geographic restriction shall apply to Synod-elected regents.

3. No fewer than four and no more than eight members shall be appointed as members by the board of regents according to a process determined by the individual institution. An appointed member shall not vote on his or her own reappointment.

4. The president of the district in which the college or university is located or a district vice-president as his standing representative shall serve as an *ex officio* member.

5. One member, who may be an ordained minister, a commissioned minister, or a layperson, shall be appointed by the Praesidium of the Synod after consultation with the president of the respective institution and the Board of Directors of the Synod.

6. College and university board of regents members may be elected or appointed to serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms and must hold membership in a member congregation of the Synod.

7. Not more than two of the elected members shall be members of the same congregation.

~~3.10.6.2.1~~ ~~8.~~—Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents should be knowledgeable regarding the institution and the region in which the institution is located and shall demonstrate familiarity and support for the doctrinal positions of the Synod and possess two or more of the following qualifications or background experiences: theological acumen, an advanced academic degree, ~~experience in~~ higher education administration, administration of complex organizations, finance, law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, ~~or~~ fund development, or a specific instructional or operational domain designated by the college or university (e.g., "health care" or "marketing"). Demonstrated familiarity with and willingness to advocate for and financially support of the institution ~~is a~~ are desired ~~quality~~ qualities in the candidate. ~~When regents are elected at the national convention of the Synod or appointed by the board of regents, qualifications shall be reviewed and verified by the Secretary of Synod (or designee) and the President of the CUS (or designee). When regents are elected at district conventions, qualifications of all~~

~~nominees, including floor nominees, shall be reviewed and verified by the chair and secretary of the district board of directors or their designees.~~

(a) Qualification of all nominees for appointment or election as regents, according to the standard indicated above, shall be reviewed and verified by the Concordia University System, which duty may be delegated to a committee composed of its members or others.

(b) Concordia University System shall also ensure that it is prepared to review and verify qualifications of floor nominees at each district and Synod convention, as well as those of regents appointed by a board or in the case of a vacancy, in a timely manner.

(c) Assessment of qualification for service shall be performed on the basis of information submitted by nominees on a regular instrument maintained by the Secretary of the Synod for this purpose.

(d) The Concordia University System and Synod Board of Directors shall provide for training of all regents concerning their responsibility to advance the Synod's confession and mission objectives and their responsibilities under the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. The training shall consist of an initial training as described in 3.10.6.2.2 and ongoing training.

(e) Approximately 18 months prior to each convention of the Synod, Concordia University System shall consult with the President and Secretary of the Synod and the chairs of the boards of regents of Synod colleges and universities regarding its application of the qualification standards, and upon this consultation review and revise its related policies and procedures.

(f) Concordia University System shall after input from the Institution Advisory Council develop and maintain in its public policies a rubric for consistent evaluation of qualification for regent service.

3.10.6.2.2 Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents shall undergo training for such service.

(a) The Concordia University System and Synod Board of Directors shall provide for training of elected and appointed regents concerning their responsibilities under the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, to advance the Synod's confession and mission objectives and to advance their respective institutions in service of the church through the Concordia University System visitation program.

(b) The chair of each board of regents shall, subject to guidelines prepared by the Concordia University System Institution Advisory Council after input from Concordia University System, provide training of elected and appointed regents in the task of governance and in their business and legal duties as regents.

(c) The training under (a) and (b) above shall be provided within one year after each Synod convention and at least annually between Synod conventions.

(d) Failure to complete the initial training within the first year after the first Synod convention after a regent is elected or appointed renders the regent ineligible to

continue in office. Upon such failure, the respective board of regents shall declare the position vacant.

(e) Training programs, initial and continuing, may allow for electronic or remote participation.

(f) Concordia University System, in collaboration with its Institution Advisory Council and the Synod Board of Directors, shall prepare and make available a summary of the demands and expectations of service as a college or university regent, including their responsibilities under the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. This summary shall be reviewed and confirmed by nominees as a condition to being eligible to serve if elected or appointed.

(g) The cost of the development of the regent training by CUS and Synod Board of Directors shall be funded by the CUS; the cost of regent participation in the training shall be funded per capita by the institutions.

3.10.6.3 Vacancies that occur on a board of regents shall be filled in the following manner:

...

3.10.6.4 The board of regents of each institution shall become familiar with and develop an understanding of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod and the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

(a) It shall develop detailed policies and procedures for governance of the institution, including but not limited to

(1) attention to specific ways that the institution is confessing Jesus Christ in full accord with the doctrinal position of the LCMS (Constitution Art. II) and fulfilling His mission in our world;

(2) ensuring that all faculty receive appropriate formal, ongoing training in the doctrines of Holy Scripture as rightly taught in the Lutheran Confessions as they relate to their academic disciplines, consistent with the CUS Lutheran Identity Statement, to enable faculty to engage in responsible exercise of their academic freedom under the CUS Academic Freedom Policy in effect from time to time;

(3) annual certification of the institution's financial viability;

(4) creation, modification, and abolition of administrative positions;

(5) processes for filling and vacating administrative positions;

(6) a clear plan for succession of administration to ensure that the institution continues to function effectively in the case of incapacity or lengthy absence of the president and other executive officers;

(7) handling faculty complaints and dispute resolution under an operating procedures manual approved by the Concordia University System Board; and

(8) all subject matters for which Concordia University System requires policies to be developed (Bylaw 3.6.6.7).

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

~~(b) It shall coordinate institutional planning with other Concordia University System schools and approve master plans for its college or university.~~

~~(c) It shall review and approve academic programs recommended by the administration and faculty after assessment of system policies in accordance with Concordia University System standards and guidelines and institutional interests and capacities.~~

~~(d) It shall review and approve the institutional budget.~~

~~(e) It shall approve institutional fiscal arrangements, develop the financial resources necessary to operate the institution, and participate in its financial support.~~

~~(1) Only the board of regents is authorized to establish a line of credit or to borrow for operating needs, subject to the policies of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and the Board of Directors of the Synod.~~

~~(2) All surplus institutional funds above an adequate working balance shall be deposited with the Concordia University System for investment. Earnings from such investments shall be credited to the depositing institution.~~

~~(f) It shall establish appropriate policies for institutional student aid.~~

~~(g) It shall participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the institution and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of faculty members who meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty development and research.~~

~~(h) It shall take the leadership in assuring the preservation and improvement of the assets of the institution and see to the acquisition, management, use, and disposal of the properties and equipment of the institution within the guidelines set by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.~~

~~(i) It shall operate and manage the institution as the agent of the Synod, in which ownership is primarily vested and which exercises its ownership through the Board of Directors as custodian of the Synod's property, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, and the respective board of regents as the local governing body. Included in the operation and management are such responsibilities as these:~~

~~(1) Carefully exercising its fiduciary duties to the Synod.~~

~~(2) Determining that the charter, articles of incorporation, constitution, and bylaws of the institution conform to and are consistent with those of the Synod.~~

~~(3) Carrying out efficient business management through a financial officer appointed on recommendation of the president of the institution and responsible to him.~~

~~(4) Receiving of all gifts by deed, will, or otherwise made to the institution and managing the same, in accordance with the terms of the instrument creating~~

~~such gift and in accordance with the policies of the board of regents.~~

~~(5) Demonstrating concern for the general welfare of the institutional staff members and other employees; adoption of regulations governing off-campus activities; development of policies regarding salary and wage scales, tenure, promotion, vacations, health examinations, dismissal, retirement, pension, and other employee welfare benefit provisions.~~

~~(6) Serving as the governing body corporate of the institution vested with all powers which its members may exercise in law either as directors, trustees, or members of the body corporate, unless in conflict with the laws of the domicile of the institution or its Articles of Incorporation. In such event the board of regents shall have power to perform such acts as may be required by law to effect the corporate existence of the institution.~~

~~(7) Establishing and placing a priority on the capital needs of the institution and determining the plans for the maintenance and renovation of the buildings and property and purchase of needed equipment, but having no power, without the prior consent of the Board of Directors of the Concordia University System and the Board of Directors of the Synod, to close the institution or to sell all or any part of the property which constitutes the main campus, except that the Board of Regents may close the institution in the event of legal insolvency necessitating immediate closure after consultation with the Board of Directors of the Synod and the Board of Directors of the Concordia University System.~~

~~(8) Recognizing that the authority of the board of regents resides in the board as a whole and delegating the application of its policies and execution of its resolutions to the president of the institution as its executive officer.~~

~~(9) Establishing a comprehensive policy statement regarding student life and behavior that is consistent with the doctrine and practice of the Synod and that commits the institution to the principles of Christian discipline, an evangelical manner, and good order.~~

~~(10) Promoting the public relations of the institution and developing the understanding and cooperation of its constituency.~~

~~(11) Requiring regular reports from the president of the institution as the executive officer of the board and through him from other officers and staff members in order to make certain that the work of the institution is carried out effectively.~~

3.10.6.53 Recognizing its fiduciary duty as a board, as well as the requirements of accrediting bodies that an institution's governing board be clearly defined and have ultimate authority and independence in the operation of the institution subject to appropriate pre-established policies and rules (e.g., Synod Bylaws), under no circumstances shall a board delegate its authority to, nor commingle its authority with, any other body that includes non-board members. Boards of regents may meet as a "committee of

~~the whole~~” with advisory groups (e.g., a foundation board; the CUS board) to seek input, but no votes shall be taken ~~at such meetings with such advisory groups present.~~

3.10.6.4 The board of regents shall be authorized to close the institution or to sell all or any part of the real property that constitutes the campus only after receiving the prior written consent of the Concordia University System Board of Directors and the Synod Board of Directors, except that the board of regents may close or finally divest the institution in the event of legal insolvency necessitating closure or final divestiture after consultation with the Synod Board of Directors and the Concordia University System Board of Directors.

3.10.6.5 The board of regents shall be authorized to relocate, separate, or divest the institution if and only if such has been approved under the following procedure, except in the case of a final divestiture as a result of legal insolvency (Bylaw 3.10.6.4):

(1) A proposal of relocation, separation, or divestiture is presented to the Synod Board of Directors that specifies why the proposal is in the interest of the Synod. The proposal can be made by a board of regents, a committee of the Synod Board of Directors, or by the Concordia University System Board of Directors.

(2) Upon such proposal, the Synod Board of Directors shall require the proposal be developed adequately to allow determination whether the action proposed is in the interest of the Synod, for which the board of regents, the Concordia University System Board of Directors, and other agencies of the Synod shall in a timely manner supply all information the Board of Directors deems necessary.

(3) The Synod Board of Directors shall consult with the involved board of regents, the Concordia University System Board of Directors, the Institution Advisory Council, and the Council of Presidents.

(4) The Synod Board of Directors may negotiate with the involved board of regents’ terms that are in the interest of the Synod and the general furtherance of its higher education mission.

(5) The action is approved by the Synod Board of Directors by its two-thirds vote and by one of the following by its two-thirds vote: either by the board of regents of the institution being relocated, separated, or divested or by the Concordia University System Board of Directors.

3.10.6.5.1 Two or more Synod colleges or universities shall be authorized to consolidate the institutions if and only if such has been approved under the following procedure:

(1) The boards of regents of the consolidating schools shall present a detailed consolidation plan to the Concordia University System Board of Directors and the Synod Board of Directors. The plan shall be consistent with the requirements of these Bylaws for a Synod college or university, except that it may involve a consolidated board of regents deviating from the composition specified in Bylaw 3.10.6.2, provided that the ratio of elected to appointed regents is not decreased and that all members of the resulting board of regents

are members of member congregations of the Synod. Such plan must indicate a definite plan of no more than six years’ duration to bring the composition of the board of regents of the institution into compliance with Bylaw 3.10.6.2, and continued affirmation shall be contingent on execution of said plan.

(2) The plan is approved by the Concordia University System Board of Directors and the Synod Board of Directors.

(3) The consolidated college or university shall be regarded as a Concordia University System college or university.

3.10.6.5.2 The board of regents shall be authorized to consolidate a non-Synod school into the institution if and only if a detailed plan of consolidation that is consistent with Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions has first been approved by the Synod Board of Directors by its two-thirds vote and by the Concordia University System Board of Directors by its two-thirds vote.

3.10.6.6 A college or university that is not a Concordia University System institution may request to join the Concordia University System. After having consulted with its Institution Advisory Council, the Concordia University System Board of Directors may, by its two-thirds vote, recommend that the college or university join the Concordia University System. The Concordia University System recommendation must be submitted either to the convention of the Synod, which by a majority vote, or the Synod Board of Directors, which by a two-thirds vote, may grant membership in Concordia University System. The Concordia University System recommendations and subsequent approval shall be subject to all the requirements and privileges that apply to a Concordia University System institution, including compliance with the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, except that the initial composition of the board of regents may deviate from that specified in Bylaw 3.10.6.2. Such proposal must specify a definite plan of no more than six years’ duration to bring the composition of the board of regents of the institution into compliance with Bylaw 3.10.6.2, and continued affirmation shall be contingent on execution of said plan.

E. TO REVISE BYLAWS GOVERNING CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

Rationale

In keeping with the charge of 2019 Res. 7-03 to “review the process for selecting presidents of institutions” and to “review the financial models for the institutions,” the following bylaws are revised. As with bylaws dealing with the boards of regents, existing bylaws dealing with institution presidents call for simplification and updating. The absolutely essential role of the president as spiritual head of the university is emphasized, along with his responsibility and accountability through his board of regents to CUS but also to the Synod. New mechanisms are put in place for Synod to demand, for reasons of doctrine and practice, or to advise, for fiscal reasons, a board of regents to remove a university president.

After a significant amount of input from boards of regents, the 2019 Synod convention already made significant changes to the presidential selection process, moving the work of Synod's prior approval panel earlier in the process to allow for more effective communication of the panel with the board of regents and to reduce opportunities for disappointment or misunderstanding formerly associated with the process. These changes have aided presidential appointment processes conducted since and remain in place in the following.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, that Bylaws 3.10.6.6–3.10.6.6.2 be renumbered and revised as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Concordia University System College and University Presidents

3.10.6.68 The president of the institution shall be the executive officer of the board of regents. He shall as his foremost duty serve as the spiritual, academic, and administrative head of the institution; and, in addition to this and to the customary executive management exercised by a college or university president, carry out the following responsibilities:

- (a) He shall represent the institution in its relations to the Synod and its officers and boards.
- (b) He shall supervise, direct, and administer the affairs of the institution and all its departments, pursuant to the rules and regulations of the Synod and its boards and agencies Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod and the policies of its Board of Directors, and pursuant to the policies of the board of regents.
- (c) He shall bring to the attention of the board of regents matters that require consideration or decision and make pertinent recommendations.
- (d) He shall be the academic head of the faculty, ~~preside at its meetings~~, and be an *ex officio* member of all standing committees of the faculty and its colleges and departments ~~with the exception of the standing hearings committee or of another standing committee to which the functions of such a committee have been assigned.~~
- (e) He shall periodically visit or cause to be visited the classes of professors and instructors, ensure ongoing development and training of professors and instructors, and ~~in general~~ secure conformity in teaching efficiency and subject matter to the standards and policies prescribed by the board of regents ~~and by the Synod through the Board of Directors of Concordia University System in pursuit of the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.~~
- (f) ~~He shall advise and admonish in a fraternal spirit any member of the faculty found dilatory, neglectful, or exhibiting problems in his teaching. Should this action prove ineffective, he shall request selected members of the faculty privately to engage their colleague in further~~

~~fraternal discussion. If this results in failure to correct or improve the situation, the president shall report the matter to the board of regents with his recommendation for action.~~

~~(g) He shall delegate or reassign one or more of his functions to a member of the faculty or staff, although standing administrative assignments shall be made by the board of regents upon his recommendation.~~

~~(hf) He shall be responsible for the provision of spiritual care and nurture for, and, to the extent possible through each mode of instruction, the spiritual formation of, every student.~~

~~(i) He shall carefully watch over the spiritual welfare, personal life, conduct, educational progress, and physical condition of the students, and shall in general exercise such Christian discipline, instruction, and supervision as may be expected at a Lutheran Christian educational institution.~~

(g) He shall diligently manage the institution subject to, and effectively support the exercise of, the governance of the institution by the board of regents, consistent with the expectations of Bylaw 3.10.6.1.

(jh) He shall be responsible for the employment, direction, and supervision of all employees of the institution.

(ki) He shall be responsible for the business management of the school and for the proper operation and maintenance of grounds, buildings, and equipment.

(hj) He shall make periodic and special financial reports to the board of regents.

(mk) He shall represent the institution on the Concordia University System Institution Advisory Council.

3.10.6.68.1 The president of each college or university shall serve a five-year renewable term of office under the terms set forth herewith under Bylaw 3.10.6.68.1 (c), beginning with the date of his assumption of his responsibilities as president.

(a) Each president shall relinquish academic tenure upon assumption of the presidency, and shall not be granted academic tenure during the time of presidential service.

(b) The president and board of regents shall develop mutually agreed upon institutional goals and priorities that give direction to the individual as he carries out the duties of the office of the presidency. The board of regents ~~will~~shall annually evaluate presidential effectiveness based on these goals and priorities.

(c) Nine months prior to the end of each five-year term, the board of regents ~~will~~shall conduct a formal review of the president's effectiveness in the current term of office, evaluating his leadership, both of the administration of the institution and of the institution's advancement of Synod's confession and pursuit of Synod's mission objectives. ~~The president shall then be eligible for another five year term by majority action of the board of regents, voting with a ballot containing only the current president's name. Upon completion of the review and~~

using a ballot containing only the current president's name, the board of regents shall vote, the majority action of the board of regents being required to extend the president's term for an additional five years.

(1) In addition to considering the evaluation report, the board of regents shall as part of its review consult with the President of the Synod and the chairman of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

(2) The regents may consult with other boards, commissions, and councils of the Synod as they deem wise.

(d) In the event that a president's term is not renewed, the office of the president shall be considered vacant as of the end of the term of the incumbent.

(e) A president who is on a roster of the Synod is under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod. In the event a member is removed from membership in the Synod pursuant to procedure established in these Bylaws, then that member is also considered removed from the position held and shall be terminated forthwith by the board of regents.

(f) A president who is not on the roster of the Synod shall be a member of a member congregation of the Synod. He shall be subject to ecclesiastical supervision as to doctrine, life, and administration of office, by the respective geographic district president. He shall, for actions contrary to the confession of Constitution Art. II or persistence in offensive conduct, after previous futile admonition, be subject to the process of Bylaw section 2.14 as if he were a member of the Synod. Should he be suspended and not contest the suspension, or the suspension be upheld by a hearing panel and/or final hearing panel, he shall be considered removed from the position held and shall be terminated forthwith by the board of regents.

3.10.6.8.2 The following process shall govern the selection of a college/university president.

(a) When a vacancy or an impending vacancy in the office of president is known, the board of regents shall inform the campus constituencies, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, the President of the Synod, an official periodical of the Synod, and other parties as appropriate. If a vacancy in a presidency occurs, the board of regents shall appoint an interim president, who shall meet the qualifications established for the office of president. He shall bear the title "interim president" and may not serve more than eighteen (18) months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod. Such interim appointee shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

(21) The board of regents shall request initiate that the Board of Directors of Concordia University System schedule a transition review of the campus, which shall include consultation with Concordia University System on the basis of the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and the institution's most recent affirmation review. The review is to

provide a report on the state of the campus for use by the search committee, the board of regents, and the candidates.

(12) The board of regents shall request that the Board of Directors of Concordia University System authorize the institution to, on the basis of the above consultation, compose and, with the concurrence of CUS, publish a request for nominations for the position of president.

...

3.10.6.8.3 The president, in his service as spiritual head of the college or university, shall be ecclesiastically reviewed by the Concordia University System.

(a) The Concordia University System Board of Directors may call up for formal review any action or inaction of the president that, in its view, may be in violation of the doctrine or practice of the Synod (Constitution Art. II) or to have caused the institution to be not in good standing with the Synod (Bylaw 3.6.6.4.1 [e]). Such review may be requested of the president himself or of the president and the respective board of regents.

(b) Should the action or inaction prove, to the satisfaction of the Concordia University System Board of Directors and with the concurrence of the President of the Synod, to violate the doctrine and practice of the Synod (Constitution Art. II) or to have caused the institution to be not in good standing with the Synod (Bylaw 3.6.6.4.1 [e]), the Concordia University System Board of Directors and President of the Synod shall admonish the president to take appropriate action consistent with the doctrine and practice of the Synod (Constitution Art. II), and shall invite the respective board of regents and the district president thereon to join in said admonishment.

(c) Should repeated admonition prove futile, the Concordia University System Board of Directors may, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of its current members, resolve that the president is unfit to serve as spiritual head of the college or university and so inform the respective board of regents, which shall remove him from office forthwith.

F. TO REVISE BYLAWS GOVERNING CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY FACULTIES

Rationale

In keeping with the charge of 2019 Res. 7-03 to "strengthen all CUS institutions' connection to the Synod" and in light of other changes made above, minor revisions to bylaws dealing with the college and university faculties are required. Changes in higher education and in the role of the faculties in the broader work of the Synod have reduced the degree to which the Bylaws of the Synod should or can direct specifics of what are ordinarily internal personnel matters of colleges and universities. In keeping with the general philosophy of the proposal, detailed specifications have been eliminated in favor of allowing boards of regents more flexibility while maintaining Synod's specific interests through the CUS ecclesiastical visitation.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, that Bylaws 3.10.6.7–3.10.6.7.5.2 be renumbered and revised as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Concordia University System Faculties

3.10.6.7~~2~~ The faculty of each college or university of the Synod shall consist of the president, the full-time faculty and the part-time faculty.

(a) Part-time or temporary faculty members are distinguished by an appropriate title.

(b) Part-time or temporary faculty members shall hold nonvoting membership on the faculty.

(c) Only the voting or full-time faculty who are in good standing as individual members of the Synod or are members in good standing of a member congregation of the Synod shall participate in faculty decisions regarding the qualification of graduates or colloquy program participants for rostered service.

~~3.10.6.7.1 The Concordia University System Board of Directors shall maintain in its policies a list of subject matters that each educational institution must address in its own policies and procedures, to include faculty appointments, employment contracts, contract renewal, contract termination, faculty organization, modified service, sabbaticals, and dispute resolution.~~

3.10.6.7.2~~9.1~~ Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution shall appoint all full-time members of the faculty. The terms and conditions of every appointment shall be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the prospective faculty member before the appointment is consummated. Limitations of academic freedom because of the religious and confessional nature and aims of the institution shall be stated in writing at the time of the appointment and conveyed to the person being appointed. Faculty members, full- and part-time, shall pledge to perform their duties in harmony with the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Synod's doctrinal statements.

3.10.6.7.3~~9.2~~ All initial appointments to persons serving on theology faculties, or teaching classes in or cross-listed with the theology department, shall require prior approval by a majority vote of the President of the Synod (or his designee), the chairman of the Council of Presidents (or his designee), and a member of the Concordia University System board selected by the chair, and shall include a thorough theological review. The three voters shall be ordained. The process shall be facilitated by the president of Concordia University System. Initial appointment refers to the initial engagement of any person to teach one or more theology courses, regardless of assigned academic department, other than faculty who teach theology courses no more than one academic year in any three-year period.

3.10.6.7.4~~9.3~~ A formal procedure shall be in place to carry out performance reviews for all faculty on a regular basis.

3.10.6.7.5~~9.4~~ Other than honorable retirement, termination of faculty employment may only be the result of the following:

- (a) professional incompetency;
- (b) incapacity for the performance of duty;
- (c) insubordination;
- (d) neglect of or refusal to perform duties of office;
- (e) conduct unbecoming a Christian;
- (f) advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution Art. II) or failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as defined further in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b);
- (g) discontinuance of an entire program (e.g., social work, business);
- (h) discontinuance of an entire division or department (e.g., modern foreign language) or college (e.g., college of business) of a college or university;
- (i) reduction of the size of staff in order to maintain financial viability ~~in compliance with policies concerning fiscal viability;~~
- (j) discontinuance, merger, or consolidation of an entire college or university operation;
- (k) expiration of the term of a contract of employment; and
- (l) for those whose position requires membership in a Synod congregation, if the person ceases to be a member of a Synod congregation.

3.10.6.7.5.1~~9.5~~ A faculty or staff member who is on a roster of the Synod is under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod. In the event a member is removed from membership in the Synod pursuant to procedure established in these Bylaws, then that member is also considered removed from the position held and shall be terminated forthwith by the board of regents.

3.10.6.7.5.2~~9.6~~ An appeal process consistent with the *Model Operating Procedure Manual for Faculty and Administration Complaints and Appeal of Termination: Colleges and Universities* ~~(developed by the Commission on Constitutional Matters in consultation with the Concordia University System)~~ Bylaw 3.6.6.1 [d)] shall be in place for use by faculty members who wish to challenge a termination decision. Notwithstanding the provisions of any such policy, any person connected with an institution who is a member of Synod shall also remain under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod, and nothing in any such CUS institution policy shall be construed to limit or constrain any action that may be taken, or the rights or responsibilities of any party, pursuant to the Synod's *Handbook* with respect to a member of Synod.

G. TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE SYNOD COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES' BUSINESS CONSULTATION AND EFFICIENT COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION IN SHARED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Rationale

In the impression of the 2019 Res. 7-03 committee, the CUS institutions' success in the present environment—certainly

their thriving, as tuition-dependent schools with relatively limited endowments—requires not only the sort of shared values advanced by the visitation and affirmation review program developed above but also efficient coordination and collaboration or organic consolidation. To address this issue, the first *whereas* of 2019 Res. 7-03 acknowledged the college and university presidents' conclusion that "greater integration and collaboration would strengthen the individual institutions and the system as a whole." Given the natural inertia and independence of every individual human institution, however, broad success in such synergetic efforts will likely require strong leadership.

CUS has in the past facilitated some common efforts of the colleges and universities, including the employment of staff and the maintenance of finances, principally in the area of information technology, accounting software, and common efforts toward distance education in support of commissioned minister colloquy. It will no more be charged with such business coordination. Its focus must be on confession and mission rather than on administration and operations, areas that demand, instead, the focused attention of the several boards of regents and their executives. Mechanisms the schools devise together to lend efficiency to their operations simply must be immediately responsive and clearly accountable to the institutions served. In recognition of the value such shared endeavors may have in preserving and extending the schools' mission capacity, the Synod BOD is to be permitted to extend to them the same benefits available to the several schools.

Proposed Action

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention implore the boards of regents and presidents of Synod colleges and universities that, being mindful of their common confession and mission, of the Synod's vast historical investment in and present and future reliance on the schools, and of the great responsibility incumbent on them as wise stewards—for the church's sake—of limited resources, they seek diligently and urgently opportunities for coordination, cooperation, and consolidation of operations, in part or in whole, that will reduce unnecessary duplication, share best-in-class resources and leadership, strengthen the institutions' ability to weather challenges, and enhance their ability together to deliver effectively on their mission objectives; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.10.6.7–7.2 be added as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Concordia University System Coordination and Collaboration

3.10.6.7 Colleges and universities of the Synod are urged to conduct themselves materially in accordance with "our Lord's will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit" (1 Cor. 12:4–31; Constitution Preface), strengthening one another through coordination, collaboration, consultation, and efficient consolidation of operations, wherever prudent and practically feasible.

3.10.6.7.1 Colleges and universities of the Synod are free and are encouraged to pursue among themselves efficient

collaboration; sharing of administrative and educational resources; and consolidation of operations, academic programs, or institutions, as opportunities present themselves to their respective boards of regents and after input from the Concordia University System Board of Directors.

Action: Adopted (7)

It was moved but withdrawn to call the question. It was established that division of this question would be out of order due to the interrelation of bylaw changes among the sections. With twenty minutes debate elapsed, the chair called the question under the rule; this motion failed. After further debate, the previous question was moved; this was carried. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 882; No: 120].

To Bring Accountability to Concordia Boards of Regents and to Improve Doctrinal Fidelity and Amenability to Ecclesiastical Supervision

RESOLUTION 7-05A

Overtures 7-10–15 (CW, 355–58)

WHEREAS, Our Concordia universities have long been and continue to be precious gifts to the world and to the Church, especially when they clearly confess Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior according to Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The board of regents at each of our Concordia universities is vital to offering to its students, the world, and the Church a clear confession of what we in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) believe, teach, and confess; and

WHEREAS, While each of our Concordia universities has expanded its academic offerings to include other God-pleasing vocations, and at the same time our Concordia universities continue to be the primary training ground in preparing future ordained and commissioned ministers for the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, While each Concordia University board of regents is to hold its members accountable to the sacred Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Bylaws of the LCMS; there is currently no sufficient process in the Synod Bylaws for the church at large to deal with regents, including laity, who fail to faithfully adhere to the doctrine and practice of the church; and

WHEREAS, Neither the Synod President nor the geographic district president in whose district the Concordia University resides has any ecclesiastical authority over the elected or appointed lay regents; therefore be it

Resolved, That upon approval of the 2023 Synod convention this action be applied immediately to any and all board of regents members across the Concordia University

System regardless of their time of appointment of election; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.6.2 be amended as follows (with references to Bylaws 3.10.6.2.1 and 3.10.6.2.2 [f] to bylaws as would be revised by adoption of Res. 7-04):

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

F. Concordia University System Boards of Regents

...

3.10.6.2 The board of regents of each college and university shall consist of no more than 18 members, all voting.

1. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the conventions of the Synod.

2. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the geographical district in which the institution is located. If any board is required by its governing documents to include one or more persons holding residence or church membership in a specific locality, the institution is responsible for ensuring (including by appointment, if necessary) that individual(s) meeting such requirements are included among those persons serving on such board, and no such geographic restriction shall apply to Synod-elected regents.

3. No fewer than four and no more than eight members shall be appointed as members by the board of regents according to ~~a the following process determined by the individual institution:~~

(a) Members appointed by the board of regents may not vote on the appointment of members of the board.

(b) The board of regents nominations committee shall seek input from the board of regents members, the president of the institution, the Synod President, the CUS President, and Synod Board of Directors regarding qualified and suitable candidates for appointment.

(c) The board of regents nominations committee shall properly vet all candidates to ensure the candidates possess the qualifications specified in 3.10.6.2.1 with particular attention given to the needs of the institution.

(d) The board of regents nominations committee shall not nominate for appointment any person who fails to meet the qualifications required under Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2 (f).

(e) The appointment shall be made by those board of regents members eligible to vote.

...

5. One member, who may be an ordained minister, a commissioned minister, or a layperson, shall be appointed by the Praesidium of the Synod after consultation with the president and chair of the board of regents of the respective institution and the Board of Directors of the Synod.

...

and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.5.7.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.5.7.1 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, the procedure for removal of a member of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors (BOD), except for those persons subject to Bylaw sections 2.15 and 2.16, shall be as follows:

...

(f) If a Concordia University System (CUS) college or university board of regents is presented with a written notice from the CUS Board of Directors detailing the basis for cause for removal of a member of the board of regents pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.7 (2), (8), or (9), the written notice shall be handled as follows:

(1) The CUS Board of Directors shall give notice to the Board of Regents and as otherwise required under Bylaw 1.5.7.1 (a).

(2) The board of regents shall schedule and hold a special meeting as required under Bylaw 1.5.7.1 (a) and (b) and consider a recommendation for removal under Bylaw 1.5.7.1 (c) (1).

(3) If the board of regents fails to take action or declines to recommend removal under Bylaw 1.5.7.1 (c) (1) within 90 days of receiving the written notice, the CUS Board of Directors may present the written notice to the Praesidium of the Synod.

(4) The Praesidium, without participation of the First Vice-President of the Synod, shall make an initial determination as to whether the written notice presents sufficient grounds for removal of a member of a board of regents under Bylaw 1.5.7 (2), (8), or (9).

(5) If the Praesidium determines, by majority vote, that the written notice presents sufficient grounds for removal, the Praesidium shall appoint a three-person panel consisting of the First Vice-President of Synod, a member of the Council of Presidents appointed by the Council of Presidents, and an additional member who is a member of the Council of Presidents who shall be appointed by the First Vice-President and the member of the Council of Presidents who was appointed by the Council of Presidents.

(6) This panel shall consider the written notice and evidence submitted by the CUS Board of Directors and the board of regents member, and make a determination as to whether there is sufficient grounds for removal of the board of regents member under Bylaw 1.5.7 (2), (8), or (9).

(7) If a majority of the panel concludes sufficient grounds exist, it shall make a recommendation to the Synod's Board of Directors. This recommendation shall be considered and acted upon under Bylaw 1.5.7.1 (c) (2).

(8) If the CUS Board of Directors presents written notice stating cause for removal of more than one member of the board of regents, each written notice shall be handled separately, although if a panel is appointed can be considered by the same panel.

Action: Adopted (7)

An amendment was declined to replace, in proposed Bylaw 3.10.6.2 (3)(a), the language “Members appointed by the board of regents may not vote on the appointment of members of the board” with “An appointed member shall not vote on his or her reappointment.” The resolution was adopted [Yes: 824; No: 143].

To Support Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System

RESOLUTION 7-06B

Overture 7-20 (CW, 360); Resolution 7-06A (TB, 2B:337)

WHEREAS, Colleges and universities of the Concordia University System (CUS) have been serving The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and her congregations since 1864 by providing faithful, high-quality, Lutheran higher education to many tens of thousands of people throughout the nation and around the world; and

WHEREAS, Each of the colleges and universities within the CUS is committed to grounding all academic pursuits in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, The colleges and universities of the CUS have afforded theologically sound liberal arts education and professional formation to thousands of students who serve in various vocations in the family, the Church, and civil society; and

WHEREAS, Countless students of the colleges and universities of the CUS have heard the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed and expounded, through which many such students have come to faith and many faithful students have been strengthened in the Word; and

WHEREAS, God has provided priceless benefits to untold numbers of the faithful through professional church workers who were educated and formed at colleges and universities of the CUS; and

WHEREAS, The intensity and scope of the higher education landscape in which the LCMS colleges and universities

operate is changing rapidly, which further increases scrutiny on the institutional boards’ ability to fulfill their fiduciary duties as agencies of the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions provide us with clear direction regarding our responsibilities toward civil authorities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the colleges and universities of the CUS be commended for their God-pleasing work; and be it further

Resolved, That with increased antagonism toward Christian faith and Christian educational institutions, the Synod in convention encourages the Board of Directors of the Synod and the universities to consider options to best preserve both ecclesiastical and secular rights, interests, and responsibilities of the universities and, as appropriate, take actions and institute processes accordingly, or if beneficial, to bring to the convention potential further action; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS and their members encourage enrollment in the colleges and universities of the CUS, especially in programs that train workers for the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS be encouraged to provide spiritual and financial support for their congregants who enroll in a college or university of the CUS; and be it further

Resolved, That each district of the LCMS be encouraged to create and fund scholarships for members of that district’s congregations to attend a college or university of the CUS; and be it finally

Resolved, That members of LCMS congregations be encouraged to support the colleges and universities of the CUS generously and regularly with their prayers, time, talents, and financial resources, all to the glory and praise of Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Action: Adopted (7)

With the chair sensing no need for debate, he put the question by an immediate hand and voice vote; the resolution was adopted unanimously.

8. FINANCE

To Respectfully Decline Overtures

RESOLUTION 8-01

Overtures 8-01-02 (CW, 363)

WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons, that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

Ov. 8-01: To Request Expanded Permissions for 1986 *Small Catechism* Translation

The Synod Board of Directors approved a resolution in November 2013 reaffirming the right of LCMS congregations and individuals to use the 1986 translation of the *Enchiridion* for noncommercial personal, congregational, or classroom use under permission policies set forth by Concordia Publishing House.

Ov. 8-02: To Form Synodical Technology “Help Desk”

The creation of a central, Synod-level technology “help desk” for congregations was determined to be impractical as well as too expensive.

Action: Adopted (4)

The overtures were handled severally. As to Ov. 8-01, after debate, the declination of the overture was approved in a voice vote. As to Ov. 8-02, without debate, the declination of the overture was approved in a voice vote.



Committee 8 Chairman Roger C. Paavola



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

To Amend Bylaws to Provide Clarity for Cross-Circuit and Cross-District Multi-Congregation Parishes

RESOLUTION 9-01

Overture 9-01 (CW, 365–66)

Preamble

The 2019 Synod convention labored significantly to clarify the representation of multi-congregation parishes in Resolution 9-05, “To Amend the Constitution to Address Individual Membership and Advisory Representation”; Res. 9-08, “To Amend Bylaws to Clarify Multi-congregation Parish Representation at the Circuit Forum”; and Res. 9-12, “To Clarify the Meaning of Parish as it Relates to Congregational Representation at District Conventions and Election of the Synod President, and to Distinguish Assisting Capacity Pastoral Calls.” These resolutions had the following principal relevant effects:

- The multi-congregation parish now has a clear definition and clear and consistent representational expectations: “The total number of congregations regularly cared for (served) by a pastor or pastors constitutes a parish as it applies to bylaws dealing with representation at circuit forums (Bylaws 3.1.2.1 [c]; 5.3.2) and district conventions (Bylaw 4.2.2; Constitution Article XII 10 A), and in voting for the Synod President (Bylaw 3.12.2.3).” (Bylaw 2.5.5)
- Congregations of a multi-congregation parish other than the one supplying the district convention voting lay delegate may send an advisory/nonvoting lay delegate to the district convention.
- Multi-congregation parishes are now represented at circuit forums by one pastor and one voting lay representative (lay representatives of congregations other than the one supplying the voting lay delegate are possible, but advisory/nonvoting). Previously each congregation got a voting lay delegate.

The convention’s new bylaws did not, however, provide clarity about which district conventions and circuits these representatives and delegates attend when multi-congregation parishes cross circuit and/or district lines. While the several congregations of a multi-congregation parish reside ideally within one visitation circuit, this is not necessarily the case. Congregations of one parish may belong to distinct visitation/electoral circuits and even different districts. As of March 5, 2021, records appear to indicate 13 parishes involving congregations from more than one district:

- four established cross-district parishes involving a non-geographic district and a geographic one;

- seven established cross-district parishes involving two geographic districts; and
- two apparent but not recorded cross-district parishes involving two geographic districts.

In addition, there appear to be 63 parishes (all of the above, of course, naturally involve multiple circuits and are not included in the counts below) that involve congregations from more than one visitation circuit:

- 38 established parishes (including two triples and a quad) involving two visitation circuits each; and
- 12 apparent but not recorded parishes involving two visitation circuits.

Bylaws are presently silent as to how congregations involved in such situations are to be represented at district conventions and electoral and visitation circuit meetings. The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) has from time to time been called upon to opine on questions of representation for such parishes and has reached a variety of conclusions on the basis of various principles and inferences. Of these, the following are held at present:

- No parish divided across circuit or district lines is entitled to additional representation on account of the division (i.e., each parish gets one pastoral and one lay vote and garners no additional votes in the “other” circuits or districts in which it may be involved).
- No pastor, due to a multi-congregation parish involving multiple districts, votes in the convention of a district in which he himself is not a member (CCM Op. 11-2618,



Committee 9 Chairman Timothy J. Scharr

“Congregation Representation at District Conventions”) (But cf. Bylaws 2.12.1–2 and following).

In CCM Op. 11-2618, the commission opined: “When a parish crosses district lines, it is nonetheless entitled to representation at district conventions by one pastor and one lay member. The pastor is a voting delegate to the convention of the district of which he is a member. The lay vote is shared by the congregations as in any other parish, presumably in a manner that is fair and equitable. The district membership of the congregation of the lay delegate determines the district convention that he/she will attend as a voting delegate.” (Previously, in Ag. 1959 [Oct. 16, 1993], the commission had ruled: “Because two districts would be involved in the circumstances described, because the congregation cannot be deprived of its vote, and because the matters under consideration vary from district to district [including also elections], each congregation would have a lay vote in the respective district in which the congregation holds membership.” Before that, Apr. 23–24, 1970, the commission in an unnumbered opinion indicated that the lay delegate of such a parish would vote in the same district as the pastor, even if the congregation to which he belongs is of the other district.)

The Commission on Handbook has proposed the following bylaw amendments (Item 19-019), consistent with the above guidance from currently standing CCM opinions, which will make clear how cross-circuit and cross-district multi-congregation parishes are to be represented at circuit forums and district conventions. These will provide clarity, with regard to important representational processes, to the not insignificant and increasing number of member congregations, circuits, and districts involved in such situations, without reference to CCM opinions external to the *Handbook*.

A. WITH REGARD TO DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Rationale

At the district level, the sense of existing CCM Op. 11-2618 may simply be implemented in the bylaw treating accreditation of delegates, which already mentions a “multi-congregation parish.”

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.2.2 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

4.2 District Conventions

...

4.2.2 The delegates of a voting congregation or multi-congregation parish to a district convention shall be accredited.

(a) To be entitled to vote, delegates shall return the proper credentials provided by the district secretary and signed by two of the congregation’s officers, either by mailing them to the district office at a date determined by the district or by presenting them to the district secretary at the opening of the convention.

(b) All duly elected voting delegates shall attend all sessions of the convention regularly until the close of the convention.

(c) Should a multi-congregation parish involve congregations having membership in different districts, the pastoral delegate shall be accredited in the convention of the district in which he holds membership and lay delegates, voting and advisory, shall be accredited in the convention of the district in which each delegate’s respective congregation holds membership. No multi-congregation parish is entitled to more than one pastoral and one lay voting delegate because of its inclusion of congregations from different districts.

B. WITH REGARD TO VISITATION CIRCUITS

Rationale

While any number of arbitrary rules could be applied, the following seemed to the commission the simplest, most readily applicable, and most aligned with the role of the circuit visitor as assistant and representative of a particular district president (Bylaws 5.2.3–5.2.3.1): At the visitation circuit level, lay representatives attend the circuit of which their respective congregations are members; the pastor attends that circuit (of those to which belong the congregations he serves, and within his own district only) to which he is assigned by his district president.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 5.3.2 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

5.3 Circuit Forums

...

5.3.2 The circuit forum consists of one pastor and one layperson from each member congregation or multi-congregation parish designated by the congregation or parish. Congregations of a multi-congregation parish not contributing a lay voter may send an advisory lay representative, with voice but no vote.

(a) Depending on each circuit’s adopted objectives, the circuit may provide for additional representation from each congregation. Such additional representatives have no vote in matters assigned to the circuit forum by the Bylaws of the Synod.

(b) The circuit visitor and any other officers shall have the primary responsibility of preparing the agenda for the circuit forum.

(c) The circuit visitor shall ordinarily serve as chairman of the circuit forum.

(d) Should a multi-congregation parish involve congregations having membership in different visitation circuits, each lay representative, voting and advisory, shall attend the forum of the circuit of which the representative’s congregation is a member. The pastoral representative shall attend the forum of that circuit, within which he serves a congregation and within the district in which he holds membership, to which he is assigned by his district president. No multi-

congregation parish is entitled to more than one pastoral and one lay voting representative because of its inclusion of congregations from different visitation circuits.

C. WITH REGARD TO ELECTORAL CIRCUITS

Rationale

At the electoral circuit level, the same rule is proposed (with regard to the pastor, his assignment to a visitation circuit will dictate his assignment to an electoral circuit). It is important to note that this impacts his eligibility to serve as circuit delegate.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.1.2.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Voting Delegates

...

3.1.2.1 Elections of voting delegates shall take place in accordance with established policy and procedure.

(a) Each electoral circuit shall meet at the call of the circuit visitor(s) to elect its delegates not later than nine months prior to the opening day of the convention. When in-person meetings are burdensome (e.g., geographically large circuits), a circuit may select another manner of meeting (e.g., e-meeting technologies) that is suitable and made available to all participants, taking into consideration the need to provide for an open and fair exchange of ideas and secure, private, and confidential voting.

(b) Each electoral circuit may adopt procedures and methods that will insure efficiency and accuracy, including the use of mechanical, electronic, or other methods of casting, recording, or tabulating votes.

(c) The privilege of voting shall be exercised by one pastor and one layperson from each member congregation or multi-congregation parish of the circuit, both of whom shall have been elected in the manner prescribed by the congregation or parish. Congregations of a multi-congregation parish not contributing a lay voter may send an advisory lay representative, with voice but no vote. A pastor serving a congregation in an assisting capacity (Bylaw 2.5.6) is not eligible to cast that congregation's pastoral vote.

(d) Should a multi-congregation parish involve congregations having membership in different electoral circuits, each lay representative, voting and advisory, shall attend the forum of that circuit of which the representative's congregation is a member. The pastoral delegate shall attend the forum of the circuit, within which he serves a congregation and within the district in which he holds membership, to which he is assigned by his district president. His eligibility for election as circuit delegate shall be within that circuit only. No multi-congregation parish is entitled to more than one pastoral and one lay voting representative because of its inclusion of congregations from different electoral

circuits. No circuit shall elect as a lay delegate or alternate a member of any congregation that is served (in other than an assisting capacity) by a pastor elected as delegate or alternate.

~~(de)~~ ... (subsequent subparagraphs re-lettered similarly)

Action: Adopted (3)

After discussion by the assembly, a delegate moved closure of debate, which was carried. The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Amend Various Bylaws to Provide Clarity or to Address Practical Considerations

RESOLUTION 9-02

Overture 9-02 (CW, 366–71)

Preamble

The Commission on Handbook (COH) “responds to requests from agencies of the Synod to propose new provisions to address specific *Handbook*-related issues that surface between conventions” (Bylaw 3.9.4.2 [e]). Where it finds that these changes may be of a substantive nature, it proposes them to the Synod convention for adoption. This omnibus contains a variety of more minor changes, which are severable by a floor committee or by the convention but otherwise not likely to merit individual convention consideration. As a result of its work in the 2019–2023 “triennium,” in consultation with the noted officers and agencies, COH has proposed the following for adoption:

A. ELECTION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ADVISORY REPRESENTATIVES

Rationale

The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) in its Opinion 22-3000 (Minutes, Nov. 4–5, 2022), in response to a request from a university faculty member for an opinion to clarify, in Bylaw 3.1.4.1, who participates in election of faculty representatives and who could serve in that capacity, ultimately found that if an inference had to be drawn from Bylaw section 3.1.3, it would be sensible for those members of the faculty included in the ratio calculation to be those who do the electing of, and who are eligible to be elected as, the advisory representatives. The opinion continues:

However, this is clearly an inference and, since Bylaw 3.1.4.1 (a) does not address the issue of how the advisory representative of an educational institution is to be selected, the commission must conclude that Bylaw 3.1.4.1 (a) does not provide a definitive answer to the question as asked.

The commission notes that the present questions reflect the reality that the essential content of these provisions has remained static

while the makeup of Concordia college and university faculties has changed substantially over time. This commission therefore recommends that the Commission on Handbook consider this matter and provide language that clarifies—if the above inference is to be made normative—that the representative is to be selected by those individuals being represented, which would be consistent, regarding those eligible to make the selection, with Bylaw section 3.1.3.

The commission therefore offers the following proposal to the convention to make Bylaw 3.1.4.1 more precise, specifying who does the electing of, and who is to be elected as, the advisory representatives of Synod educational institutions.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.1.4.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Other Advisory Representatives

...

3.1.4.2 Each educational institution of the Synod shall be represented at conventions of the Synod.

(a) Educational institutions of the Synod shall be represented by one board member in addition to the district president, by their presidents, and by one faculty member for every 30 full-time faculty members who are members of the Synod, elected from among and by the same.

(b) Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each institution having any full-time faculty members on the roster of the Synod shall be entitled to at least one faculty representative.

B. ELECTION OF SYNOD CONVENTION ADVISORY DELEGATES

Rationale

The CCM in its Opinion 22-2999 (Minutes, Nov. 4–5, 2022), in response to a request for opinion from a district secretary, interpreted Bylaws 3.1.3–3.1.3.1, regarding the election of Synod convention advisory delegates. While its interpretation did not challenge current practice, it did note unclarity that should be remedied, some of which resulted from or were exacerbated by features of 2019 Resolution 9-05. The proposal removes the first sentence of Bylaw 3.1.3, which relates to district conventions instead of the Synod conventions treated here. It is also redundant with Bylaw 4.2.3 and Constitutional Article XII 10 b. It also treats uniformly the two reasons an individual might be excluded from the advisory delegate pool: either potential for election as circuit delegate or for selection as an advisory representative. Finally, the bylaw is updated to take into account those who may be serving in only an assisting capacity (cf. Bylaw 2.5.6), a feature not previously made explicit.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.1.3–3.1.3.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Nonvoting Advisory Delegates

3.1.3 ~~The advisory delegates of a district convention shall consist, unless they present a valid excuse, of all individual members of the Synod within the district, except those pastors representing member congregations as voting delegates.~~ In a convention of the Synod, all commissioned ministers and those ordained ministers not eligible for election as a voting delegate under Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (d) and who are not eligible to represent other entities or offices in the Synod as advisory representatives in any category under Bylaw 3.1.4 shall be represented as follows:

3.1.3.1 ~~Each~~ Within each district ~~shall select~~ one advisory delegate shall be selected for every 60 ~~such advisory~~ such ordained ministers ~~and specific ministry pastors~~, and one advisory delegate shall be selected for every 60 ~~such~~ such commissioned ministers ~~on the roster of the Synod~~. Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each district shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category.

(a) Selection of district advisory delegates to conventions of the Synod shall be made by the respective groups meeting at the call of the district secretary, ~~either during the district convention or~~, at official district conferences of ordained and/or commissioned ministers, or via electronic means according to Board of Directors policy (Bylaw 1.5.3). The district secretary may assist the groups by facilitating the elections.

(b) Such selections must be completed at least nine months prior to the opening day of the convention.

(c) ~~Individuals~~ Ordained ministers who are eligible for election as a voting delegate under Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (d) (that is, all parish pastors except specific ministry pastors and those serving only in an assisting capacity) and all individuals who are eligible for selection in any category under Bylaw 3.1.4 shall not be counted in determining the number of advisory delegates from each district, shall not be eligible to be selected as delegates from the groups defined in this bylaw, and shall not participate in the election process.

3.1.3.2 All district voting and nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives and their alternates shall be certified before attending a convention of the Synod.

(a) The names and addresses of all voting and nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives and their alternates shall be forwarded by the district secretary before the announced registration deadline to the Secretary of the Synod on registration forms provided by the latter.

(b) This procedure shall constitute certification.

C. COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS, STAFF REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD CONVENTIONS

Rationale

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) requested attention to Bylaw 3.1.4.1, which fixes the default

advisory representation of the Synod's commissions at Synod conventions, for CTCR, providing for a single "principal staff person" (Bylaw 3.1.4.1 [a]) to participate unless the Board of Directors (BOD) makes an exception prior to each convention. CTCR has two executive staff members (not just one "principal staff person"), of whom it desires to make maximal use at the convention and during prior floor committee work. The BOD has regularly granted an exception to allow this, but CTCR desires not to have to make this a standing request. Bylaw 3.1.4.1 (a) was amended in 2016 (Res. 11-17) to include the executive directors of the Office of National Mission and Office of International Mission. The CTCR staff issue was left unaddressed. The CTCR is the only commission with executive staff. The COH has proposed the following (Item 19-022).

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.1.4.1 (b) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Other Advisory Representatives

3.1.4.1 Each board and commission of the Synod shall be represented at conventions of the Synod.

(a) Each board or commission shall be represented by its chairman or another board or commission member and by its principal staff person. The boards for National and International Mission shall also be represented by the executive directors of the Offices of National and International Mission, respectively.

(b) Standing exceptions shall be the Board of Directors, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, the Commission on Handbook, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, who may be represented by as many of their membership and executive staff as they deem necessary.

(c) Other exceptions must have the approval of the Board of Directors of the Synod prior to each convention.

**D. LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND
DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP FORMULA**

Rationale

The formula by which the corporate membership of The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod (LCEF) is calculated is stated in the Bylaws of LCEF and was also copied into the Synod Bylaws pursuant to 1983 Res. 4-03 (*Proceedings*, 166), presently as Bylaw 3.6.4.2.2. (Typographical errors in the formula, present in the printed 2016 and 2019 *Handbooks*, have already been corrected by the COH.)

While the formula itself has remained unchanged, the LCEF Bylaws were amended in November 1990 to limit the total number of district members to a maximum of 135, so that the formula was used thereafter on a *pro rata* basis, to compute the *fraction* of the total 135 district members to be assigned to each district, rather than to compute a raw number of members per district, which would have allowed the membership to grow without bound. The formula has been applied in this manner ever since.

No corresponding change has, however, been made to Synod Bylaws to indicate explicitly that the formula is to be applied on a *pro rata* basis. Noting that this is not a change to the formula but a clarification of how the formula has historically been applied, it is proposed to revise Bylaw 3.6.4.2.2 as follows to reflect more clearly what is the established and ongoing practice. The proposal leaves the definite number of delegates to be prescribed in LCEF bylaws, where, subject to approval by the Synod's CCM and BOD, as well as by the LCEF membership (Bylaws 3.6.1.7, 8 [c]), the cap may someday be adjusted in the interest of efficient and effective membership meetings. The COH has proposed the following (Item 19-021).

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.4.2.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod

...

3.6.4.2 As established by its bylaws, the members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod are divided into two classes.

3.6.4.2.1 One class of members consists of the President of the Synod or his representative, the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod, and such additional members appointed by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as shall equal one for each ten members of the other class of members.

3.6.4.2.2 The second class of members consists of representatives of participating districts, ~~the number determined according to the following formula, with any fraction rounded to the nearest whole number of a total number set by the bylaws of The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, with representation allotted proportionally to the districts according to the following formula, except that at least one representative shall be allotted to each district:~~

$$\frac{\text{Baptized Members}}{50,000} + \frac{\text{Investments}}{\$10,000,000} + \frac{\text{Investments}}{\text{Baptized Members}} \times 0.015 + \frac{\text{Fund Balance}}{\$100,000} \times 0.010 = \text{Number of Members per District}$$

E. SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY "SURPLUS FUNDS"

Rationale

Bylaws 3.10.5.5 (e)(2) and 3.10.6.4 lack a clear definition of "surplus institutional funds." The BOD Governance Committee (Minutes of the BOD, November 15–16, 2018, and May 21–22, 2021) has addressed itself to the requirement that such be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod (seminaries) or Concordia University System (universities) for investment, the earnings being credited to the depositing institution. It may be noted that: (1) the requirement of Bylaw 3.10.6.4 (e)(2), dealing with the Synod's universities, is proposed for removal in the 2019 Res. 7-03

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

proposal on university governance, as presently conceived; (2) LCEF is today principally managing lines of credit and deposits of surplus funds, rather than doing so through the Concordia University System as an intermediary; (3) that the seminaries and universities have developed capacity for other investment approaches. In its meeting of April 28, 2021, the BOD Governance Committee recommended simply striking both passages, a proposal with which the COH concurs in its Item 19-004.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.5.5 (e) be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

E. Seminary Boards of Regents

...

3.10.5.5 The board of regents of each theological seminary shall become familiar with and develop an understanding of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod.

...

(e) It shall approve institutional fiscal arrangements, develop the financial resources necessary to operate the seminary, and participate in its support program.

~~(1) Only the board of regents is authorized to establish a line of credit or to borrow for operating needs, subject to the policies of the Board of Directors of the Synod.~~

~~(2) All surplus institutional funds above an adequate working balance shall be deemed to be surplus and shall be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod for investment. Earnings from such investments shall be credited to the depositing seminary.~~

...

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.6.4 (e) be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

F. Concordia University System Boards of Regents

...

3.10.6.4 The board of regents of each institution shall become familiar with and develop an understanding of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod and the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

...

(e) It shall approve institutional fiscal arrangements, develop the financial resources necessary to operate the institution, and participate in its financial support.

~~(1) Only the board of regents is authorized to establish a line of credit or to borrow for operating needs, subject to the policies of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and the Board of Directors of the Synod.~~

~~(2) All surplus institutional funds above an adequate working balance shall be deposited with the Concordia University System for investment.~~

~~Earnings from such investments shall be credited to the depositing institution.~~

...

F. REGISTRATION PROCEDURE FOR PRESIDENTIAL VOTERS

Rationale

Bylaw 3.12.2.3 governs the registration of presidential voters by the congregations and parishes of the Synod. This process involves the collection of name, address, email address, phone, and a "security question" for the pastoral and lay voters to be registered. Handwriting of this information on a form and subsequent data entry have proven very error-prone and time-consuming. Especially the important email address has been a challenge. Improperly completed or signed forms take a long time to detect and correct, with the consequence that some congregations have difficulty completing the process in time.

The Office of the Secretary implemented an online registration process in preparation for this convention to address the above issues and to allow for districts to be involved in reminding congregations to register their voters, as required by 2019 Res. 9-16 and its amendment of Bylaw 3.12.2.3 (d). This required an interpretation of the CCM (CCM Op. 20-2930) to understand an online interface to be within the definition of "form" and the "signatures" required to be satisfied by "verifiable attestations, by some commonly understood means of physical or electronic signature."

Proposed is to adapt the language of the Bylaw to be similar to the "secure and verifiable method" used elsewhere, so as to clarify requirements without seeming to imply use of an unwieldy paper process.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.12.2.3 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 ~~a proper credentials form provided~~, via a secure and verifiable method provided by the Secretary, the voter(s) selected by the congregation or parish, signed 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 ~~on the credentials form~~ 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.

G. NOMINATION PROCEDURE FOR REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Rationale

The Office of the Secretary implemented for the first time, in connection with the 2023 convention, “a secure and verifiable” online method for submission of congregational nominations for President, First Vice-President, and regional vice-presidents of the Synod. The use of a “secure and verifiable” (possibly electronic) method was enabled by 2010 Res. 3.12.2.4, to which this language in Bylaw 3.12.2 (b–c) is due. The same convention made the second and following vice-presidents regional (2010 Res. 8-14A) but copied over the *old* procedure used for pre-convention nomination of the President and First Vice-President (paper ballots, signed by two officers) rather than adopting the new “secure and verifiable method” language. At the request of the Office of the Secretary, the CCM found in its Op. 20-2930 (Minutes, April 24, 2020) that:

[In addition to 2010 Res. 8-14A, which provided for vice-presidents after the first to be elected regionally] [t]he 2010 Synod convention also adopted Resolution 4-07, which made a large number of bylaw changes pertaining to the preparations for conventions of the Synod. One of these bylaw changes altered how the President and *all vice-presidents* of the Synod were to be nominated. The 2010 change to then-Bylaw 3.12.1 eliminated the requirement of 3.12.1 (b) that all nominating ballots be signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, replacing it instead with a provision directing the Secretary of the Synod to provide “a secure and verifiable method that will offer opportunity to every congregation of the Synod to submit nominations.” This change was not, however, incorporated into the 2010 *Handbook* with regard to the nomination of regional vice-presidents.

...

Since the procedure for nomination by the congregations today applies only to the offices of President of the Synod, First Vice-President, and the five regional vice-presidents [and no longer to regional Board of Directors or mission board offices, which used a parallel paper process in the 2013 and 2016 conventions], it is

the opinion of the commission that Resolution 4-07, adopted by the 2010 convention, can be followed in its original intention to allow the Secretary of the Synod to provide “a secure and verifiable method that will offer opportunity to every congregation of the Synod to submit nominations,” not only for the President of the Synod and the First Vice-President, but also for the five regional vice-presidents as well, without requiring the signature of the president and secretary of nominating congregations.

In its Item 19-014B, the COH has proposed “finishing the work” of 2010 Res. 4-07 and amending the language of Bylaw 3.12.2.7 to allow explicitly for the use of a “secure and verifiable” (possibly electronic) method for the election of the regional vice-presidents, to parallel exactly the language used for President and First Vice-President. While it found the change would only make explicit the sense of Bylaw 3.12.3.7 already determined by the CCM, it found the change important enough to be presented to the convention for adoption.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.12.2.7 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Nominations and Elections of Regional Vice-Presidents

3.12.2.7 After the results of the first-vice-presidential election have been announced, the convention shall elect five regional vice-presidents according to the following nominations and elections process.

(a) Each member congregation of a region (including any non-geographic-district congregations in that region) shall have been given opportunity, through a secure and verifiable method provided by the Secretary of the Synod, to nominate two ministers of religion—ordained from the clergy roster of the Synod with residence in its designated region as candidates for regional vice-president.

~~(b) The Secretary of the Synod shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation).~~

~~(c)~~ The names of the five ministers of religion—ordained residing within the boundaries of each geographic region who receive the most nominating votes shall form the slate from which the Synod convention shall select by majority vote each regional vice-president.

~~(d)~~ ... (subsequent subparagraphs re-lettered similarly)

H. ELECTION OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

Rationale

In CCM Opinion 22-2987, a review of district bylaws, the commission noted that Bylaw 4.7.3 specifies a procedure for successive balloting for offices of the districts *other than* president and the vice-presidents. It is customarily

understood that the proper procedure for president and vice-presidents is, should a ballot not produce a majority election, to produce a successive ballot by removing the candidate who received the fewest votes, repeating until an election occurs (cf. Bylaw 3.12.2.6 [b] but ctr. Bylaws 3.12.2.4 and 3.12.2.7 [e–f]). The variety of approaches available for President and regional vice-presidents of the Synod—both of which, to be sure, have unique election mechanisms not likely to be reproduced exactly on the district level—leads to a question, especially given Bylaw 4.7.1, which allows for district election regulations, provided that “these do not conflict with the Bylaws of the Synod,” of what is the proper procedure for use by the districts (Const. Art. XII 5).

In its Item 19-024, COH proposed that the common understanding be implemented clearly and explicitly in the Bylaws.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.7.3 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

4.7 District Nominations, Elections, and Appointments

4.7.1 Each district may adopt regulations for the nomination and election of its president; the nomination, selection, election, ranking, and succession in case of vacancies of its vice-presidents; and the nomination or selection of any regional officers or regional board of directors members, as long as these provisions do not conflict with the Bylaws of the Synod.

4.7.2 A nominating committee of each district shall be elected by the district convention. Nominating committees may not be employed in the election of the president and vice-presidents.

4.7.3 A majority of all votes cast by a district convention shall be required in every election to all elective offices and elective board positions. ~~Except in the election of the president and the vice-presidents, the~~ The following regulations shall apply:

(a) Candidates receiving a majority on the first ballot shall be declared elected.

(b) In the election of the president and the vice-presidents, when a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the ballot.

~~(b)~~ When in other elections, when a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than 15 percent of the votes cast shall be dropped from the ballot, unless fewer than two candidates receive 15 percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest candidates shall constitute the ballot.

(ed) In every election balloting shall continue until every position has been filled by majority vote.

I. SUGGESTION OF NOMINEES FOR CIRCUIT VISITOR

Rationale

When the 2010 convention amended the process for election of a circuit visitor, an amendment made in the course of the convention adopted, instead of the initially proposed language (that “nominations for circuit [visitor] may be submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit *and by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district*”) the practice that “the district president be provided opportunity to [instead of *nominate*, as initially proposed] *suggest* eligible candidates from within the circuit.” The fact that the convention made this evident distinction between *nominating* and *suggesting a nomination* has led to triennial guidance of circuit visitors by the Office of the Secretary as follows:

“Nominations for candidates for the office of circuit visitor may be submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit and suggested by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district” (Bylaw 5.2.2 [b]). Unlike names *suggested* by district presidents, which names may be added to the slate of candidates at the meeting by majority vote of the assembly, the names *submitted* by congregations must appear on the ballot for circuit visitor. All suggested or submitted names of pastors, whether serving congregations or emeriti, should be accompanied by pertinent information regarding each nominee (Bylaws 5.2.2 [d][1] and 3.12.3.6 [c]). All nominations must be received by the circuit visitor before the day of the circuit forum (Bylaw 5.2.2 [b]).

In its item 19-018, the COH, at the suggestion of the Secretary, proposed the following change that would make this practice, with regard to suggested nominations, an explicit part of the *Handbook*.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 5.2.2 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

5.2 Circuit Visitors

...

5.2.2 The circuit visitor shall hold his position by virtue of his selection by the circuit forum and ratification by the district convention.

(a) Circuit forums shall meet at the call of their circuit visitors to select their circuit visitors no later than the time established by the district. When in-person meetings are burdensome (e.g., geographically large circuits), a circuit may select another manner of meeting (e.g., e-meeting technologies) that is suitable and made available to all participants, taking into consideration the need to provide for an open and fair exchange of ideas and secure, private, and confidential voting.

(b) Prior to the day of the circuit forum, nominations for candidates for the office of circuit visitor may be

submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit and suggested by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district. Names suggested by the district president may, during the circuit forum, be received into nomination by a majority vote of the assembly.

(c) Each circuit may adopt procedures and methods that will insure efficiency and accuracy, including the use of mechanical, electronic, or other methods of casting, recording, or tabulating votes. The privilege of voting shall be exercised by the representatives from each member congregation of the circuit, who shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation (Bylaw 5.3.2).

...

Action: Adopted (3)

Motions to divide Sections A and I from the remainder of the question both failed. Without objection, the chair put the main question to the body and the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Clarify Bylaws Regarding Appointment of a Synodwide Corporate Entity Chief Executive

RESOLUTION 9-03

Overture 9-03 (CW, 371–72)

Rationale

The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) in its Opinion 21-2970 (Minutes, Dec. 3–4, 2021), in response to a request for clarification from a member of a synodwide corporate entity board, interpreted Bylaw 3.6.1.5 (a) to envision—instead of a process whereby the board would present nominees to the President of the Synod for him to strike unacceptable names, leaving the remainder as the board’s appointment slate—a “continued dialogue by which the board and President jointly construct—by a process not specified in further detail in the bylaw—a slate of candidates in which they can mutually concur.” CCM referred the matter to the Commission on Handbook for clarification of the bylaw language; the latter commission now presents the following proposal, which recasts the appointment process, including any interim, in chronological order and more precisely describes its various steps.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.1.5 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.6 Synodwide Corporate Entities

General Principles

...

3.6.1.5 Synodwide corporate entities may create chief executive positions (who may be designated as an officer of

the corporation) pursuant to Bylaw 1.2.1, and fill them in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5.

(a) ~~The chief executive shall serve at the pleasure of the governing board be appointed by the governing board according to the following process.~~

~~(1) The slate of candidates for the initial appointment of the chief executive shall be selected by the governing board in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the President of the Synod.~~

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

~~(2) Any appointment of an interim chief executive shall be made by the governing board in consultation with and the concurrence of the President of the Synod. Interim service shall last no more than 18 months, unless renewed by the governing board with the concurrence of the President of the Synod.~~

~~(3) Nominations shall be gathered by a process that includes solicitation, in an official publication of the Synod, of nominations from agencies and officers of the Synod and the congregational and individual members of the Synod, along with lay persons of the congregations of the Synod.~~

~~(4) The governing board shall from the nominees gathered, in consultation with and ultimately with the concurrence of the President of the Synod, select the slate (consisting of one or more candidates), from which the governing board shall attempt to select a chief executive for appointment.~~

~~(5) In the event of a failure to appoint or a declination, the governing board may as necessary repeat stages of nomination gathering, candidate selection, and appointment, but may only select an appointee from a slate established as described above.~~

~~(b) The chief executive shall serve at the pleasure of the governing board.~~

~~(31) The governing board shall conduct an annual review of its chief executive and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.~~

~~(42) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the governing board takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.~~

~~(b) Any interim appointment of a chief executive shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of a chief executive.~~

~~(1) Such interim appointees must be approved by the President of the Synod, and may not serve more than 18 months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.~~

~~(2) Such interim appointees shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.~~

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

(c) The chief executives shall normally attend all meetings of their board except when their own positions are being considered.

Action: Adopted (3)

After discussion by the assembly, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Establish Mission Board Responsibilities Regarding Mission Office Strategic Plan and Annual Budget Proposal

RESOLUTION 9-04

Overture 9-48 (CW, 397)

WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.2.1 (n) defines the duties of a mission board of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.2.1 (n) states that the mission boards of the Synod are charged with developing and determining policies that establish boundaries, parameters, and principles that guide the respective mission offices in determining present and future activities and programs; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.2.1 (n) states “the mission board shall have oversight of the implementation of these policies”; and

WHEREAS, Bylaws 3.8.2 (Board for National Mission [BNM]) and 3.8.3 (Board for International Mission [BIM]) do not specify how each of the mission boards are to monitor and provide oversight of the implementation of mission board established policies; and

WHEREAS, The BNM and the BIM have thoughtfully reviewed the processes currently in place and recommend that, in order to carry out their duties of monitoring and oversight effectively, Bylaws 3.8.2 and 3.8.3 be amended to include a process for review and endorsement of the strategic plan and review and input on budget on an annual basis prior to the submission of the budget proposal to the Synod Board of Directors; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.8.2 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for National Mission

3.8.2 ...

3.8.2.1 The Board for National Mission shall have oversight 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 the Office of National Mission strategic plan and review and provide input on the Office of National Mission 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).

3.8.2.2 ...

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.8.3 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for International Mission

3.8.3 ...

3.8.3.1 The Board for International Mission shall have oversight 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 the Office of International Mission strategic plan and review and provide input on the Office of International Mission 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).

3.8.3.2 ...

Action: Adopted (3)

Without discussion, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Simplify Circuit Elections

RESOLUTION 9-05A

Overtures 9-18–19 (CW, 380–81)

WHEREAS, Every electoral circuit meets to elect voting delegates to the national convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS); and

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (d–f) mandates a procedure of preliminary ballots and succeeding ballots; and

WHEREAS, Per the Bylaws and the ruling of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM), the district president cannot appoint a substitute lay delegate unless both a delegate and alternate are elected at the circuit forum; and

WHEREAS, Lay representation at the Synod convention is a vital aspect of our polity; and

WHEREAS, Every congregation should be assured that elections are carried out in strict accordance with the Bylaws of the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.1.2.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING***Voting Delegates***

3.1.2.1 Elections of voting delegates shall take place in accordance with established policy and procedure.

...

~~(d) Each pastor who is called and installed to a congregation of the circuit in a non-assisting capacity and not a specific ministry pastor shall be eligible for election.~~

~~(1) Each voter may write in the names of two such pastors on the initial ballot. The three pastors (or more, in case of a tie vote) who receive the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot shall be placed on the next ballot.~~

~~(2) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate. Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the pastoral delegate.~~

~~(3) The congregation or congregations served (in other than an assisting capacity) by the elected pastoral delegate shall be removed from consideration for supplying any other voting delegate or alternate for that particular convention.~~

~~(e) Prior to the meeting of the electoral circuit, each congregation may nominate one layperson (i.e., not a commissioned or ordained minister), either from its congregation or from the circuit. These names must be submitted to the circuit visitor prior to the day of the circuit meeting and shall constitute the slate of candidates. All congregational nominees, except those who have been eliminated through the election of the pastoral delegate, shall be eligible for election.~~

~~(1) Each voter may write in the name of two of the remaining lay nominees on the initial ballot. The three laypersons (or more, in case of a tie vote) who received the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot shall be placed on the next ballot.~~

~~(2) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate. Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one layperson shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he/she shall be declared the lay delegate.~~

~~(3) The congregation from which the lay delegate has been elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying any alternates to that particular convention.~~

~~(f) All other pastors who received votes in the initial write-in ballot, except those who were eliminated through the election of the lay delegate, shall be eligible for election as the alternate.~~

~~(1) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate.~~

~~(2) Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority~~

~~of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the alternate pastoral delegate.~~

~~(3) The congregation or congregations served by him shall be removed from consideration for supplying the remaining lay alternate.~~

~~(g) All lay nominees except those who have been disqualified through the procedures listed above shall be eligible for election as the alternate lay delegate. The election of the alternate shall follow the same procedure as in paragraph (f) above.~~

~~(h) All four persons elected shall come from four different member congregations or multi-congregation parishes of the circuit. (No lay delegate or alternate shall come from a congregation served by the pastoral delegate or alternate.)~~

(e) The electoral circuit shall determine whether the elections start with the lay or pastoral voting delegate. The elections shall then proceed alternating between lay and pastoral delegate elections followed by the election of the alternate delegates.

(f) For the election of the lay voting delegate: Prior to the meeting of the electoral circuit, each congregation may nominate one layperson (i.e., not a commissioned or ordained minister), either from its congregation or from the circuit. These names must be submitted to the circuit visitor prior to the day of the circuit meeting. Nominees not disqualified by other delegate elections shall constitute the slate of candidates.

(1) Each voter shall vote for only one candidate. Candidates receiving zero votes and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be removed from each succeeding ballot until one layperson shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he/she shall be declared the lay delegate.

(2) The congregation or multi-congregation parish from which the lay delegate has been elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying candidates for the other delegate elections for that particular convention.

(g) For the election of the pastoral voting delegate: Except those who have been disqualified by other delegate elections, each pastor who is called and installed to a congregation of the circuit in a non-assisting capacity and not a specific ministry pastor shall be eligible for election and their names shall constitute the ballot.

(1) Each voter shall vote for only one candidate. Candidates receiving zero votes and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the pastoral delegate.

(2) The congregation or congregations served (in other than an assisting capacity) by the elected pastoral delegate shall be removed from consideration for supplying candidates for the other delegate elections for that particular convention.

(h) For the election of the alternate lay delegate: All lay nominees except those who have been disqualified by other delegate elections shall be eligible for election as the alternate lay delegate.

(1) Each voter shall vote for only one candidate. Candidates receiving zero votes and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be removed from each succeeding ballot until one candidate shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he/she shall be declared the alternate lay delegate.

(2) The congregation or multi-congregation parish from which the alternate lay delegate has been elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying candidates for the other delegate elections for that particular convention.

(i) For the election of the alternate pastoral delegate: All other eligible pastors, except those who were disqualified through other delegate elections, shall be eligible for election as the alternate.

(1) Each voter shall vote for only one candidate. Candidates receiving zero votes and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast whereupon he shall be declared the alternate pastoral delegate.

(2) The congregation or multi-congregation parish from which the alternate pastoral delegate has been elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying candidates for the other delegate elections for that particular convention.

(j) The visitor(s) shall report the results of the election to the secretary of the district in writing immediately after said election.

(k) If the circuit fails to elect a delegate or alternate, the circuit is permitted to meet again prior to the deadline (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [a]) to elect the delegate or alternate in accordance with this election procedure.

(j) If after the election deadline neither the delegate nor the alternate (pastoral or lay) can serve, the district president, in consultation with the respective circuit visitor(s), shall appoint a delegate to fill the vacancy shall be filled by the district president in consultation with the respective circuit visitor(s).

Action: Adopted (3)

After discussion, upon closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Appoint Task Force to Evaluate Current Electoral Circuit Parameters

RESOLUTION 9-06A

Overtures 9-11-17 (CW, 375-80)

Rationale: The Principle of Franchise in the Synod

The basic principle of franchise in the Synod at the time of its formation in 1847 involved two essential components. The first essential component was that the Synod consisted of equal (*Pfarrgemeinde*) (pastor-congregation), no matter their numerical size, and it was these *Pfarrgemeinde* (pastor-congregations) that held the franchise. The second essential component was the maintaining of a “balance of power” in the conventions of the Synod between the clergy and the laity. To accomplish this principle of franchise, the 1847 Constitution of the Synod assigned the franchise to each member *Pfarrgemeinde* of the Synod, with each *Pfarrgemeinde* to receive two votes, one to be cast by its pastor and the other, by the lay delegate accredited by the congregation.

The German term used was *Pfarrgemeinde*, and it was defined in a footnote to the 1847 Constitution as “either one single congregation or the sum of the individual congregations which the pastor serves (*bedient*), as, in Germany, the territory in which he serves is called *Kirchspiel* or *Kirchensprengel*. The pastor may serve 3 or 4 or more congregations, locally separated; they are in relation to him essentially only one congregation.”

In 1924, when the Constitution was translated into English from German, the term “parish” was used in reference to situations in which a pastor served more than one individual congregation and the term “congregation” was used to reference situations in which a pastor served only one congregation. Thus, each congregation or parish (in this specific limited sense) was entitled to two votes, one by its pastor, and the other by its accredited lay delegate. Today the term “parish” has been replaced with “multi-congregation parish” (Constitution Article XII 10 a).

A. The Historic Practice of Franchise at the Conventions of the Synod

At the time of its inception every congregation or parish was entitled to send its pastor and a lay delegate to the conventions of the Synod. When the Synod divided into districts this did not change. Each congregation or parish sent two delegates to both the conventions of the Synod and the district. The entire Synod would meet in convention every three years and the districts would meet in convention annually.

Originally conventions were held in one of the congregations of the Synod. As a result of the growth of the Synod, it was becoming difficult to find host congregations large enough to provide the necessary housing for all the delegates. Therefore, it was proposed to the 1864 convention to begin to hold delegate conventions. However, the congregations in Fort

Wayne, Ind. and St. Louis, Mo. assured the convention that they would have no problem serving as hosts, so no changes were adopted (1864 *Proceedings*, 3). However, by 1869 this assurance proved to be unrealistic, and C.F.W. Walther suggested establishing delegate conventions. Professor George Schick was given the responsibility to develop a plan. This tentative plan was for two or more congregations to select one pastor and one lay delegate. When the plan was adopted in 1872 it was specified that the pastor and lay delegate should be selected from between two to seven congregations (1872 *Proceedings*, 96–97). Presumably, small congregations would form large groupings and large congregations would form small groupings. While the convention was originally scheduled for 1875, the first delegate convention was convened a year earlier in 1874.

The suggestion for a delegate convention, proposed in 1869, was actually the second grouping of congregations within the Synod. Prior to this formation of electoral circuits, visitation circuits had been established by the Synod at its 1866 convention. While the two existed side by side, they were created for completely different purposes. Electoral circuits functioned only for the purpose of selecting delegates to conventions of the Synod. However, the concept behind the establishment of visitation circuits was to address a concern considered crucial from the very beginning of the Synod, which was to ensure and retain the unity of doctrine and commitment to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions within the Synod.

At the founding of the Synod in 1847, the responsibility for visitation to ensure unity and faithfulness to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions was assigned to the President of the Synod. When the Synod divided into districts in 1854, one of the major concerns was maintaining this unity within the Synod, and it was resolved by giving the responsibility of visitation not only to the president of each district of the Synod but also to the President of the Synod as well. However, with the rapid growth of the number of congregations in the Synod, it became impossible for the President of the Synod to carry out this duty of visitation. Therefore, the 1864 convention removed the duties of visitation from the general President and essentially entrusted all duties of visitation of the congregations and individual members of the Synod to the district president. The one exception specified was that if the President of the Synod was convinced that a district president had erred in his dealing with a congregation or individual member, the President of the Synod himself was authorized to investigate personally (1864 *Proceedings*, 4; 1873 *Handbook*, 89).

Again, due to the growth of the Synod, these visitation responsibilities quickly proved to be too great for a district president alone to carry out. Therefore, the 1866 convention adopted a resolution establishing visitation circuits of two to seven congregations in order to help the district presidents carry out their visitation responsibilities (1866 *Proceedings*, 85).

When the decision to have delegate conventions was adopted at the 1872 convention, while the guidelines were also set at two to seven congregations being given one pastor and one lay

delegate, which was the same numbers as used for visitation circuits, there does not seem to have been any effort to have these two types of circuits coincide, or even an indication that they should. In both cases, districts were free to group them as they pleased.

In the ensuing years a significant variation in the size of electoral circuits developed among the various districts, with many districts having electoral circuits of two or three congregations. In an effort to reduce the number of delegates at Synod conventions, the 1893 Synod convention adopted a resolution calling for circuits to number between five to seven congregations (1893 *Proceedings*, 125). However, there was no change in Article III “Membership” as the 1899 edition of the *Synodical Handbook* does not reflect this continuing to read: “The power of this corporation shall be lodged with the accredited clerical and lay delegates of the congregations in actual membership with this synod. Not less than two and not more than seven congregations being entitled to one clerical and one lay representative in this organization at the option of said congregations, and only such delegates shall be entitled to a vote at the meetings of this Synod” (1899 *Handbook*, 54).

Synod President Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer reported to the 1908 convention of the Synod that 77 of the 245 electoral circuits did not conform to this rule adopted by the 1899 convention, and he recommended enlarging electoral circuits to at least ten congregations. However, no action was taken until the 1917 convention, which would then become effective with the 1920 convention. This convention also adopted a resolution indicating that visitation and electoral circuits should coincide as much as possible (1917 *Proceedings*, 108–9). The following resolution is noteworthy as it explains the reasoning for the change.

Reducing Number of Delegates

On the past scale of representation in the Delegate Convention, Synod has become too large a body, both for effective dispatch of business and even more so with respect to the quartering of delegates. After considering various propositions, Synod

Resolved, 1. That henceforth from five to ten congregations shall combine to form an electoral circuit, with the understanding that the relative size of congregations shall determine how many shall constitute a circuit, provided, however, that no circuit comprise less than five nor more than ten congregations; each circuit, as heretofore, to be represented by a clerical and a lay delegate.

... (1917 *Proceedings*, English, 52)

These parameters remained in effect until the 1944 convention when a change was made, again prompted by the perception that the conventions were becoming too large. Note the reasons specified in the resolution adopted:

ACTION

The following resolutions submitted by Committee 6 were adopted:

WHEREAS, The number of delegates to synodical conventions is steadily growing larger; and

WHEREAS, This causes great difficulty in providing proper housing; and

WHEREAS, An equal reduction of delegates will not infringe upon the representation rights of any congregation; therefore be it

Resolved, That Art. IV, A, page 19 of the *Synodical Handbook* be revised to read: "Every ten to fifteen member congregations shall form an electoral circuit, which shall elect one pastor and one layman and their alternates to represent them at the conventions of Synod"; ... (1944 *Proceedings*, 207)

The Synodical Survey Commission Report, written by Dr. August Suelflow in 1959, indicated that in nine of the districts, the electoral and visitation circuits were usually identical. The other two thirds of the districts used a system which treated the two types of circuits independently in one degree or another. The report concluded that it is legitimate to question the degree to which the districts followed the encouragement of the 1917 resolution. Note the following from the 1960 *Handbook*, which sets the parameters, but makes no specific connection between electoral and visitation circuits:

1.51 Electoral Circuits of Member Congregations

An electoral circuit shall comprise from 10 to 15 member congregations. Each electoral circuit shall be represented by one pastor and one layman. Large congregations shall form small circuits, and small congregations shall form large circuits. A fractional portion remaining after the circuits have been formed shall be entitled to the same representation as a complete circuit (1960 *Handbook*).

The 1967 convention proposed a manner of electing delegates to conventions in a way which would ensure that there was some kind of an ongoing relationship between the congregations involved in the electoral circuits. It did this by both changing the parameters of an electoral circuit and tying visitation circuits to electoral circuits. It also proposed a means by which an electoral circuit, which did not meet the parameters, could request an exemption from the Office of the President. Note the following sections from the overture proposed in the 1967 *Workbook* (pp. 124–25):

To Revise *Handbook* Regulations Regarding Convention Delegates

Considerable confusion and dissatisfaction exist with reference to the election of delegates to the convention of the Synod and their accountability. For example:

1. *Electoral Circuits* (1.51). These have often been artificially created entities, with little cohesiveness, hindering effective postconvention action in implementing

resolutions and even in transmitting information. We propose that representation be on the basis of the regular, permanent *visitation* circuits.

2. *Number of Congregations* (1.51). Present requirement: from 10 to 15 member congregations shall form an electoral circuit. Some visitation circuits have fewer than 10 congregations. If two visitation circuits are combined (we are proposing that provision be made for that possibility), the electoral circuit may well number more than 15 congregations. Furthermore, many have felt that representation should be based not on the number of congregations but on the number of communicant members involved. We propose a method based on both number of congregations and number of communicants, with a wide enough spread between minimum and maximum requirements in each category to take care of most situations and with a prescribed procedure which permits the President of the Synod to deal with those cases which still prove to be exceptional.

...

4. *Functions of the Delegate*. What does the delegate do? Presumably he attends the convention, studies, listens, dialogs, makes judgments, votes. And then, according to the present paragraph 1.55, he reports to the circuit the action of the Synod. And this is all? This delegate has just had the experience of a lifetime. He has been caught up in a great cause. He has gained fresh insights. He has grown tremendously in the faith. A fresh love for his Synod and for his Savior lives in his heart. And then he goes home. To what? We are of the opinion that the Synod should dignify this position and therefore recommend that the delegate be elected for a 2-year term, to serve until the next convention of the Synod. What a source of power this man can be for the mission of the church!

PROPOSED WORDING

1.51 Voting Delegates

Voting delegates shall consist of one pastor and one layman from each electoral circuit. An electoral circuit shall consist either of one or of two adjacent visitation circuits, as shall be determined by each district, on the basis of the following requirements: each pair of delegates shall represent from 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000. Exceptions to these requirements and limitations can be made only by the President of the Synod upon the request of a district board of

directors. Voting delegates shall serve a 2-year term, beginning with the convention; after the convention they shall function as resource persons in their circuit and assist in the dissemination and implementation of the synodical resolutions in their area.

...

The convention adopted the proposed wording for electoral circuits (1967 *Proceedings*, 121–22). The 2019 *Handbook* retains essentially the same wording with a slight change in structure and wording (Bylaw 3.1.2 [a–d]).

B. Current Trends

Due to demographic changes over the past several convention cycles, it has become necessary for more and more visitation circuits either to request an exemption from the President of the Synod or to be combined in order to qualify to meet the parameters for an electoral circuit. The result has been a gradual decrease in the number of electoral circuits within the Synod and the number of delegates attending conventions.

The following table is compiled on the basis of the *Proceedings* from the various convention years and *The Lutheran Annual*. (Note the figures for 1967, 1969, and 1986 included the three Canadian districts and the Argentina/Brazil District*, which have since formed their own church body.) The 1967 convention was held prior to the adoption of the current parameters. The percentage in parenthesis for 1986, 2007, 2016, and 2019 states the percentage of visitation circuits which were also electoral circuits. The number of exemptions is unknown.

Year	Electoral Circuits	Delegates	Visitation Circuits	Congregations
1967	424 (441)*	882	?	5,904
1969	478 (503)*	1,006	?	5,765
1986	558 (580)* (89%)	1,160	624	5,933 (6,150)*
2007	639 (99%)	1,278	643	6,168
2016	568 (89%)	1,136	633	5,968
2019	551 (86%)	1,102	636	5,875
2023	532 (87%)	1,049	608	5,777

The current estimate for the 2023 convention is that approximately 20 percent of the visitation circuits currently do not qualify as electoral circuits, which would be about 125 of the 625 visitation circuits. This in turn would mean that if no exemptions to the parameters were granted by the President of the Synod, there would be about 500 electoral circuits sending delegates to the 2023 Synod convention and about 1,000 voting delegates.

What is unknown in the above table is the number of exceptions granted for each convention to visitation circuits that did not qualify as an electoral circuit and the number of visitation circuits that were joined together to form an electoral circuit.

These numbers indicate that a growing number of visitation circuits, because of demographic reasons, no longer qualify as electoral circuits. In addition, the current Bylaws provide no guidelines to the President of the Synod for determining whether or not to grant an exception, or the basis on which

exemptions are to be considered. This ambiguity could result in questions being raised regarding why one visitation circuit is granted an exception while another is not. Another complicating factor involving circuits and voting, not covered by the Bylaws, is the fact that there are currently 13 multi-congregation parishes which cross district lines, as well as an additional 50 multi-congregation parishes within districts which are in different visitation circuits. This generates confusion in these situations regarding voting for a circuit visitor, eligibility to represent an electoral circuit, and voting at district conventions.

All of this points to the advisability for the Synod, due to demographic changes, to again consider the parameters for the electoral circuits which select delegates to conventions of the Synod to determine if they are adequate as they are or should be changed. In addition, it would be helpful for the Synod to clarify some of the ambiguity in the Bylaws regarding multi-congregation parishes which cross district or circuit lines.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention establish a task force to consider the parameters for visitation circuits and electoral circuits and report with an overture six months before the 2026 Synod convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force consist of the Secretary of Synod, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, the Commission on Handbook, and three district presidents and three district secretaries (from different districts) chosen by the Council of Presidents.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon the chair's immediate proposal to close debate, a delegate raised a point of order, questioning whether the chair can under Standing Rule 22 put the close of debate before the assembly when no debate has occurred. The chair instead opened debate on the resolution. After debate, a delegate called the question. Closure of debate was carried. The resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

To Provide for Continuity of Service in Regional Positions

RESOLUTION 9-07

Overture 9-38 (CW, 391)

WHEREAS, Various boards for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod require candidates elected by the Synod convention for some or all positions to be residents of specified regions of the Synod to be eligible for election and continued service; and

WHEREAS, Currently, if a board member elected to a position from a given region relocates outside that region, the seat held by such board member becomes vacant and must be filled by appointment between conventions, which has

resulted in an increasing number of vacancies for such positions that are then filled by appointment; and

WHEREAS, The Committee for Convention Nominations for the 2023 Synod convention believes that, ideally, positions elected from the Synod convention should be filled by the persons elected by the Synod convention insofar as possible, for purposes of continuity of service on the related board and the benefit of the related expertise thereby provided to such board, and thus that it is appropriate to allow a person elected from a region to continue to serve until the elected term expires even if such person relocates residence; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.12.2.8 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Nominations and Elections of Regional Positions—Board of Directors and Mission Boards

3.12.2.8 The convention shall elect the regional positions for the Synod’s Board of Directors and Mission Boards according to the following nominations and elections process.

...

(j) Persons elected to regional positions under this bylaw who subsequently take residence outside of the region may remain serving in their regional positions for the remainder of their current elected terms, so long as they retain membership in a congregation of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (4)

After some debate, a delegate called the question, which was carried. The resolution was adopted by a voice vote.

To Strengthen Nonvoting Advisory Delegate Participation at Conventions

RESOLUTION 9-08A

Report R62 (CW, 159–68); Overtures 9-20–26 (CW, 381–84)

Rationale

The Synod is comprised of parishes—that divinely established unity of the office of the one given to proclaim the Word of God and administer His Sacraments together with the one given to receive this grace thus administered through these means. As the Synod meets, each parish has been given equal voting status to be exercised by those without which there is no parish—the office of proclaiming and the office of receiving. This proclaiming office is identified in the Lutheran Confessions (Augsburg Confession [AC] V) and in the official theological position of the Synod (C.F.W. Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, Thesis VIII) as the called pastor of the parish.

In addition to the voting parishes of the Synod, individuals rostered as ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned all hold a nonvoting, advisory status (Constitution Article V B). In recent history, these advisory delegates have been underutilized within our district and Synod conventions. Recent efforts have included polling

advisory delegates prior to delegate voting, but in addition to violating the established rules of order (*Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* [12th ed.] 45:72), such polling reduces the advice and counsel given to a single word—either “Yes” or “No.” The counsel these advisors can bring is much more nuanced and valuable than merely a single word. The 2019 Resolution 9-17 Report included in the 2023 Convention Workbook concludes, “...one of the best existing opportunities is to encourage more participation of commissioned ministers on floor committees” (2023 Convention Report R62, “2019 Res. 9-17 Report: Study of Voting Privilege in the LCMS (CCM),” Secretary of Synod, *Workbook*, 167). The Bylaws have always contemplated, and it is made explicitly clear in the revisions made at the 1981 Convention, that advisory members of floor committees have full voice and vote on the floor committees (Bylaw 4.2.3 [a]). Some have suggested extending the full franchise to some or all advisory delegates, but there is no way to accomplish this without fundamentally changing the structural and theological underpinnings of the Synod and redrafting the entirety of the Constitution and Bylaws.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That we reaffirm the historical and theological position of the Synod from its foundation, that every parish is represented by one who holds the preaching office and one who holds the hearing office (Small Catechism Table of Duties); and be it further

Resolved, That the conventions of the Synod and its districts be encouraged to ensure that the advisory delegates are well prepared to exercise their responsibilities and privileges because their participation is valued and appreciated; and be it finally

Resolved, That we encourage the conventions of the Synod and its districts to include more robust representation of advisory delegates, especially ministers of religion—commissioned, on the floor committees of their respective conventions.

Action: Adopted (4)

An amendment was declined to replace, in the first resolved, the words “holds the hearing office” with “hears what is preached.” An amendment failed to strike from the second rationale paragraph the sentence “Recent efforts...single word.” Twenty minutes having elapsed, debate was closed and the resolution was adopted by hand and voice vote.

**To Appoint a Task Force
to Prepare the 2026 Convention
to Consider Implementing
a Four-Year Convention Cycle**

RESOLUTION 9-09A

Overtures 9-06–10 (CW, 373–75)

Preamble

There were a number of overtures from districts and district boards of directors calling for a four-year cycle, especially to save in the financial costs of conventions. The savings would be realized primarily through congregational assessments, a savings of one less assessment over 12 years.

WHEREAS, A move from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle would have major implications for election cycles, terms of office, staggering of terms, and many other unforeseen issues that would arise for districts and the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention establish a task force to consider the implications of adopting a four-year convention cycle; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force prepare an overture or overtures to implement a four-year convention cycle, including necessary Constitution and Bylaw changes; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force be composed of the Secretary of Synod, two representatives from the Council of Presidents, three district secretaries, the Commission on Handbook, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters; and be it finally

Resolved, That the task force issue its report, including overture or overtures, 18 months before the next Synod convention.

Action: Declined (9)

Closure of debate was called and carried; the resolution as read (to include “three district secretaries” in the task force) failed of adoption [Yes: 309; No: 486].

**To Amend Bylaws 3.6.4 and 3.6.4.4.1
to Clarify Use of
Lutheran Church Extension Fund
Financial Resources and Related Services**

RESOLUTION 9-10A

Report LR67 (TB, 1:27–30); Overture L9-50 (TB, 1:76–77)

Preamble

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod (LCEF) was “formed to provide financial resources and related services for ministry, witness, and outreach of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” (Bylaw 3.6.4). This is

accomplished by providing financial resources and related services to support rostered church workers, congregations, schools, recognized service organizations, auxiliaries, districts, colleges, universities, and synodwide corporate entities (“traditional support”).

Two recent opinions of the Synod’s Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM Op. 23-3003, “Scope of Board of Directors Authority to Approve Usage of Lutheran Church Extension Fund Assets under Bylaw 3.6.4.4.1”; CCM Op. 23-3005, “Lutheran Church Extension Fund Canada Corporation”), issued in response to questions raised by LCEF, clarify that LCEF under current Synod Bylaws may not provide support to church bodies with which the Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship (partner churches) or other church bodies working cooperatively with the Synod (“outreach support”). Specifically, one opinion constrains the authority of LCEF to provide financial resources and related services to be only “within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.6.4), thus prohibiting LCEF from providing financial resources and related services to support activities outside of the Synod itself, even if such activities were determined by the Synod Board of Directors (BOD) to be within the strategic and operational scope of the Synod’s ministry, witness, and outreach. The second opinion goes further, stating that although Lutheran church bodies in Brazil, Argentina, and Canada were once a part of Synod, they are now established, independent partner churches, no longer “within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.6.4), and are, therefore, not eligible for the support of the financial resources and related services that might be provided by LCEF. The effect of the opinion is that LCEF may not make its financial resources and related services available to partner churches, even were the Synod BOD to determine that making such LCEF financial resources and related services available would advantageously support the Synod’s ministry, witness, and outreach.

Rationale

LCEF believes that the full exercise of its capacity and expertise in the provision of financial resources and related services—not only for “traditional support” but also to support partner churches—is essential to accomplish the ministry, witness, and outreach of the Synod. In certain exceptional cases, when directed by the Synod President, this same strategic rationale likewise pertains to outreach support. As a result, LCEF is proposing the following amendments to Bylaws 3.6.4 and 3.6.4.4.1 to clarify that the LCEF Board of Directors may make financial resources and related services available to partner churches and for outreach support, provided that in each such instance the provision of such financial resources and related services is approved by the Synod BOD.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.6.4 and 3.6.4.4.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING***The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod***

3.6.4 The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, as established on June 15, 1978, as a corporate entity under the laws of the State of Missouri, is operated by its members and Board of Directors, in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and corporate Bylaws, to further the objectives and duties of the church extension fund by providing financial resources and related services for ministry, witness, and outreach within the Synod and, as approved by the Synod Board of Directors, beyond the Synod: (1) to and within partner churches with which the Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship; or (2) upon the recommendation of the President of Synod, to Lutheran entities formed and operating outside of the United States that assist in fulfilling the Synod's ministry and mission objectives in foreign countries. ~~It is formed to provide financial resources and related services for ministry, witness, and outreach of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.~~

(a) Any amendment to the Articles of Incorporation and the corporate Bylaws of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod as heretofore adopted shall be made by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

(b) Amendments shall be reported to the next convention of the Synod.

...

3.6.4.4 The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall raise funds primarily through the issuance of corporate notes and other debt instruments.

3.6.4.4.1 The assets of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall be used exclusively to provide financing and services for the acquisition of sites, for the construction of facilities, for the purchase of buildings and equipment, for operating expenses, for professional church worker education, for the residential housing needs of professional church workers, for promoting strategic ministry planning and assisting in capital campaigns; and for other purposes approved by its governing board and the Synod Board of Directors, which purposes shall be consistent with the ministry and mission of the Synod under policies approved by the Board of Directors of the Synod.

3.6.4.4.2 The assets of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall also be used exclusively to provide financing for its own operations and for distribution of operating results to its member districts, congregations, and corporate Synod, as determined by its governing board.

Action: Adopted (9)

After a speech by Chief Mission Officer Kevin Robson strongly encouraging adoption and his own supportive remarks, the chair called the question; closure of debate was carried. The resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

**To Amend Bylaw 3.12.2.4
to Change How Subsequent Ballots Are
Determined in Election of Synod President**

RESOLUTION 9-12

Overture 9-36 (CW, 390–91)

WHEREAS, There are five candidates for President of Synod (Bylaw 3.12.2.1); and

WHEREAS, The number of candidates was changed from three to five at the previous Synod convention in 2019 Resolution 9-07, “To Amend Synod Bylaws 3.12.2.1 and 3.12.2.2” (*Proceedings*, 194); and

WHEREAS, Current bylaws provide that “if no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast ... the candidate receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than 15 percent of the votes cast shall be dropped from the ballot” (Bylaw 3.12.2.4); and

WHEREAS, This practice has the potential to unnecessarily restrict the choice of credentialed voters from selecting a consensus candidate in the event of multiple rounds of balloting; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.12.2.4 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING***Elections of President and First Vice-President***

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 ~~and all candidates receiving less than 15 percent of the votes cast shall be dropped from the ballot, unless only one candidate receives 15 percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest candidates shall constitute the ballot, and another vote shall be taken in the same manner.~~

Action: Adopted (9)

After debate, closure was called and carried. The resolution was adopted [Yes: 535; No: 249].

10. ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERVISION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

To Amend Dispute Resolution and Expulsion Bylaws to Address Practical Considerations and Clarity

RESOLUTION 10-01

Overture 10-01 (CW, 399–401)

Preamble

The Commission on Handbook (COH) has, in keeping with its responsibility to “respond to requests ... to propose new provisions to address specific *Handbook*-related issues that surface between conventions” (Bylaw 3.9.4.2 [e]), responded to suggestions for bylaw changes in the dispute resolution and expulsion bylaws of the Synod with the following. Areas for work and potential solutions were proposed by the Secretary of the Synod, assembled from his consultation with the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and Ambassadors of Reconciliation, which provides training for Synod’s official roster of reconcilers and hearing facilitators. These fall in the following areas:

A. CLARIFY THAT HEARING FACILITATOR SERVICE SURVIVES DISTRICT TRANSFER (COH 19-009A)

Rationale

Hearing facilitators are drawn from the pool of district-based, trained reconcilers, onto a separate roster at the Synod level. A question has arisen about the sense of language in Bylaw 1.10.12 (a), which refers, nonetheless, to movement of hearing facilitators from district to district. The commission determined that the language should be clarified by incorporating the sense of existing Bylaw 1.10.12.2 into 1.10.12 (a).

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.10.12 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Hearing Facilitators

1.10.12 After the training of the reconcilers and in consultation with the appropriate district presidents, the Secretary of the Synod shall maintain a roster of 25 hearing facilitators selected from the roster of trained reconcilers. They may be ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, or laypersons and shall exhibit skills in the proper conduct of a fair and impartial hearing. They shall receive training for such purpose.

(a) Their term of service, monitored by the Secretary of the Synod, shall be six years, renewable without limit. Once appointed, the district membership of hearing facilitators no longer pertains to their eligibility for service in this position. Within three months after even-

numbered conventions of the Synod (e.g., 64th in 2010, 66th in 2016, 68th in 2023, etc.), the Secretary of the Synod shall contact all hearing facilitators to learn of their availability and willingness to continue for an additional term. Resulting vacancies on the roster of hearing facilitators shall be filled by the Secretary of the Synod from the Synod roster of reconcilers after consultation with the appropriate district presidents in time for resulting vacancies on district rosters of reconcilers to be filled by appointment by district boards of directors.

(b) Any vacancy in an unexpired term shall be filled in the same manner as described above.

1.10.12.1 Limitations on holding multiple offices do not apply to hearing facilitators.

~~1.10.12.2 If a hearing facilitator moves from the district where nominated, such hearing facilitator may remain on the Synod’s roster of hearing facilitators.~~

1.10.12.2 A hearing facilitator shall not serve as a reconciler or as a voting member of a panel.

B. TIMING, APPOINTMENT OF RECONCILERS AND HEARING FACILITATORS (COH 19-003)

Rationale

2016 Resolution 12-09 adjusted the schedule and procedure for appointment of dispute resolution reconcilers and hearing facilitators, allowing district boards of directors to make such appointments before, rather than after, the Synod convention (after which terms of service begin). Reconcilers are trained once appointed but cannot serve without training.



Committee 10 Vice-Chairman Dwayne M. Lueck

Training occurs within six months following a national Synod convention (Bylaw 1.10.10). At that training it is determined which of the new reconcilers might be useful as hearing facilitators (Bylaw 1.10.12), and those, after consultation, are appointed such, as vacancies on the roster of hearing facilitators require. At that point, it is impossible for vacancies on the district rosters of reconcilers to be filled (meaningfully) as the training has already occurred and will not occur for another three years (Bylaw 1.10.10). The last portion of Bylaw 1.10.12 (a), added in 2016, is therefore problematic—unless one is to bar the present year’s trainees from becoming hearing facilitators, which would pose a practical problem.

It may be possible to fill some of the hearing facilitator vacancies with previously trained reconcilers—but not if the vacancies are only addressed three months after the Synod convention, with training being provided within the six months after the convention.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.10.12 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Hearing Facilitators

1.10.12 After the training of the reconcilers and in consultation with the appropriate district presidents, the Secretary of the Synod shall maintain a roster of 25 hearing facilitators selected from the roster of trained reconcilers. They may be ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, or laypersons and shall exhibit skills in the proper conduct of a fair and impartial hearing. They shall receive training for such purpose.

(a) Their term of service, monitored by the Secretary of the Synod, shall be six years, renewable without limit. ~~Within three months after Beginning six months before even-numbered conventions of the Synod (e.g., 64th in 2010, 66th in 2016, 68th in 2023, etc.), the Secretary of the Synod shall contact all hearing facilitators to learn of their availability and willingness to continue for an additional term. Resulting vacancies on the roster of hearing facilitators shall be filled by the Secretary of the Synod from the Synod roster of reconcilers (whether already serving, before the convention, or, being newly appointed, after their post-convention training) after consultation with the appropriate district presidents, in time for resulting vacancies on district rosters of reconcilers to be filled by appointment by district boards of directors.~~

(b) Any vacancy in an unexpired term shall be filled in the same manner as described above.

**C. REMOVAL OF HEARING FACILITATORS FOR CAUSE
(COH 19-003)**

Rationale

Bylaw 1.10.10.4, added by 2013 Res. 7-12A (part E) at the request of the COH and the Secretary of the Synod, who administers the dispute resolution process, allows for reconcilers to be removed for cause, should the need arise. As that resolution noted, “Strict adherence by reconcilers to the

instructions provided in the Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures Manual is essential for uniformity and good order as reconcilers do their important work.” This is equally true for the work of hearing facilitators, who are to exhibit specific skills “in the proper conduct of a fair and impartial hearing” (Bylaw 1.10.12). No provision currently exists for the removal for cause of a hearing facilitator. In the impression of the process administrator and commission, this is a need that could conceivably arise, and that should be provided for in the Bylaws.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.10.12.4 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Hearing Facilitators

1.10.12.4 A hearing facilitator may be removed for cause according to the Bylaws and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual from Synod’s roster of hearing facilitators by Synod’s Board of Directors upon report of the administrator of the dispute resolution process after consultation with the President of the Synod.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.10.10.4 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

District Reconcilers

1.10.10.4 A reconciler may be removed for cause according to the Bylaws and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual from a district’s roster of reconcilers by that district’s board of directors upon report of the administrator of the dispute resolution process after consultation with the president of the district.

D. APPEAL PANEL DETERMINATIONS (COH 19-009C)

Rationale

In Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17, dealing with formal process for expulsion from the roster of the Synod, a suspended member (individual or congregation) may request a hearing of the matter by a Hearing Panel (Bylaw 2.14.7). Upon the issuance of a decision by that panel, the suspended member, suspending ecclesiastical supervisor or, in some circumstances, the President of the Synod may request an appeal (Bylaw 2.14.8). The appeal request is considered by an Appeal Panel, which determines on the basis of specific criteria (Bylaw 2.14.8 [d]) whether the decision of the Hearing Panel will stand, or whether the matter will be forwarded to a Final Hearing Panel. The language of Bylaws 2.14.8 (e), 2.15.8 (e), and 2.17.8 (e) seems to suggest only an appeal by the suspended member of a decision to uphold the suspension. This language should be clarified.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 2.14.8 (e) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Appeal Panel**

2.14.8 The decision of the Hearing Panel may be appealed by the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel), by the suspending ecclesiastical supervisor, or by the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved (Constitution Art. XI B 1–3) within 15 days after receiving the decision. Such request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod with copies provided to the district president(s) of the accuser and the accused, the hearing facilitator of the Hearing Panel, the accuser, and the President of the Synod, and shall be accompanied by a written memorandum stating the basis for the request.

...

(e) Within 30 days after its formation, the Appeal Panel shall issue its written decision in response to the request for reconsideration. If the Appeal Panel denies the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel ~~and upholds the suspension of the ecclesiastical supervisor~~, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be regarded as final and shall

- (1) be binding upon the parties to the matter and not be subject to further appeal;
- (2) have no precedential value;
- (3) be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod; and
- (4) shall be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or the President of the Synod.

...

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 2.15.8 (e) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Appeal Panel**

2.15.8 The decision of the Hearing Panel may be appealed by the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel), or by the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved (Constitution Art. XI B 1–3) within 15 days after receiving the decision. Such request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod with copies provided to the district president(s) of the accuser and the accused, the chairman of the Hearing Panel, the accuser, and the President of the Synod, and shall be accompanied by a written memorandum stating the basis for the request.

...

(e) Within 30 days after its formation, the Appeal Panel shall issue its written decision in response to the request for reconsideration. If the Appeal Panel denies the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel ~~and upholds the suspension of the ecclesiastical supervisor~~, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be regarded as final and shall

- (1) be binding upon the parties to the matter and not be subject to further appeal;

- (2) have no precedential value;
- (3) be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod; and
- (4) shall be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or the President of the Synod.

...

and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaw 2.17.8 (e) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Appeal Panel**

2.17.8 The decision of the Hearing Panel may be appealed by the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel), by the suspending ecclesiastical supervisor, or by the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved (Constitution Art. XI B 1–3) within 15 days after receiving the decision. Such request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod with copies provided to the district president(s) of the accuser and the accused, the chairman of the Hearing Panel, the accuser, and the President of the Synod, and shall be accompanied by a written memorandum stating the basis for the request.

...

(e) Within 30 days after its formation, the Appeal Panel shall issue its written decision in response to the request for reconsideration. If the Appeal Panel denies the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel ~~and upholds the suspension of the ecclesiastical supervisor~~, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be regarded as final and shall

- (1) be binding upon the parties to the matter and not be subject to further appeal;
- (2) have no precedential value;
- (3) be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod; and
- (4) be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or the President of the Synod.
- (f) If the Appeal Panel grants the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel, a Final Hearing Panel shall be selected by the Secretary of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

**To Amend Bylaws to Clarify
Application of Pre-Call Consultation
and Call and Be Served By (Bylaws 2.5.2–3)
beyond Member Congregations**

RESOLUTION 10-02

Overture 10-02 (CW, 401–2)

Preamble

The 2019 Synod in convention in its Resolution 10-02A (B) included in Bylaws 2.5.1–3, which required *congregations* of the Synod to consult district presidents in call processes and to call and be served by only such ordained and commissioned ministers or candidates therefor, also “association schools, agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations” (RSOs). The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM Op. 20-2957, Minutes of Oct. 30–31, 2020) and Commission on Handbook (Item 19-005) have, in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the LCMS Recognized Service Organization office, noted potential unclarity or unintended implications of this requirement being inserted as it is into paragraphs that ordinarily deal with congregations. At a minimum, the “association schools, agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations” to which the language now applies need to look in a “foreign” section of the *Handbook* to find a regulation that applies to them. In certain areas, because of the very different sort of work done by RSOs, in particular, the language may create a certain degree of confusion regarding how it applies to positions that are not involved directly in teaching or practice of doctrine.

With regard to the latter, the CCM has understood *served by* in Bylaw 2.5.2 to refer to “service in the sense of the distinctive functions of the pastoral office, not to *service* in some purely secular sense” (CCM Op. 20-2957, “Requirements for Call Processes by Agencies, Auxiliaries, and Recognized Service Organizations”). The opinion goes on: “A divine call cannot be extended by any of the listed calling entities to any person not listed under Bylaw 2.5.2’s (1), (2), or (3). Furthermore, such a calling entity cannot be “served by,” in the sense of any exercise of distinctive functions of the pastoral office, any person not listed under Bylaw 2.5.2’s (1), (2), or (3).”

Agencies are by definition part of the Synod and would be precluded from calling an individual who is not a member of the Synod. This should be made explicit in Section 1.5, dealing with agencies. Requirements incumbent on auxiliaries and RSOs should be dealt with in the appropriate sections (Bylaw sections 6.1 and 6.2, respectively), not in Section 2.5, which deals with congregations and their association schools, which, by virtue of their governance strictly be member congregations, are subject to the same requirements as their constituent congregations.

The commission has proposed changes that will clarify the scope of “service by” (to refer, outside of congregations and their association schools, to exercise of distinctive functions of the pastoral office) and to place the provisions in their appropriate sections.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw section 2.5 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.5 Calling Ministers of Religion

2.5.1 Congregations; and their association schools; ~~agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations of the Synod~~ shall seek the counsel of the ~~appropriate~~their respective district president when calling ordained or commissioned ministers.

~~(a) A congregation or association school shall seek the counsel of its own district president.~~

~~(b) An agency, auxiliary, or recognized service organization shall seek the counsel of the district president who would, by virtue of the call, assume supervision of the minister (Bylaw section 2.12). If the call is such that the district president to assume supervision is not known, the counsel of the president of the district within which the entity is located or with which it is associated shall be sought.~~

~~(c) If such a call involves multiple districts (such as by entity location or connection and/or position locale), the presidents of all such districts shall be consulted and mutually agree on which one of them will counsel the entity regarding the call and assume supervision of the worker called.~~

2.5.2 Congregations that are members of the Synod, ~~as well as~~ and their association schools; ~~agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations~~ shall call and be served only by (1) ordained ministers who have been admitted to their respective ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod; (2) candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments; or (3) ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.

2.5.3 Congregations that are members of the Synod, ~~as well as~~ and their association schools; ~~agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations~~ shall call only (1) commissioned ministers who have been admitted to their ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod; (2) candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments; or (3) commissioned ministers (or those holding positions comparable to commissioned ministers) who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.

2.5.4 Congregations that violate these requirements and persist in such violation shall, after due admonition, forfeit their membership in the Synod.

...
and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 1.5.5.2 be added as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Agency Operations

...
1.5.5.2 When calling ordained or commissioned ministers, agencies shall seek the counsel of the district president who would, by virtue of the call, assume supervision of the minister (Bylaw section 2.12). If the call is such that the district president to assume supervision is not known, the counsel of the president of the district within which the agency is located or with which it is associated shall be sought.

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 6.1.2.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

6.1 Auxiliaries

...
6.1.2.1 An organization desiring to be recognized as an auxiliary of the Synod shall satisfy the following requirements:

...
(g) Seek, when calling an ordained or commissioned minister, the counsel of the district president who would, by virtue of the call, assume supervision of the minister (Bylaw section 2.12).

(1) If the call is such that the district president to assume supervision is not known, the counsel of the president of the district within which the entity is located or with which it is associated shall be sought.

(2) If such a call involves multiple districts (such as by entity location or connection and/or position locale), the presidents of all such districts shall be consulted and mutually agree on which one of them will counsel the entity regarding the call and assume supervision of the worker called.

(h) Call and, in any sense involving distinctive function(s) of the pastoral office, be served by only those ordained ministers or candidates designated by Bylaw 2.5.2.

(i) Call only those commissioned ministers or candidates designated by Bylaw 2.5.3.

6.1.2.2 Auxiliaries shall continue to meet the above requirements for continued recognition.

...
and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaws 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

6.2 Recognized Service Organizations

6.2.1 The granting of recognized service organization status by the Synod signifies that a service organization, while independent of the Synod, fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that extends the mission and ministry of the Synod, is in harmony with the programs of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.

...
(d) A recognized service organization shall call and, in any sense involving distinctive function(s) of the pastoral office, be served by only those ordained ministers or candidates designated by Bylaw 2.5.2.

(e) A recognized service organization shall call only those commissioned ministers or candidates designated by Bylaw 2.5.3.

(~~f~~) ... (subsequent subparagraphs re-lettered similarly)

...
6.2.2.2 The right to extend a Synod-recognized, regular call to a rostered worker is afforded to the board of directors of a recognized service organization, provided that:

(a) ~~the~~The board's composition contains at least the proportion of members of Synod member congregations required by recognized service organization program policies;~~and,~~

(b) ~~the~~The ~~appropriate~~ district president who would, by virtue of the call, assume supervision of the minister (Bylaw section 2.12) is properly consulted in the call process;~~and,~~

(1) If the call is such that the district president to assume supervision is not known, the counsel of the president of the district within which the entity is located or with which it is associated shall be sought.

(2) If such a call involves multiple districts (such as by entity location or connection and/or position locale), the presidents of all such districts shall be consulted and mutually agree on which one of them will counsel the entity regarding the call and assume supervision of the worker called.

(c) ~~the~~The call document is approved by the district president who would assume ecclesiastical supervision of the member as clearly stating that the organization:

(1) expects that the worker will, without compromise or constraint, carry out the ministry for which ordained or commissioned, and to which called, according to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.

(2) agrees to accommodate and encourage the ecclesiastical supervision of the worker by the appropriate district president.

(3) submits, as an exclusive remedy, to the dispute resolution process of the Synod for the resolution of any issues arising under the divine call.

(d) ~~the~~The organization demonstrates to the district president its ability to provide for the reasonable needs

of the called worker for the duration of the period of the call.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 926; No: 40].

To Provide Application of Standards of Accountability to Members of Synod

RESOLUTION 10-03A

Overture 10-08 (CW, 405)

WHEREAS, The district president has the responsibility of ecclesiastical supervision for his district; and

WHEREAS, There is confusion as to the application of the standards to which the district presidents hold members of the Synod within their duties as ecclesiastical supervisors; and

WHEREAS, There is a perceived lack of transparency with the Council of Presidents (COP) and the members of the Synod they supervise; and

WHEREAS, It is God-pleasing for Christians to foster and grow trust among the fellowship; therefore be it

Resolved, That the COP keep the Synod members of their districts informed of applications of standards to which members could be held accountable; and be it further

Resolved, That those portions of the COP Manual that are not marked “confidential” documents be made available by the COP; and be it further

Resolved, That the COP work to develop consistent application of standards to which members of the Synod are held; and be it finally

Resolved, That the COP work to alleviate confusion and become more transparent by providing a summary of COP meeting notes of relevant information to aid Synod members and foster trust.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Direct Revision of Council of Presidents Policy regarding Placement

RESOLUTION 10-04A

Overture 10-09 (CW, 405–6)

WHEREAS, Bylaw 2.9.1 states:

The Council of Presidents, acting as the Board of Assignments, shall regularly assign to qualified graduates of educational institutions of the

Synod and workers available from colloquy programs as “first calls” those calls that have been duly extended to fill active member positions as identified in Bylaw 2.11.1 for ordained and commissioned ministers if positions for which candidates are qualified are available.

(a) The placement officers of the respective institutions shall be consulted before assignments are made.

(b) The president of the district in which a candidate is to be placed shall be consulted, and his concurrence shall be an essential part of the final recommendation to the Board of Assignments.

and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.10.1.3 states:

The Council of Presidents shall serve as the Board of Assignments of the Synod. It shall assign first calls to candidates for the offices of ordained and commissioned ministers. The Council of Presidents may in its policies delegate authority for interim placement (between its regular meetings) to a committee of its own members or the chairman of that committee.

and

WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents (COP), acting as the Board of Assignments of the Synod, has a crucial role in the initial placement of candidates in our Synod, and such role should be carried out with the prayerful deliberation and discussion of the entire body; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.10.1.3 currently allows the responsibility of interim placement of candidates to rest in the hands of one man alone, or to the placement committee of the COP; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable that whenever possible the plenary COP approve assignments; therefore be it

Resolved, That the COP revise its policy so that placement between regularly scheduled COP meetings can be handled in a way more fully representative of the whole COP (for example, using electronic means) in recognition of the charge given in Bylaw 2.9.1.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

**To Speak to Spiritual Care
of Victims of Sexual Misconduct
by Individual Members of the Synod**

RESOLUTION 10-05A

Overture 10-10 (CW, 406)

Whereas, The sin of sexual misconduct is an ongoing and serious concern, particularly when allegedly committed by an individual member (rostered worker) of the Synod; and

Whereas, The Synod takes all accusations of sexual misconduct alleged against individual members of the Synod seriously; and

Whereas, The Synod also seeks to provide guidance and support for those who would provide spiritual care for both the victims and members of the Synod within Christian love and care; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of Presidents work diligently with legal counsel and an external group of both women and men, who are well-versed in the field of sexual misconduct, and be encouraged to include victims of sexual misconduct, to evaluate, review, and develop advisory procedures and guidelines to address the spiritual needs of both the victims and the individual members of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (4)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

**To Amend Bylaw 2.11.2.2
regarding Candidate Status**

RESOLUTION 10-06

Overture 10-06 (CW, 404–5)

WHEREAS, Candidates are valuable members of the Synod, and having such members automatically removed from the roster would be a detriment both to the members and to the Synod, especially when there are more congregations requesting a candidate from the seminary than there are seminary candidates available; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has a duty out of Christian love and charity to care for and support these valued members; and

WHEREAS, Candidates are currently required to file an annual report with their district president by Jan. 31, which leads to inactive—candidate status letters being exchanged around Christmas, a busy time for members and district

presidents alike; while a summertime reporting period will provide more time for a thoughtful exchange; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 2.11.2.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Candidate

2.11.2.2 A “candidate” member is one who is eligible to perform the duties of any of the offices of ministry specified in Bylaw section 2.11 but who is not currently an active member or an emeritus member.

(a) A candidate may be continued on the roster for a period not to exceed ten years by act of the president of the district through which the person holds membership. A candidate may be further continued on the roster for ~~a period~~ not to exceed of five additional years at a time upon recommendation of the applicant’s district president and approval of three fourths (75%) of the Council of Presidents.

(b) While a member is a candidate, the district president shall minister to that member either directly or through others, concern himself with the spiritual well-being of that member, and continue efforts to return that member to active service.

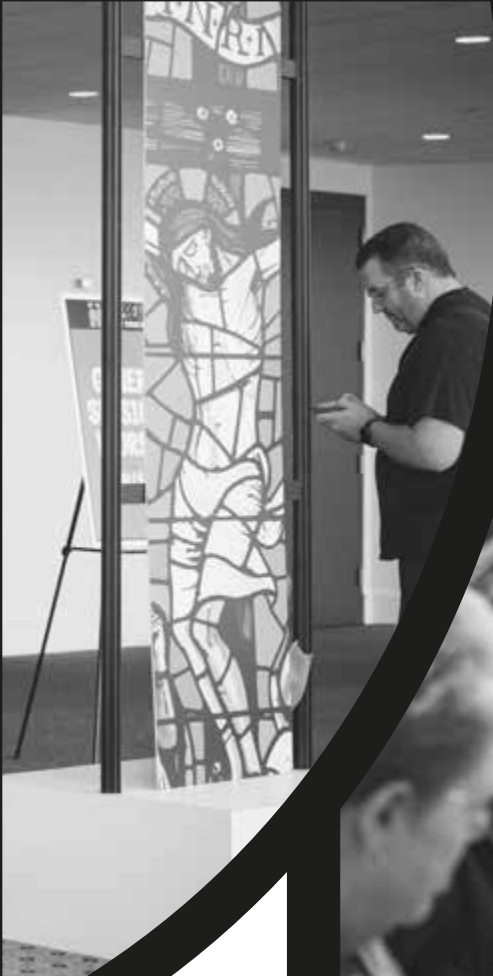
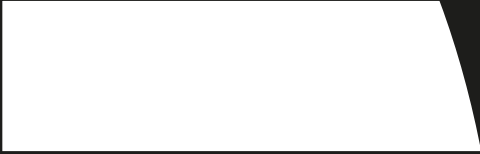
~~(b)~~ The candidate shall, by ~~January~~ July 31, make an annual report to the district president who shall determine the member’s eligibility to remain on candidate status. The candidate’s report shall include current contact information and address the criteria for remaining on candidate status.

~~(c)~~ The district president shall determine whether or not to grant or, upon annual review, continue candidate status based on the following criteria:

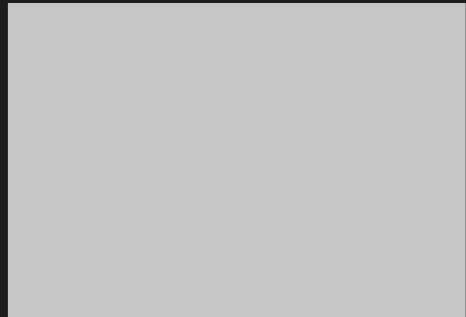
- (1) The member’s health;
- (2) The member’s efforts to address any unresolved issues involving fitness for ministry;
- (3) The member’s current involvement in ministry; ~~and~~
- (4) The member’s written statement addressing any impediments to consideration and acceptance of a call to any of the offices of ministry specified in Bylaw section 2.11; and
- (5) The member’s cooperation in keeping personnel documents up to date.

Action: Adopted (8)

An amendment was declined, to replace the proposed Bylaw 2.11.2.2 (a) with the following: “(a) A candidate may be continued on the roster by act of the president of the district through which the person holds membership.” The chair proceeded to a voice vote on the resolution, which was adopted.



WE PREACH
CHRIST CRUCIFIED
1 COR. 1:18-25



11. CHURCH AND CULTURE

To Encourage Appropriate Use of Social Media

RESOLUTION 11-01A

Report R66.4 (CW, 224–31); Overture 11-01 (CW, 407)

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) in February 2019 issued a report titled, *A Snapshot of Trending Tools: Christians and Social Media*, which cites a definition of social media as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)” (Report R66.4, *Workbook*, 224); and

WHEREAS, “These rapidly changing methods of communication are considered indispensable in all areas of life—at home, at work, at all levels of education, in managing health care and providing entertainment” (Report R66.4, *Workbook*, 224); and

WHEREAS, The CTCR report seeks to consider how Christians can “best use—or, if necessary, avoid the use of—this technology to glorify our God and Savior, build up the Body of Christ and extend His kingdom in the world” (Report R66.4, *Workbook*, 224); and

WHEREAS, “Lutherans have always been open to the constructive use of new technologies for sharing the never-changing truths of God’s Word—think of Luther and the printing press! At the same time, Lutherans are clear-eyed about the power of sin, the world and Satan, and are therefore realistic and necessarily critical about how such technologies can be twisted and misused. Social media is a prime example of this and is also evolving and developing (in both good and bad ways)” (CTCR Executive Director Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, “CTCR report looks at ‘Christians and Social Media,’” *Reporter Online*, May 29, 2019, www.reporter.lcms.org/2019/ctcr-report-looks-at-christians-and-social-media); and

WHEREAS, Social media is neither inherently evil nor good, and while it can be used to help proclaim the Gospel, it has the potential to amplify and accelerate the harm that is caused by slander, libel, and other forms of false witness; and

WHEREAS, Much of the content on social media is driven by the world’s moral imperatives and utilizes the world’s vocabulary, presenting temptations to Christians and undermining Lutheran catechesis; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) provides helpful guidelines for its own social media community (www.lcms.org/about/privacy-policy/social-media-guidelines); therefore be it

Resolved, That Christians be encouraged to exercise caution and great care in choosing the words and images they publish on social media, taking into account the challenges involved in online communication, and making every effort to be both clear and compassionate in whatever they share; and be it further

Resolved, That Christians also be encouraged to exercise charity and patience in considering what their neighbor shares on social media, not assuming the worst but interpreting everything in the kindest way, while also seeking to respond in love with words and ideas shaped by the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the language of the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That Christians who use social media be encouraged to do so with thanksgiving to God for this gift, and to sanctify their online interactions with the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:1–5); and be it further

Resolved, That church workers and leaders, being held to a higher standard and representing the church by virtue of their office (1 Tim. 3:2, 7), are expected to exercise caution in their use of social media and lead by example; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend the CTCR Report *A Snapshot of Trending Tools: Christians and Social Media* for study and discussion by pastors, current and future church workers, and members of the congregations of the LCMS; and be it finally

Resolved, That, remembering our baptism and living as baptized children of God, we fear, love, and trust in God above all things while using social media as a means of loving and serving our neighbor.



Committee 11 Chairman Terry R. Forke

Action: Adopted (7)

After debate, the second call for closure was carried; the resolution was adopted [Yes: 853; No: 31].

To Reject All Forms of Racism and Affirm Our Witness to All People

RESOLUTION 11-02A

Overtures 11-04–11, 17–20 (CW, 408–13, 416–19); President’s Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:26)

WHEREAS, Scripture reveals that all people are created in the image of God, one human race, one common humanity, no matter what our outward distinctions might be (Gen. 1:26–27, 9:6; Acts 17:25–26), giving every human inherent value (Psalm 139:13–14); and

WHEREAS, In Jesus, God became man and so identifies fully with every human being (Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38), His mission of redemption is for all of mankind (Heb. 2:17), and in Him the value of every person in the eyes of God is verified (John 3:16–17); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Peter said, “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34–35); and

WHEREAS, James says, “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (James 2:8–9); and

WHEREAS, Contrary to Scripture, there are ideologies that determine human worth and value in other ways, such as genetics, biology, physical characteristics, cultural heritage, or historical experiences; and

WHEREAS, In common speech, “race” distinguishes people according to skin color and geographical heritage; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention adopted 2019 Resolution 11-04A, “To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities,” which states: “Racism is defined as: (1) A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism); and (2) Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior (www.lexico.com/en/definition/racism)” (Proceedings, 217); and

WHEREAS, Racism thus defined denies biblical truth as it claims that some races are inherently superior to others; and

WHEREAS, There are contemporary movements, methodologies, and ideologies that seek to address racism such as Black Lives Matter (BLM); Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); and Critical Race Theory (CRT); and

WHEREAS, BLM, DEI, and CRT are multifaceted and include controversial aspects and theories as well as some explicitly unbiblical tenets; and

WHEREAS, Elements of the BLM organizational philosophy, certain DEI policies, and some proponents of CRT often divide people on the basis of race and may therefore promote another form of racism; and

WHEREAS, Additional contemporary ideologies and movements such as Nazism, White Supremacy, and White Nationalism espouse unbiblical aspects, theories, and tenets; and

WHEREAS, Nazism, White Supremacy, and White Nationalism divide people on the basis of race, therefore promoting racism; and

WHEREAS, The Church exists to call the world to repent of sin including racial and ethnic division and discrimination, and to proclaim that Christ Himself is our peace and that we are reconciled to God and one another only through Him (Eph. 2:14–16; Acts 17:30–31); therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) rejects any doctrine or ideology that teaches the superiority of one race, ancestry, or nationality over another or that teaches that an individual is inherently racist or oppressive because of his or her race, ancestry, or nationality; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod’s congregations and church workers, and its national and district workers, in teaching the scriptural truth that Christ is the Savior of all people of every color and ethnicity, recognize the need for humility and acknowledge our past failures in this regard (James 4:6); and be it further

Resolved, That Synod’s congregations and church workers, and its national and district workers, engage vigorously in the Great Commission to see all people of every color and ethnicity come to faith in Christ and be incorporated in LCMS congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod recognize that members of LCMS congregations may seek to address racism in various ways, and we commit to love one another in Christ, seeking to find common ground in our confession of the Word of God; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod continue to utilize the 1994 Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) Report *Racism and the Church: Overcoming the Idolatry*, develop additional resources to combat racism, and work collaboratively to proclaim God’s love for all people in Christ; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR to examine, from a biblical perspective, the issues around race and racism central to contemporary discussions and life, including movements, methodologies, and ideologies that divide people by race.

Action: Adopted as amended (7)

An amendment was declined to replace, in the tenth whereas, “include” with “some proponents endorse” and, in the eleventh, “often divide people...racism” with “sinfully divide.” The second-last resolve was amended by consent to strike “implore her congregations and ministries to” from before “continue to utilize the 1994...Report...” An amendment was declined to amend the third-last resolve to insert “in our common humanity and” before the words “in our confession of the Word,” and to add, in the final resolve, “traumas” to the list, “movements, methodologies, and ideologies.” With twenty minutes debate having elapsed, closure was called and was carried. The resolution was adopted as amended [Yes: 875; No: 84].

To Love and Disciple Peoples of All Ethnicities, Languages, and Skin Colors

RESOLUTION 11-03A

Overtures 11-02–03, 12–16, 21–23 (CW, 407–8, 413–16, 419–20)

WHEREAS, God has created all people, all have their common descent from Adam and Eve which makes all subject to original sin, and all are redeemed through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:7, 19–22; 1 Cor. 15:22); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has acknowledged in convention the ways in which differences in ethnicity, language, and skin color can be used sinfully and by Satan himself to divide us from each other and from the love of God in Christ our Lord (2019 Resolution 11-04A; 1992 Res. 3-03; 1981 Res. 8-07; 1971 Res. 9-32); and

WHEREAS, The Word of God clearly teaches that using ethnic, linguistic, or physical differences to show partiality is not pleasing to our Lord and stands in contradiction to His saving work for all people in Christ (Matt. 28:19–20; James 2:8–9; Acts 6:1–3; 10:34–35; 15:16–17; Rev. 7:9); and

WHEREAS, The New Testament witnesses to the need for Christians to “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2), to listen to one another, to learn one another’s languages, and to understand one another’s backgrounds, in order to speak the Good News even more clearly to one another (James 1:19; Acts 2:6–8; 17:16–28); and

WHEREAS, We acknowledge the disparities in educational, medical, and financial outcomes among people of various ethnicities, languages, and skin colors in our nation, as well as the suffering these disparities bring; and

WHEREAS, We sorrow over the suffering caused when individuals are persecuted in civil society for voicing opinions at odds with certain contemporary ideologies; therefore be it

Resolved, That all Christians be continually urged to “... not give false testimony against [their] neighbor” and to “... explain everything in the kindest way” (Small Catechism I, Eighth Commandment), and repent where we have failed to

love our neighbors in accordance with the Lord’s will; and be it further

Resolved, That we rejoice that God has brought the nations to our neighborhoods, and that we challenge the leaders and congregations of the Synod to engage the people of the many ethnicities and languages that now make up the communities around our churches; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors be encouraged to consider pointing out during the penitential season of Lent ways in which Satan uses our differences to divide us, and to highlight at Pentecost our common identity in Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Communications regularly spotlight, in Synod publications, on the web, in social media, and in e-newsletters, 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 people of the Synod be encouraged to investigate and inform themselves of the historic and current work of the Synod in outreach and mission to the various ethnic groups in our midst; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission work with Concordia Publishing House to prepare a scholarly book and supporting materials on the successes, failures, and opportunities of the Synod’s ministry and outreach to communities of color, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of black ministry in the Synod in 2027; and be it further

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church Extension Fund be encouraged to support the work of proclaiming the Gospel across ethnic and linguistic lines; and be it finally

Resolved, That we, as a church body, strive intentionally to love and disciple peoples of all ethnicities, languages, and skin colors, and thank God for and celebrate the steps made toward this goal.

Action: Adopted (7)

Upon closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted [Yes: 882; No: 69].

To Address Abortion and Use of Fetal Tissue in Vaccines

RESOLUTION 11-04

Overtures 5-42–44, 11-27 (CW, 312–13, 423)

WHEREAS, Abortion is a sin against God’s Law (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5; *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, Fifth Commandment, 2017 ed., Ques. 62–63 [88–92]); and

WHEREAS, The methods and means of elective abortion have changed dramatically since the publication of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) 1984 report *Abortion in Perspective*; and

WHEREAS, There are some vaccines and medications that are developed utilizing human fetal tissue from aborted children and human fetal cell lines from past abortions (www.lozierinstitute.org/cell-lines-used-for-viral-vaccine-production/); and

WHEREAS, Christians should not be partakers in any evil nor provide any sort of support or justification for evil committed in the past (Eph. 5:11–14; 1 Thess. 5:22); and

WHEREAS, Initial guidance has been provided to the congregations of the Synod by President Matthew C. Harrison’s “LCMS COVID Vaccine Pastoral Letter” dated Jan. 21, 2021 (files.lcms.org/f/1F618D12-7061-4157-9321-A0B870A37B34) and the Sept. 24, 2021 document: “The LCMS and COVID-19 Vaccines: Facts and Considerations” (files.lcms.org/f/169E6F74-5868-40A3-8DCB-47F075EDEE81); and

WHEREAS, Some Synod congregations have expressed a desire to receive additional guidance about vaccine development and testing in relation to abortion so that their members may make decisions about vaccination and medication in good conscience; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR, in consultation with LCMS Life Ministry and the seminaries and universities of the Synod, address the changing nature of abortion and specifically the topic of vaccines and other medications as it relates to the issue of abortion and the use of fetal tissue.

Action: Adopted (7)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

To Address the Relationship between Church and State in an Increasingly Hostile Environment

RESOLUTION 11-05

Overtures 11-24–27 (CW, 421–23)

WHEREAS, God has given the Word and Sacraments and instituted the Office of the Ministry that we may obtain saving faith (Matt. 28:18–20; John 20:21–23; Augsburg Confession [AC] IV; V); and

WHEREAS, God has commanded His people to gather to hear His Word and receive His Sacraments for the forgiveness of sins, refreshment, comfort, and strength (Matt. 26:26–29; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 11:23–26; Large Catechism [LC] V 72); and

WHEREAS, When we gather together in person to receive God’s gifts, we are strengthened to withstand the attacks of the evil one (Eph. 6:10–18; LC V 80–82); and

WHEREAS, Historically, the Church has continued its essential work during times of plague, and pastors have brought God’s Word and Sacrament to the sick and homebound; and

WHEREAS, Mandated closings of congregations and banning of pastors from healthcare facilities during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic caused harm to members of congregations of the Synod and others residing in our communities; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic exposed an increasing hostility of culture and governmental authorities toward the church in her Word and Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic also engendered ambiguities concerning faithful church membership, faithful citizenship, and love of neighbor, leading to polarization and division among Christians of our Lutheran confession; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod affirm that gathering together in person to receive God’s gifts in Word and Sacrament is essential for the health and well-being of God’s people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod assert that the State has no God-given authority to dictate the sacramental and liturgical practices of churches; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod affirm that in times of pandemic or public crisis the church in Christian love should seek to implement measures that serve the public good while continuing to carry out her essential role of offering the Word and the Sacraments; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod affirm that in Christian freedom (Gal. 5:1), and in consideration of local conditions, some congregations may choose to temporarily suspend public gatherings, but that Word and Sacrament ministry must continue; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod acknowledge that reasonable minds can disagree in Christian love on how a congregation may respond to a plague or public crisis in an increasingly hostile State and culture; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod will support to the best of its abilities the conscientious acts of its members; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations address the relationship among Church, State, and Christian love of neighbor, especially in light of an increasing hostility toward the Christian faith; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod continue boldly to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and provide spiritual care for their members and communities; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod confess to the world that only the Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ can provide final victory over sin, sickness, and death.

Action: Adopted (7)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.

To Oppose Mandatory Registration of Women into the Draft

RESOLUTION 11-06A

Overtures 11-29–30 (CW, 423–24)

WHEREAS, God has created both male and female in His image, yet made them individually to be complementary but not identical to one another (Gen. 2); and

WHEREAS, The Word of God teaches that headship belongs to man (1 Cor. 11:1–16); and

WHEREAS, God specifically commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and laid down His life for her (Ephesians 5); and

WHEREAS, Both natural law and the vast majority of human history testify that men, not women, are required at times to enter combat and risk their lives in defense of their wives, daughters, family, and country; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention in 2016 adopted Resolution 5-11A, “To Protect Christian Consciences and Address Conscription of Women,” which “strongly oppose[d] any legal action that forces the compulsory service of women in the military, also called the conscription of women, by mandatory participation in Selective Service registration, a draft, or by any other mechanism” (2016 *Proceedings*, 160); and

WHEREAS, We recognize, honor, and appreciate the talents and voluntary service of women who may choose to enlist in the military; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2015 the United States Secretary of Defense lifted the ban on women serving in frontline combat; and

WHEREAS, Legislation such as United States Senate Bill 4543 has included language that would require women at the age of 18 to register for the military draft (James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Section 521 (d): Modernization of the Selective Service System, Expanded Registration to All Americans, S.B. 4543, 117th Congress [2022]); and

WHEREAS, Such entrance into the draft may mean that our wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters would be forced to fight in frontline combat; and

WHEREAS, Christian consciences are rightly burdened by the requirement that women risk their lives in carrying out duties of war; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reassert and maintain its opposition to the compulsory service of women in the military, by the draft or any other means; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the President of the Synod to communicate to the United States Congress, the United States Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States our objection on religious grounds to the involuntary service of women in the military; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod continue to support the right of conscientious objection on religious grounds on the part of individual women, in the event of a national military draft which would include women.

Action: Adopted (7)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice and hand vote.



12. SCHOOLS, FAMILY, YOUNG ADULTS, AND YOUTH

To Produce Uniform Set of Lutheran Academic Standards for Our Schools

RESOLUTION 12-01A

Overtures 12-01–04 (CW, 425–27)

WHEREAS, Education in all subject areas is first and foremost about what is taught, namely that which is good, true, and beautiful; and

WHEREAS, Secular education in all subject areas is increasingly subject to forces contrary to God and His Word, for example, Darwinism; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures provide the norm and framework for knowledge in all subject areas; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has the second largest system of parochial schools in America, but does not have a uniform set of Lutheran academic standards; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran schools, homeschools, and other Christian schools would benefit greatly from having a uniform set of Lutheran academic standards; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct LCMS School Ministry to coordinate the systematic preparation and production of biblically faithful Lutheran academic standards across all subject areas for our schools; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS School Ministry engage the expertise of LCMS university and seminary faculties, LCMS early childhood, day school, high school, and homeschool teachers, district education executives, and other LCMS laity for the development of these Lutheran academic standards; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS School Ministry consult with Concordia Publishing House to publish these Lutheran academic standards; and be it finally

Resolved, That the first drafts of the Lutheran academic standards be made available one year prior to the 2026 Synod convention.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Confess Authority God Gave to Fathers and Mothers

RESOLUTION 12-02A

Overtures 12-12–13 (CW, 431–33)

Preamble

Governmental, legal, and related institutional overreach has created severe challenges to divinely instituted parental authority. The following illustrations, sometimes more narrowly and sometimes more broadly, encroach upon God's command to fathers and mothers:

- Children, without parental consent, are being permitted, encouraged, or otherwise coerced by some governments or governmental institutions to receive medical care or procedures (e.g., inoculations, COVID-19 injections, HPV vaccines, hormonal contraceptives, abortion, “gender-reassignment” treatments), even when their parents object. As an example, S.B. 5599, recently signed into law in Washington state, allows minors seeking abortion or “gender-reassignment treatments” to remain in licensed youth shelters without parental notification.
- Children in an increasing number of some government-sponsored schools are subject to evil indoctrination in divinely instituted marital issues of sexual morality and sexual identity (“sex education”; LGBTQ+ desensitization, tolerance, and promotion; transgender



Committee 12 Chairman Benjamin T. Ball

12. SCHOOLS, FAMILY, YOUNG ADULTS, AND YOUTH

training and promotion; etc.), contrary to their parents' beliefs and intentions for their children.

- Children in some government-sponsored schools are being permitted, encouraged, or otherwise coerced into adopting unwanted or evil social practices, contrary to the will and authority of parents.
- Children are increasingly indoctrinated in anti-Christian history and science contrary to the traditional norms of rigorous historical and scientific investigation, and contrary to the will and authority of their parents.
- Children in some government-sponsored schools are being subjected to the deconstruction of divinely mandated and given institutions (marriage and family, the Christian Church, government with its natural powers and limitations, natural and revealed law and justice, etc.) by the assumption of an anti-Christian worldview, by the corruption of sound and truthful language, and by the conspicuous absence of sound teaching in these matters, contrary to Scripture and the authority of parents regarding their children's education.

WHEREAS, It is increasingly clear that educational authorities behave in ways which lead children to question the authority and competence of their parents and to reject other authority figures including grandparents and religious leaders in their life; and

WHEREAS, In the Fourth Commandment, "You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long upon the earth" (Large Catechism [LC] I [Fourth Commandment] 104, 371), God established marriage and provides moral and legal authority to husband and wife regarding their children; and

WHEREAS, We confess in the Large Catechism that "all who are called masters stand in the place of parents and must get their power and authority to govern from them ..." (LC I [Fourth Commandment] 142 [Kolb & Wengert], 406); and

WHEREAS, In the Sixth Commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," God defends the institution of marriage and provides moral and legal protection to the lifelong integrity and well-being of marriage, thereby also protecting children born to marriage; and

WHEREAS, We affirm and confess these truths in Large Catechism I (Sixth Commandment) 206–8:

First, understand and mark well how gloriously God honors and praises this estate [marriage]. For by His commandment He both approves and guards it. He has approved it above in the Fourth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." But here He has (as we said) hedged it about and protected it. Therefore, He also wishes us to honor it and to maintain and govern it as a divine and blessed estate because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others. He created man and woman separately [differently], as is clear. This was not for lewdness, but so that

they might live together in marriage, be fruitful, bear children, and nourish and train them to honor God.

Therefore, God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others. In addition, He has bestowed on it and wrapped up in it everything in the world, so that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life, therefore, is no joke or presumption. It is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness. For marriage has the highest importance to God so that people are raised up who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of God, godly living, and all virtues, to fight against wickedness and the devil (*Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*, 382);

and

WHEREAS, God has given the direct and full authority for the education of children to their parents, with the command to fathers to bring up their own children "in the education and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). In accordance with the truth that Christian doctrine and faith encompasses the whole person (body and soul), this scripture teaches that God has invested parents with His authority and command to educate their own children, including their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical care and training; and

WHEREAS, Accordingly, fathers and mothers are to give and see to the education of their children in Christian doctrine and holy living. They are to be their teachers in all matters of marriage and marital intimacy. They are to provide all care and support of their children's bodies, including such matters as food, clothing, health, etiquette, exercise, grooming, and the like. They are to educate their children for service in their own marriage, family, and workplace; in their church; and in their neighborhood or civil community. They may designate some other persons to assist them and act in their stead in all these matters (*in loco parentis*) without relinquishing this divine authority (cf. LC I [Fourth Commandment] 141); and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit teaches Christians in 1 Timothy 5:8 that "... if anyone does not provide for his own people and especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Here God authorizes and obligates the members of a household (family) to make provision for the care of its own members; therefore be it

Resolved, That we confess that fathers and mothers are not mere caregivers to their children. Rather, God has appointed them to feed, clothe, house, educate, give medical care, and above all, provide the spiritual service to their children's body and soul, mind and spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm and defend the rights and duties of fathers and mothers toward their children as divinely commanded and given (Titus 2:1–8), and therefore not severable except in the case of the abdication of their office; and be it further

Resolved, That we reject every assertion and practice of civil government—federal, state, and local—that assumes or

implies right or authority over children as children, that is, as though children were wards of government. Rejected here are assertions of governmental authority which are expressly contrary to the Word of God in the realms of education, medical care, physical care, the doctrinal and spiritual training of children, and the so-called sexual or gender identity of children; and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm the divine duty of the church to teach, encourage, strengthen, and assist fathers and mothers in doing their divinely appointed duties toward their children. We likewise recognize that no church or Christian school has rights or authority over children except what is granted by baptism, membership in that church, or enrollment in said school; and be it further

Resolved, That we confess and teach that fathers and mothers are obligated by God to bring their children to the Church for Baptism and the divine services of the church. They are to teach their children God's Word in their home, lead them in prayer, and teach and discipline them in Christian piety and virtue, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures; and be it finally

Resolved, That we teach and maintain the discipline that a man and woman are to marry each other before sexual intimacy and the conceiving of children, and that they are to remain married and faithful to each other till death parts them, in accordance with God's holy will. Parents are, by God's grace, to live in daily contrition, repentance, and the forgiveness of sins, always teaching and holding before their children the divine institution and pattern of marriage and household as God gave it.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, and with a subsequent attempt to refer ruled out of order, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Address Commissioned Minister—Teacher Student Debt

RESOLUTION 12-03A

Overtures 12-06–10 (CW, 428–31)

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran schools struggle to find rostered teachers to serve in the classrooms of our early childhood centers, day schools, and high schools, as in the 2019 Resolution 12-02A, "To Exhort the Congregations of the LCMS to Actively Encourage Future Lutheran School Teachers";

WHEREAS, The number of new commissioned teachers has steadily declined since 2005 (Concordia University System [CUS] Board for University Education [BUE] statistics); and

WHEREAS, The fulfillment rate of requests for first-year Synod-trained candidates to LCMS calling entities has declined from 63 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2018 because of the lack of available

Synod-trained candidates (CUS BUE statistics); and

WHEREAS, The CUS only graduated 23 early childhood educators, 39 elementary educators, and 32 secondary educators in 2018 (CUS BUE statistics) (2019 *Proceedings*, 222);

and

WHEREAS, The fulfillment rate of requests for first-year Synod-trained candidates to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) calling entities has declined from 30 percent in 2018 to 25 percent in 2022, and the CUS only graduated 17 early childhood educators, 33 elementary educators, and 26 secondary educators in 2023 (CUS BUE statistics); and

WHEREAS, Research has shown that a primary reason for this is the lower salary offered for teachers within the Lutheran school systems, as in Theme 8 of the "LCMS Church Worker Wellness Insights" presentation by Rev. Robert Zagore, former Executive Director, Office of National Mission, to *Gospel 2019*:

- financial wellbeing is unique among worker needs in that the major problems are beyond the worker's ability to change—most often the problem is that the workers are in a mathematically impossible situation;
- workers are under-paid for their skill level and workload;
- costs for health care are being pushed to the workers;
- young workers are burdened with significant student debt; and
- many calling bodies are unable to pay their workers what is necessary;

WHEREAS, Concordia Plan Services (CPS) reported in 2021 that 27 percent of LCMS church workers have student debt that averages \$46,000 per student; and

WHEREAS, The reality of student loan debt is an important part of the decision to seek employment outside the Lutheran school; and

WHEREAS, The church has previously recognized the need for church worker student debt retirement by identifying and creating:

- MinistryFocus, a recognized service organization, in partnership with CPS which has, since 2015 given 258 debt retirement grants in the amount of \$645,000.
- The Fidelity Student Debt Solutions loan repayment plan available to CPS 403(b) participants.
- BeFine App, available to all CPS retirement participants to assist in the development of a plan to pay off debt, including access to 1-on-1 coaching webinars.
- Lutheran Church Extension Fund and Lutheran Federal Credit Union offer debt consolidation services to LCMS rostered workers.

Therefore be it

12. SCHOOLS, FAMILY, YOUNG ADULTS, AND YOUTH

Resolved, That congregations and schools be encouraged to regularly conduct salary and benefit reviews using the CPS salary tool and/or district salary guidelines toward the creation of a plan to increase, over time, salaries and benefits; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and schools be encouraged to assist teachers with student debt repayment as a regular employee benefit; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations prayerfully consider contributing to church work student scholarship funds at their respective districts and our Concordia Universities with the goal of reducing tuition costs and student debt; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and schools be encouraged to promote the various resources already available such as MinistryFocus and other debt retirement options to assist with student indebtedness; and be it finally

Resolved, That all Synod congregations be encouraged to contribute towards an annual special designated offering in support of commissioned minister—teacher debt reduction to be taken during National Lutheran Schools Week administered by MinistryFocus in consultation with LCMS Mission Advancement and LCMS Communications, until the next convention.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Commend and Give Thanks for Lutheran Schools

RESOLUTION 12-04A

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 14)

WHEREAS, The Triune God commands that children be taught His Word by their parents and by the Church, (Deut. 4:9–10; 6:5–9; Psalm 78; Matt. 19:13–15; 28:16–20; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 4:10–11); and

WHEREAS, Congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have established early childhood centers, day schools, and high schools to teach the Word of God, and to assist fathers and mothers in their calling to instruct their children in the same Word and all godly knowledge; and

WHEREAS, During the 2022–23 school year 1,677 early childhood centers, 816 day schools, and 103 high schools were operated by the congregations and recognized service organizations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, In the 2022–23 academic year these early childhood centers, day schools, and high schools, through their over 21,000 staff members, taught the Word of God to over 180,000 students; and

WHEREAS, In the 2022–23 academic year 1,794 students were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, The last several years have seen substantial growth in various models of Lutheran schools, including classical Lutheran schools, micro-schools, homeschools, and other emerging school models; and

WHEREAS, LCMS School Ministry has established the Genesis Project, which assists congregations in determining the feasibility of a new school plant; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend all early childhood teachers, day school teachers, high school teachers, administrators, and all those who serve in our Lutheran schools, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and give thanks to God for their faithful service; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations of the LCMS be encouraged in their continued operation and support of our Lutheran schools; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations, circuits, and districts, be encouraged to consult with LCMS School Ministry to explore expansion, new school plants, and other opportunities for various Lutheran school models in their respective communities; and be it further

Resolved, That all parents who are members of LCMS congregations be encouraged, where available, to enroll their children in our Lutheran schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors and congregations of our Synod view their schools as the front line of the mission field; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the growth of Lutheran schools, including classical Lutheran schools, micro-schools, homeschools, and all other emerging school models that provide instruction in Lutheran doctrine and godly knowledge; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for His blessing and work in the schools of our Synod by rising and singing “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” (*Lutheran Service Book*, 865).

1. Lord, help us ever to retain
The Catechism’s doctrine plain
As Luther taught the Word of truth
In simple style to tender youth.
2. Help us Your holy Law to learn,
To mourn our sin and from it turn
In faith to You and to Your Son
And Holy Spirit, Three in One.
3. Hear us, dear Father, when we pray
For needed help from day to day
That as Your children we may live,
Whom You baptized and so received.
4. Lord, when we fall or go astray,
Absolve and lift us up, we pray;

And through the Sacrament increase
Our faith till we depart in peace.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Encourage Family Devotions, Lutheran Fathers, and Young Men

RESOLUTION 12-05A

President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:26)

WHEREAS, The Triune God commands that children be taught His Word by their parents and by the Church (Deut. 4:9–10; Deut. 6:5–9; Psalm 78; Matt. 19:13–15; 28:16–20; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 4:10–11); and

WHEREAS, *The Treasury of Daily Prayer* teaches that “the rhythm of daily prayer is really catechesis in the Word of God” (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008, 15); and

WHEREAS, The Word of God commands that fathers bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), that children are to hear their father's instructions and be attentive (Prov. 1:8; 4:1; 6:20), and that we are to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17); and

WHEREAS, Parents and children live daily in the forgiveness and motivation of God's grace; and

WHEREAS, Luther's Small Catechism directs the head of the family to teach his household in a simple way, recognizing that some mothers serve as head of the household due to the absence of a father or the abdication of his responsibility; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourages a robust devotional life for the members of its congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and congregations be encouraged to intentionally provide instruction to boys and young men that they might be raised as godly men and heads of households according to the Word of God; and be it finally

Resolved, That fathers be encouraged in their duty to teach their family the Christian faith through daily devotions with their wives and children.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.

To Encourage Use of Current Research and Resources for Ministry to Youth

RESOLUTION 12-06

President's Report, Part 2 (TB, 1:26)

WHEREAS, The LCMS Youth Ministry and LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services conducted an in-depth and extensive study on youth and young adults in our Synod (“Retention of Lutheran Millennials: 2017 LCMS Study of Young Adults,” www.youthsource.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Full-Slide-Deck-Report_2.pdf); and

WHEREAS, This research found that only one-third of confirmands were retained in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) through young adulthood; and

WHEREAS, This research found that congregations with a lay leader (i.e., volunteer Sunday school teacher, board member, etc.) under the age of 30 had an increased retention rate amongst youth and young adults; and

WHEREAS, This research found that one of the largest effects on retention of young adults shows up in the question of whether they felt there was a “safe person” to talk to at church; and

WHEREAS, This research also found a strong correlation between the feelings young adults had of being cared for personally and their long term retention; and

WHEREAS, On the basis of this research, LCMS Youth Ministry produced the book *Relationships Count: Engaging & Retaining Millennials*; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Youth Ministry is continuing to research trends amongst our youth; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS be encouraged to actively seek and promote high school youth and young adults to be involved in the lay leadership of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors, youth leaders, and others in congregational leadership be encouraged to develop and maintain authentic relationships with high school youth and young adults; and be it further

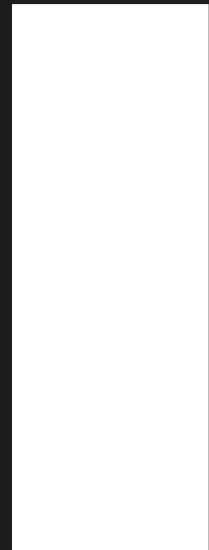
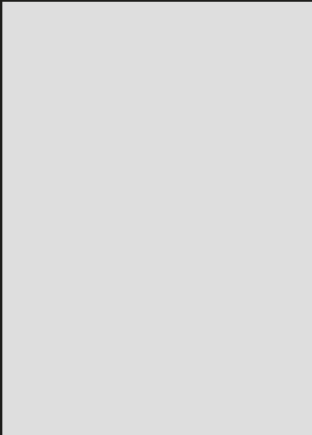
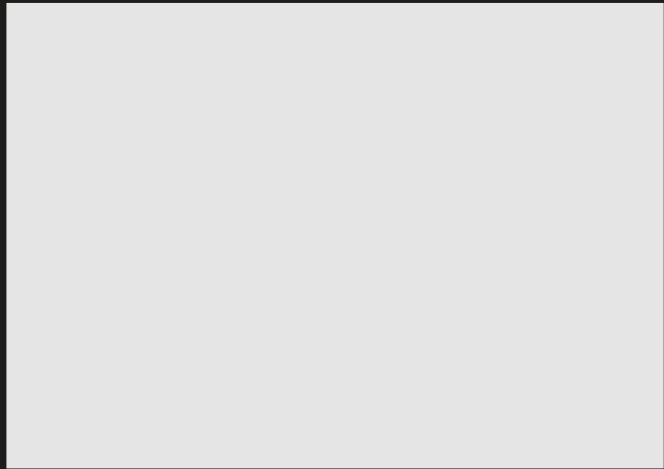
Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to LCMS Youth Ministry and LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services for their efforts in collecting this impactful data; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations in the Synod be encouraged to read, study, and implement suggestions from the book *Relationships Count: Engaging & Retaining Millennials*; and be it finally

Resolved, That all congregations be encouraged to make use of the latest research findings and resources at youthsource.com.

Action: Adopted (5)

Upon immediate closure of debate, as suggested by the chair, the resolution was adopted by voice vote.



DELEGATE RESOLUTIONS

To Call for Repentance and Forgiveness by All Parties to the Concordia Texas Conflict

DELEGATE RESOLUTION

Resolution 7-03 (TB, 1:139–41)

WHEREAS, 2023 Resolution 7-03 has been adopted, wherein the Concordia University Texas (CTX) president, administrators, and CTX Board of Directors were urged to repent of their actions in the recent conflict about CTX's purported attempt to depart from Synod governance; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Texas District, who is the direct ecclesiastical supervisor of called workers at CTX, on July 26, 2023, published his *Preliminary Observations and Recommendations* (Texas District, txlcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Observations-and-RecommendationsCTXPrelimReport-1.pdf, Jul. 26, 2023), which contains important, impartial information about this conflict, not previously brought to the attention of convention delegates, including the fact that miscommunication and misunderstandings may have contributed to the conflict and necessitate all parties to consider repentance and forgiveness of one another; and

WHEREAS, Such open conflict negatively impacts not only the immediate parties involved, but the entire Synod, as well as our public witness (1 Cor. 12:26); and

WHEREAS, Scripture clearly teaches that those mediating conflict must not consider only one point of view (Prov. 18:17; Deut. 19:15); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that if we perceive that our brother has something against us, we must address that regardless of whether or not we believe him to be correct (Matt. 5:21–24), and that we must remove the plank from our own eye before we can address the speck in our brother's eye (Matt. 7:3–5); and

WHEREAS, God's Word commands us in conflict or disagreement we must look not only to our own interests, but also the interests of others (Phil. 2:4; 1 Cor. 6:7–8) with a ready spirit willing to listen to others' perspectives (James 1:19–20); and an offended brother may be unyielding (Prov. 18:19); and

WHEREAS, Because of our fallen, sinful nature, it is impossible for any of us to fully recognize all of our many sins (Psalm 19:12; Luke 23:34); and

WHEREAS, God's Word urges us to confess our sins to one another (i.e., mutual confession) in order to be healed (James 5:16); and

WHEREAS, The repentance of even one sinner is a source of immeasurable joy to Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins (Luke 15:7, 10); therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod in convention ask all parties to the conflict, including the Synod President and the members of the Synod Board of Directors, the Concordia University System Board of Directors, and any other Synodical entities directly involved in the matter, to humbly pray with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23–24); and be it further

Resolved, That Synod in convention stand and pray for repentance and forgiveness by all parties to the conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That all parties to the CTX conflict be urged to confess privately to one another any sins they discover in themselves upon such heartfelt self-examination; and be it further

Resolved, That all parties to the CTX conflict be urged to extend public forgiveness and absolution to one another in a demonstration of the grace that God has given to us in Christ Jesus, as the apostle Paul instructs, "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32); and be it finally

Resolved, That any genuine Christian repentance and forgiveness receive public notice in appropriate Synod publications (e.g., *Reporter*, *The Lutheran Witness*, www.lcms.org), in order that the wider Church may be called upon to give thanks and celebrate this reconciliation.

Chris Matthis

Pastoral Delegate, Rocky Mountain District

Action: Declined (9)

The President briefly addressed the convention. Closure of debate, called for by the chair, was carried. The resolution failed of adoption [Yes: 393; No: 460].

To Establish a Standing, Synodwide Process for Ongoing Exchange and Conflict Resolution

DELEGATE RESOLUTION

Resolution 4-01 (TB, 1:101)

WHEREAS, God calls us to harmony in a "common mind" in faith and practice (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2; Rom. 12:16, 15:5); and

WHEREAS, Establishing such a common mind requires fallen human beings to always work toward consensus through exchange of testimony to the Word of God and clear reasoning by consciences held captive to it; and

DELEGATE RESOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, In our life as Synod, a fully functional, transparent, synodwide conversation on each key issue of life or doctrine is required to actually foster this common mind and consensus, especially where there is controversy; and

WHEREAS, Every year that passes without such a standing conversation simply means more time in which new issues, conflicts, and grievances emerge and fester; and

WHEREAS, Full guidance into all the truth through the work of the Spirit in the Body of Christ (John 16:3), as well as unity with each other leading into and out of our conventions, would be greatly benefited by such a process; and

WHEREAS, Such a standing conversation should bring together circuits, districts, seminaries, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), the Praesidium, and the Council of Presidents (COP), and also connect as far as possible with all pastors, commissioned workers, and laity; and

WHEREAS, The *Koinonia* Project already contains the seeds of such a standing network, namely, 1) several smaller groups who already have met voluntarily—including the COP, who are the key bridge from circuits to district and districts to Synod; and 2) the recognition that technology could be used to further connect these and other essential in-person gatherings, both to each other and to the wider Synod; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries, CTCR, and Praesidium likewise already play critical roles in shaping our common mind and synodwide connections; and

WHEREAS, The Chief Financial Officer of Synod reported that the identical process originally discussed in an amendment to Resolution 4-01 on Sunday, July 30, 2023, would have no additional financial cost if referred to the bodies named above for implementation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention request that the COP, CTCR, seminaries, and Praesidium grow their existing connections into such a standing process as soon as humanly possible.

Adam Clark
Pastoral Delegate, Indiana District

Action: Declined (9)

The resolution was moved and seconded with “direct” in the final resolve replaced with “request that.” After some discussion, closure of debate was carried and the resolution failed of adoption [Yes: 180; No: 520].

OMNIBUS RESOLUTIONS

Responsibility Assigned to Others

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION A

WHEREAS, Certain overtures submitted to the convention for consideration request action for which the responsibility has been previously delegated to a board, office, individual, or commission; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be referred to the appropriate board, office, individual, or commission indicated below:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 1-05	To Include Prison Ministry as Mission Program and Objective of the Synod	Office of National Mission (Specialized Pastoral Ministry)
Ov. 3-02	To Offer Clearer Information for Couples Using the Pill for Birth Control as to When and How Often It Acts as an Abortifacient	Office of National Mission (Life Ministry)
Ov. 4-02	To Provide Triennial Synod Emphases	Board for National Mission, Board for International Mission
Ov. 4-03	To Prioritize “Living as the Baptized” as a Mission and Ministry Focus for the 2022–2025 Triennium	Board for National Mission, Board for International Mission
Ov. 4-04	To Suggest Mission and Ministry Emphases for the Synod	Board for National Mission, Board for International Mission
Ov. 4-09	To Rejoice in Proclamation of God’s Word by His Called and Ordained Servants	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 4-16	To Prohibit District Conventions and Pastors Conferences during Lent and Advent	Council of Presidents
Ov. 5-07	To Study Triangular Fellowship	Office of the President
Ov. 5-21	To Rescind 2019 Resolution 5-09A	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-22	To Clearly Declare the Work of Our Creator	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-23	To Affirm and Bind Ourselves to Biblical Doctrine of Young Age of Earth	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-24	To Affirm and Bind Ourselves to Biblical Doctrine of Young Age of Earth	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-25	To Affirm and Bind Ourselves to Biblical Doctrine of Young Age of Earth	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-26	To Affirm Young Earth as Biblical Doctrine	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-27	To Confirm Synodical Position Concerning Special Creation, Young Earth, and Global Flood	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-34	To Instruct CPH to Have <i>Portals of Prayer</i> and Other Devotionals Written by Men	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-45	To Reconsider Allowing “Brain Death” Criteria for Determination of Death at End of Life	Office of National Mission (Life Ministry)
Ov. 5-46	To Commission Biblical Study of Lending within the Church	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-47	To Recognize the Organization 1517 as Heterodox Tract and Mission Society	Council of Presidents

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 5-48	Distinguish Terms for Pastoral Office from Those for Auxiliary or Helping Offices	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-49	To Affirm the Use of “Deliver Us from the <i>Evil One</i> ”	Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Office of National Mission
Ov. 5-50	To Affirm Inspiration and Authority of Mark 16:9–20	Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Concordia Publishing House
Ov. 6-09	To Encourage and Expand Support for Immigrant and Non-Anglo Pastoral Formation through Learning in Ministry, Non-Residential, Distance Programs That Lead to Ordination	Seminaries
Ov. 6-10	To Encourage and Support Existing Learning-In-Ministry, Non-Residential, Distance Programs Leading to Ordination	Seminaries
Ov. 6-22	To Increase Number of Students Preparing for General Ordination by Expanding Work of Cross-Cultural Ministry Center	Pastoral Formation Committee
Ov. 6-23	To Increase Number of Students Preparing for General Ordination through Distance Learning Opportunities and by Expanding Work of Cross-Cultural Ministry Center	Pastoral Formation Committee
Ov. 6-29	To Work to Resolve Issue of Qualified Ordained Candidates Remaining Without Calls	Council of Presidents
Ov. 6-34	To Prevent Admission, Reinstatement, or Colloquization of a Divorced Man into the Office of the Public Ministry Who Has Married Another Woman	Seminaries, Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, Council of Presidents
Ov. 6-35	To Define “Domineering in Office”	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 6-36	To Require Knowledge of Scripture and Confessions from Candidates for Ordained Ministry	Seminaries, Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry
Ov. 6-41	To Encourage the Synod’s Seminaries to Teach the <i>Handbook</i>	Seminaries, Council of Presidents
Ov. 6-42	To Provide for Prior Approval for Seminary Adjunct Faculty	Pastoral Formation Committee
Ov. 6-44	To Encourage Both Synod Seminaries to Continue Teaching Men for Faithful Service and to Petition the Synod to Dramatically Increase Funds Sent to Undesignated Seminary Operations	Synod Board of Directors
Ov. L6-47	To Amend Bylaw 3.10.2.2 to Provide for Temporary Service of Men Undergoing Colloquy	Pastoral Formation Committee
Ov. 7-18	To Protect People’s Offerings Given to Concordia University Schools	Concordia University System
Ov. 7-19*	To Encourage and Provide Support for Currently Non-Rostered Lutheran School Educators to Receive Colloquy	Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry
Ov. 7-22	To Encourage Training for Volunteers Stepping into Roles of Youth Education and Faith Formation	Concordia University System
Ov. 7-23*	To Request Comprehensive Review of Commissioned Ministry Colloquy Process	Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry
* Ov. 7-19 and 7-23 were transferred to Floor Committee 12, which placed them in Omnibus A		
Ov. 8-03	To Establish a Commission to Study the Possibility of Utilizing a Health Sharing Community Group	Concordia Plan Services, Synod Board of Directors

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 8-04	To Audit Concordia Plan Services Retirement Funding	Synod Board of Directors, Concordia Plan Services
Ov. 9-27	To Restrict Synod Convention on Sundays	Synod Board of Directors
Ov. 9-28	To Establish Procedures for Delay of Meetings of Synod	Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook
Ov. 9-29	To Provide for Elections if Conventions Cannot Be Held	Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook
Ov. 9-30	To Have Next Available Convention of the Synod in Detroit	Synod Board of Directors
Ov. 9-33	To Provide Additional Information about Nominees for Elected Positions of the Synod and Districts	Secretary of the Synod
Ov. L9-51	To Examine Bylaws and Offer Recommendations concerning Doctrinal Review of Historical Documents	Office of the President
Ov. 10-07	To Establish Common Procedures for Sake of Unity and Avoiding Unnecessary Offense	Council of Presidents
Ov. 11-28	To Offer Special Thanks to Our Supreme Court Justices	Office of the President
Ov. 11-31	To Address Violence	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 12-11	To Ensure Fidelity and High Quality in Lutheran Education	Concordia University System Advisory Council, LCMS School Ministry

Action: Adopted as amended (1)

In Session 1, Omnibus A was introduced as printed in TB 2B:295–97. It was moved, seconded, and carried to remove Ov. 2-05, “To Thank God for the Synod’s International Schools and Pray for God’s Guidance in Furthering Their Role in the Church’s Mission,” from the omnibus and to return it to the floor committee for a separate report. Motions to remove Overtures 4-02–04, 5-34, and 5-47 failed. Omnibus A as amended was adopted by voice vote.

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. L4-19	To Give Priority to Kingdom Work over Institutional Preservation	Constitution Article III: Objectives
Ov. 5-39	To Reconsider Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov. 5-40	To Reconsider Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17
Ov. 5-41	To Reconsider Woman Suffrage in the Church	1995 Res. 3-05; 1986 Res. 3-09; 1969 Res. 2-17

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Previous Action</u>
Ov. 7-17	To Memorialize Commission on Handbook to Revise Number of Voters for Election of Presidents of Concordia University System Schools	2019 Res. 7-04 relocated the work of the prior approval panel to prior to the vote of the board of regents.
Ov. 9-04	To Reaffirm “Bottom-Up Nature of Synod”	Constitution Articles III and IV

Action: Adopted (1)

In Session 1, Omnibus B was introduced as printed in TB 2B:297–98. Motions to remove Overtures L4-19 and 5-40 failed. Omnibus B was adopted by voice vote.

Expressions of Encouragement and Gratitude

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION C

WHEREAS, Many requests for recognition of noteworthy labors of love are brought to the Synod’s attention at every convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be received as expressions of encouragement or gratitude:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Encouragement / Thanks</u>
Ov. 6-46	To Thank the Lord of the Church for the Life and Ministry of Rev. Dr. Laokouxang (Kou) Seying	Thanksgiving to God for the devoted life and ministry of our esteemed brother, Rev. Dr. Seying

Action: Adopted as amended (1)

In Session 1, Omnibus C was introduced as printed in TB 1:82. It was moved, seconded, and carried to remove Ov. 6-45, “To Declare/Encourage Recognition of the Pastor’s Wife and Honor Her in 2025,” from the omnibus and to return it to the floor committee for a separate report. Omnibus as amended was adopted by a voice and hand vote.

RESOLUTION ACTION REPORT

Floor Committee (continues on next page)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
01	A/Ad. Am. (3)	Adopted (6)	Ad. Am. (2)	A/Ad. Am. (9)	Adopted (2)	Adopted (6)
02	A/Adopted (3)	A/Adopted (6)	A/Adopted (6)	Adopted (9)	Adopted (2)	A/Adopted (6)
03	A/Adopted (3)	Adopted (6)	A/Ad. Am. (6)	Adopted (9)	Adopted (2)	A/Adopted (8)
04	A/Ad. Am. (3)	A/Adopted (6)	A/Adopted (6)	Adopted (9)	Adopted (2)	Adopted (9)
05	A/Ad. Am. (3)	Adopted (6)	Adopted (9)		A/Adopted (2)	Adopted (9)
06	A/Adopted (3)	A/Adopted (6)		Adopted (9)	Adopted (4)	A/Adopted (9)
07	Adopted as read (3)	A/Adopted (6)		Ad. Am. (9)	Ad. Am. (4)	A/Adopted (9)
08	A/Adopted (3)				A/Adopted (5)	
09					Adopted (8)	Adopted (9)
10					Adopted (8)	
11					Adopted (8)	
12					Adopted (8)	
13					A/Adopted (8)	
14					Withdrawn (8)	
15					Adopted (8)	
16					Only overture moved to Omni A	
17						
18						
19						
20						

Key

Adopted / Ad.: Adopted Declined / Dc.: Declined Pending / Pd.: Pending before assembly Referred / Rf. to cmte.
Ad. Am.: Adopted as amended (#): Action in session # A/, B/, C/, etc.: Action on published revised resolution

Example: In column 1, row 04: A/Ad. Am. (3): Res. 1-04A was adopted as amended in session 3.

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

Floor Committee (continued from previous page)

	7	8	9	10	11	12
01	A/Adopted (4)	Adopted (4)	Adopted (3)	Adopted (4)	A/Adopted (7)	A/Adopted (5)
02	A/Adopted (4)		Adopted (3)	Adopted (4)	A/Ad. Am. (7)	A/Adopted (5)
03	Adopted (5)		Adopted (3)	A/Adopted (4)	A/Adopted (7)	A/Adopted (5)
04	B/Adopted (7)		Adopted (3)	A/Adopted (4)	Adopted (7)	A/Adopted (5)
05	A/Adopted (7)		A/Adopted (3)	A/Adopted (4)	Adopted (7)	A/Adopted (5)
06	B/Adopted (7)		A/Adopted (4)	Adopted (8)	A/Adopted (7)	Adopted (5)
07			Adopted (4)			
08			A/Adopted (4)			
09			A/Declined (9)			
10			A/Adopted (9)			
11						
12			Adopted (9)			
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18					Omnibus Resolution A	A/Ad. Am. (1)
19					Omnibus Resolution B	A/Adopted (1)
20					Omnibus Resolution C	Ad. Am. (1)

Key Adopted / Ad.: Adopted Declined / Dc.: Declined Pending / Pd.: Pending before assembly Referred / Rf. to cmte.
Ad. Am.: Adopted as amended (#): Action in session # A/, B/, C/, etc.: Action on published revised resolution

Example: In column 1, row 04: A/Ad. Am. (3): Res. 1-04A was adopted as amended in session 3.

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

CORRELATION OF REPORTS, OVERTURES, AND RESOLUTIONS

† = indicated resolution was not introduced or died without action during the convention (see *Today's Business*)

Report	Resolution(s)		
R1	Res. 1-07: Adopted as read (3) Res. 2-04A: Adopted (6) Res. 2-08† Res. 5-10: Adopted (8) Res. 7-03: Adopted (5)	Ov. 2-02	Res. 2-01: Adopted (6)
		Ov. 2-03	Res. 2-03: Adopted (6)
		Ov. 2-04	Res. 2-05: Adopted (6)
		Ov. 2-05	Res. 2-08†
		Ov. 3-01	Res. 3-01: Adopted as amended (2)
R1.2.1	Res. 1-01A: Adopted as amended (3) Res. 1-02A: Adopted (3) Res. 1-05A: Adopted as amended (3) Res. 1-06A: Adopted (3) Res. 1-07: Adopted as read (3) Res. 3-04A: Adopted (6) Res. 3-05: Adopted (9) Res. 12-04A: Adopted (5)	Ov. 3-02	Omnibus A
		Ov. 3-03	Res. 3-02A: Adopted (6)
		Ov. 3-04	Res. 3-01: Adopted as amended (2)
		Ov. 3-05	Res. 3-03A: Adopted as amended (6)
		Ov. 3-06–07	Res. 3-05: Adopted (9)
		Ov. 4-01	Res. 4-02: Adopted (9)
R6	Res. 1-06A: Adopted (3) Res. 1-07: Adopted as read (3)	Ov. 4-02	Omnibus A
		Ov. 4-03	Omnibus A
R7	Res. 2-08†	Ov. 4-04	Omnibus A
R12	Res. 5-01: Adopted (2) Res. 5-02: Adopted (2) Res. 5-03: Adopted (2) Res. 5-04: Adopted (2)	Ov. 4-05	Res. 4-03: Adopted (9)
		Ov. 4-06–08	Res. 4-06: Adopted (9)
		Ov. 4-09	Omnibus A
R14	Res. 7-03: Adopted (5)	Ov. 4-10	Res. 4-10† (decline)
R13.1–2	Res. 2-04A: Adopted (6)	Ov. 4-11	Res. 4-04: Adopted (9)
R60	Res. 6-02A: Adopted (6)	Ov. 4-12–13	Res. 4-05†
R62	Res. 9-08A: Adopted (4)	Ov. 4-14	Res. 4-01A: Adopted as amended (9)
R64	Res. 7-03: Adopted (5)	Ov. 4-15	Res. 4-09†
R66.4	Res. 11-01A: Adopted (7)	Ov. 4-16	Omnibus A
LR67	Res. 7-03: Adopted (5) Res. 9-01A: Adopted (9)	Ov. 4-17	Res. 4-08†
LR68	Res. 1-02A: Adopted (3)	Ov. 4-18	Res. 4-07: Adopted as amended (9)
LR69	Res. 7-04B: Adopted (7)	Ov. L4-19	Omnibus B
President's Report, Part 2	Res. 1-03A: Adopted (3) Res. 2-04A: Adopted (6) Res. 2-06A: Adopted (6) Res. 2-07A: Adopted (6) Res. 5-12: Adopted (8) Res. 5-15: Adopted (8) Res. 6-02A: Adopted (6) Res. 11-02A: Adopted as amended (7) Res. 12-05A: Adopted (5) Res. 12-06: Adopted (5)	Ov. 5-01	Res. 5-02: Adopted (2)
		Ov. 5-02	Res. 5-01: Adopted (2)
		Ov. 5-03	Res. 5-03: Adopted (2)
		Ov. 5-04	Res. 5-05A: Adopted (2)
		Ov. 5-05–06	Res. 5-07: Adopted as amended (4)
		Ov. 5-07	Omnibus A
		Ov. 5-08	Res. 5-06: Adopted (4)
		Ov. 5-09–10	Res. 5-09: Adopted (8)
		Ov. 5-11–19	Res. 5-08A: Adopted (8)
		Ov. 5-20	Res. 5-08: Adopted (8), Res. 5-13A: Adopted (8)
		Ov. 5-21–27	Omnibus A
Overture	Resolution(s)	Ov. 5-28–29	Res. 5-13A: Adopted (8)
Ov. 1-01–03	Res. 1-02A: Adopted (3)	Ov. 5-30–33	Res. 5-14A†
Ov. 1-04	Res. 1-05A: Adopted as amended (3)	Ov. 5-34	Omnibus A
Ov. 1-05	Omnibus A	Ov. 5-35–38	Res. 5-11: Adopted (8)
Ov. 1-06–07	Res. 1-04A: Adopted as amended (3)	Ov. 5-39–41	Omnibus B
Ov. 1-08	Res. 1-06A: Adopted (3)	Ov. 5-42–44	Res. 11-04: Adopted (7)
Ov. 1-09–13	Res. 1-07: Adopted as read (3)	Ov. 5-45–46	Omnibus A
Ov. 1-14	Res. 1-08A: Adopted (3)	Ov. 5-47	Res. 5-16† (decline), Omnibus A
Ov. 2-01	Res. 2-02A: Adopted (6)	Ov. 5-48–50	Omnibus A

Ov. L5-51	Res. 5-04	Ov. 9-27-30	Omnibus A
Ov. 6-01	Res. 6-01: Adopted (6)	Ov. 9-31-32	Res. 9-13† (decline)
Ov. 6-03-04	Res. 6-02A: Adopted (6), Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. 9-33	Omnibus A
Ov. 6-05-07	Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. 9-34-35	Res. 9-11†
Ov. 6-08	Res. 6-02A: Adopted (6)	Ov. 9-36	Res. 9-11†, Res. 9-12: Adopted (9)
Ov. 6-09	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-37	Res. 9-13† (decline)
Ov. 6-10	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-38	Res. 9-07: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-11-12	Res. 6-02A: Adopted (6)	Ov. 9-39-47	Res. 9-13† (decline)
Ov. 6-13-21	Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. 9-48	Res. 9-04: Adopted (3)
Ov. 6-22	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-49	Res. 9-13† (decline)
Ov. 6-23	Omnibus A	Ov. L9-50	Res. 9-10A: Adopted (9)
Ov. 6-24	Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. L9-51	Omnibus A
Ov. 6-25-26	Res. 6-04: Adopted (9)	Ov. 10-01	Res. 10-01: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-27	Res. 6-04: Adopted (9), Res. 6-05: Adopted (9)	Ov. 10-02	Res. 10-02: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-28	Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. 10-03-04	Res. 10-08† (decline)
Ov. 6-29	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-05	Res. 10-07A†
Ov. 6-30-33	Res. 6-04: Adopted (9)	Ov. 10-06	Res. 10-06: Adopted (8)
Ov. 6-34-36	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-07	Omnibus A
Ov. 6-37	Res. 6-08† (decline)	Ov. 10-08	Res. 10-03A: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-38	Res. 6-06A: Adopted (9)	Ov. 10-09	Res. 10-04A: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-39	Res. 6-07A: Adopted (9)	Ov. 10-10	Res. 10-05A: Adopted (4)
Ov. 6-40	Res. 6-03A: Adopted (8)	Ov. 11-01	Res. 11-01A: Adopted (7)
Ov. 6-41-42	Omnibus A	Ov. 11-02-03	Res. 11-03A: Adopted (7)
Ov. 6-43	Res. 6-08† (decline)	Ov. 11-04-11	Res. 11-02A: Adopted as amended (7)
Ov. 6-44	Omnibus A	Ov. 11-12-16	Res. 11-03A: Adopted (7)
Ov. 6-45	Res. 6-09: Adopted (9)	Ov. 11-17-20	Res. 11-02A: Adopted as amended (7)
Ov. 6-46	Omnibus C	Ov. 11-21-23	Res. 11-03A: Adopted (7)
Ov. L6-47	Omnibus A	Ov. 11-24-26	Res. 11-05: Adopted (7)
Ov. 7-01-09	Res. 7-04B: Adopted (7)	Ov. 11-27	Res. 11-04A: Adopted (4), Res. 11-05: Adopted (7)
Ov. 7-10-15	Res. 7-05A: Adopted (7)	Ov. 11-28	Omnibus A
Ov. 7-16	Res. 7-07† (decline)	Ov. 11-29-30	Res. 11-06A: Adopted (7)
Ov. 7-17	Omnibus B	Ov. 11-31	Omnibus A
Ov. 7-18	Omnibus A, Res. 7-03: Adopted (5)	Ov. 12-01-04	Res. 12-01A: Adopted (5)
Ov. 7-19	Omnibus A	Ov. 12-05	Res. 12-07† (decline)
Ov. 7-20	Res. 7-06B: Adopted (7)	Ov. 12-06-10	Res. 12-03: Adopted (5)
Ov. 7-21	Res. 7-07† (decline)	Ov. 12-11	Omnibus A
Ov. 7-22-23	Omnibus A	Ov. 12-12-13	Res. 12-02: Adopted (5)
Ov. 7-24-26	Res. 7-01A: Adopted (4)		
Ov. L7-27	Res. 7-04B: Adopted (7)		
Ov. 8-01-02	Res. 8-01 (decline)		
Ov. 8-03-04	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-01	Res. 9-01: Adopted (3)		
Ov. 9-02	Res. 9-02: Adopted (3)		
Ov. 9-03	Res. 9-03: Adopted (3)		
Ov. 9-04	Omnibus B		
Ov. 9-05	Res. 9-13† (decline)		
Ov. 9-06-10	Res. 9-09A: Declined (9)		
Ov. 9-11	Res. 9-06A: Adopted (4)		
Ov. 9-18	Res. 9-05A: Adopted (3)		
Ov. 9-20	Res. 9-08A: Adopted (4)		

ENTERED INTO REST

Atlantic District

Dr LuJuana R Butts, 1943–2023
Rev Arthur R Downing, 1942–2020
Rev Robert M Duchow, 1936–2021
Rev William B Eberle, 1935–2022
Rev Thomas Nelson Green, 1931–2019
Rev Kenneth E Hansen, 1936–2022
Rev Herbert M Kern, 1917–2019
Dr Henry L Koepchen, 1931–2021
Rev Dr Dwayne Holger Mau, 1942–2021
Rev Richard J Niebanck, 1931–2021
Rev Wayne F Olson, 1936–2021
Rev Robert H Rose, 1931–2021
Rev Paul David Steinke, 1936–2023
Rev Philip Nai Sui Yang, 1926–2023

California/Nevada/Hawaii District

Rev Gary Alan Bell, 1948–2021
Rev Charles A Brehmer, 1937–2019
Rev Richard P Brewer, 1932–2021
Rev Ronald A Clawson, 1935–2022
Rev Everett L Garwood, 1946–2020
Rev Richard A Grammes, 1933–2019
Rev Milton W Gundermann, 1927–2022
Rev Don O Herman, 1928–2021
Rev Russell H Howen, 1932–2022
Rev Lance R Jennings, 1948–2020
Walter G Knoedler, 1943–2019
Rev James F Kramer,* 1948–2019
Dr Paul E Labrenz, 1936–2022
Rev Henry H S Lai, 1936–2021
Dr Roland R Lassanske,* 1919–2017
Deac Beverly R Lipscomb, 1950–2020
Rev John R Marozik, 1935–2022
Rev James W Mueller, 1943–2019
Rev Theodore Charles Mueller, 1940–2022
Rev Ruclare D Pauling, 1936–2021
Rev Isidro Sandate, 1926–2019
Charles Albert Schliebe (Chuck), 1926–2022
Rev Martin W Steyer, 1927–2020
Rev Dr Richard Bernard Thompson, 1939–2021
Rev David S G Tin, 1931–2020
Rev James W Tyler, 1928–2020
Rev Rexford E Umbenhaur III, 1951–2021
Rev Karl H Wyneken, 1936–2021

Central Illinois District

Dr Rodger P Abatie, 1951–2021
Rev Jerry Don Bagwell, 1952–2023
Rev Richard Benke, 1937–2019
Rev Edwin W Blumenkamp, 1929–2021
Sue Ann Bowden, 1947–2020
Mary J Burch, 1956–2022
Daniel D Cluver, 1947–2021
Ellen Cluver, 1951–2021
Rev Thomas Gordon Cruikshank, 1932–2022
Anne Louise Dart, 1940–2021
Rev Theodore Casper Gall (Ted), 1952–2021
Dr Wayne Paul Hoffman, 1947–2021
Rev Brian Paul Edwin Homann, 1991–2021
Rev Darwood J Kesselmayr, 1927–2021
Allan L Keup, 1943–2021
Katherine Lyn King, 1996–2021
Edward F Krueger, 1924–2020
Rev Bruce A Lakamp, 1942–2021
Rev Marvin L Matzke, 1925–2022
Kent Frederick Rincker, 1953–2019
Rev John D Senter, 1931–2021
Rev K Michael Simminger, 1941–2021

Rev Don Richard Stuckwisch Sr, 1941–2019
Rev Eric L Trickey, 1973–2020
Rev Gerry L Weaver, 1945–2021
Rev Kenneth W Wegener, 1932–2020
Dr Harold G Woodworth, 1933–2021

Eastern District

Rev David H Brammer, 1930–2021
Deac Beverly J Craig,* 1940–2018
Rev Larry W Gerdes, 1943–2022
Rev Ronald A Ginter, 1933–2022
Rev Richard L J Hoemann, 1933–2022
Rev Robert L Hoffman, 1952–2020
Rev James D Kusko, 1943–2021
Rev Gene A Lenk, 1927–2020
Rev Gerhard A Pera, 1930–2020
Rev Edward L Saresky, 1928–2021
Charlene Hunsicker Schorr, 1954–2022
Rev Marcus P Sims, 1958–2021
Rev Otto G Struckmann, 1935–2020
Rev Eric R Ziegler, 1948–2019

English District

Rev Hans O Andrae, 1933–2023
Rev Charles R Aufdenkampe, 1945–2021
Donald W Bauer, 1930–2021
Theodore T Braun, 1936–2022
Rev Don Edward Burch, 1938–2022
Rev Paul H Eggold, 1936–2020
Rev James L Elsner (Jim), 1951–2023
Rev Joseph P Fabry, 1929–2021
Sandra C Fields, 1940–2020
John R Fredel, 1938–2021
Rev Ernest Norman Hahn, 1926–2021
Donna D Hay, 1943–2021
Rev Arlo T Janssen, 1928–2020
Rev David E Krueckeberg, 1943–2020
Rev Myron G Mader, 1932–2021
Rev Robert F Mayer, 1929–2022
Beverly M Pittelko, 1935–2020
Dr Roger D Pittelko, 1932–2020
Emily Kathryn Rawlings, 1951–2021
Dennis N Schultz,* 1940–2012
Betty J Sodemann,* 1931–2019
Rev Mark A Steinke, 1959–2021
Rev David J Stevens, 1978–2020
Rev Thomas G Van Der Bloemen Sr, 1931–2020

Florida-Georgia District

Esther M Barg, 1954–2020
Dr David H Bernthal, 1940–2021
Rev Dr Geary F Bird, 1931–2023
Rev David C Brighton, 1955–2021
Rev Daniel A Brockhoff, 1930–2022
Rev Robert J Brown, 1943–2020
Rev Donald A Cario, 1930–2022
Rev Robert C Cooper, 1939–2020
Rev Richard A Eissfeldt,* 1936–2019
Rev Kenneth Walter Farnsworth, 1960–2023
Theodore O Geheb, 1940–2022
Dr John V Glamann, 1948–2021
Rev Herman J Glienke, 1927–2022
Rev Juan A Gonzalez, 1957–2022
Ralph A Grewe, 1936–2020
Walter K Halfmann, 1947–2021
Rev Theodore R Hanus, 1938–2022
Rev Robert L Hinz, 1945–2021
Rev Russel Peter Johnson Jr, 1939–2020
Fredric W Kamprath, 1936–2022
Rev David H Kehret, 1942–2021

Rev Chang Soo Kim, 1957–2020
Rev James A Knuth, 1941–2021
Rev Frederick F Koehler, 1932–2021
Herman E Koenig, 1934–2019
David Lee Kroll, 1974–2022
Dr Osmar O Lehenbauer, 1929–2022
Rev Milton O Lehr, 1933–2022
Dr Thomas Leonard,* 1934–2018
Rev Bruce J Lieske, 1935–2021
Rev John Elmer Medley Jr, 1935–2020
Marjorie A Meier, 1931–2020
Rev Dr Christoph Rodger Meyer, 1934–2022
Rev Thomas L Moore, 1931–2021
Rev David A Mueller, 1938–2023
Arthur H Niermeier, 1941–2020
Rev Ervin R Oermann, 1927–2021
Jackie M Okun, 1955–2022
William D Patrick, 1949–2019
Deac Sara Perez-Arche, 1940–2021
Rev Carl L Peterson, 1938–2019
Dr Martin M Platzer, 1946–2021
Richard L Rath, 1933–2020
Rev Roland H Roehrs, 1928–2023
Orlyn A Schlie, 1922–2019
Dr David G Schmiel, 1931–2020
Rev Harlan R Schoenrock, 1944–2020
Rev Dr Gerald N Schultz, 1937–2021
Rev Norman E Steinke, 1939–2019
Linda M Stoeckel, 1948–2020
Rev Alan D Struckmeyer, 1959–2021
Arthur Swett, 1948–2020
Monica E Trautsch, 1930–2020
Rev Edgar A Trinklein, 1933–2021
Rev James Wiggins Jr, 1960–2021
Dianne L Wrase, 1946–2022
Rev Alvey A Yates Jr, 1945–2021
Rev Roy M Zerbe, 1939–2022
Glen F Zobel, 1938–2021

Indiana District

Rev Richard P Baepler, 1930–2020
Rev Jack A Belk, 1949–2021
Mark A Boerger, 1944–2020
Robert C Boetel, 1935–2020
Rev Chris A E Bottorff, 1955–2021
Rev Otto Arnold Brillinger, 1931–2021
June Elva Brutcher, 1937–2022
Phyllis Joan Dardeen, 1940–2021
Werner E Dierks, 1922–2021
Rev Paul Michael Doebrmann, 1950–2023
Dr Ralph E Droegge, 1930–2020
Rev Carl S Fitchett III, 1936–2019
Rev Ronald R Francis, 1941–2023
Rev Donald Edward Frank, 1929–2021
Reinhold E Frank, 1948–2020
Rev Darrel W Geitz, 1930–2023
Rev Kurt H Gremel, 1942–2022
Carol L Haak, 1948–2020
Dr Rogers K Hake, 1932–2019
Rev John H Hamer, 1944–2023
Donata Ruth Haug-Owsley, 1939–2023
Dr H Allen Herbst, 1937–2023
Louis B Herring,* 1936–2019
Dr Guenther K Herzog, 1928–2020
William A Hoffmann, 1932–2021
Gertrude Delores Hoffschneider, 1930–2020
Marceil E Kanning, 1933–2020
Ross E King, 1930–2020
Deac Anita M Kinzer, 1930–2020
Harlan H Klemz, 1937–2019
Rev Parker A Knoll, 1951–2020

Rev Theodore W Kohlmeier, 1931–2021
 James Gilbert Kremer, 1942–2021
 Rev William Eugene Lauterbach, 1931–2023
 Rev Charles Edward Litterer, 1934–2022
 Dr Walter A Maier II, 1925–2019
 Dr Shigeru Masaki,* 1927–2017
 Rev Melvin M Meyer, 1937–2022
 Elizabeth A Moeller, 1947–2022
 Rev David C Mueller, 1939–2020
 John G Mueller, 1939–2020
 Rev David E Nabinger, 1939–2021
 Rev Mark A Niemoeller, 1952–2022
 Rev Donald D Nord, 1944–2020
 Rev Donald L Olson Jr, 1947–2021
 Rev Allen E Parks, 1937–2022
 Arthur C Pinnow Jr, 1929–2020
 Thomas H Pruitt,* 1949–2018
 David Rische,* 1939–2015
 Ronald P Rodenbeck, 1931–2021
 Rev Warren G Rubel, 1927–2021
 Rev Samuel Isaias Ruiz, 1959–2023
 Rev Ronald E Saatkamp, 1942–2021
 Rev Ottis L Sauls, 1926–2021
 Rev Paul J Spira, 1960–2022
 Rev Luther G Strasen,* 1933–2019
 Rev Soren Strat Urberg, 1931–2022
 Donald F Voelker, 1925–2019
 Rev Kent G Wartick, 1958–2020
 John Mark Weber, 1978–2021
 Edward R Weerts, 1921–2020
 Gerald J Werth, 1943–2019
 Charles A Winterstein, 1949–2021
 Harold E Wolf,* 1925–2019

Iowa East District

Dr Gary M Arp, 1934–2020
 James Batchelor, 1925–2022
 Charlene M Colangelo, 1957–2022
 Janane F Ebert, 1945–2022
 Orville L Elmshaeuser, 1934–2021
 Carlos A Gomez, 1948–2021
 Linda Joyce Gomez, 1948–2023
 Rev Donald C Illian, 1937–2021
 Rev Alvin Jeske, 1930–2021
 Rev Daird W Korth, 1954–2021
 Carol Janet Loesch, 1934–2022
 Dr Donald D Loesch, 1935–2023
 Rev Marvin L Lorenz, 1951–2021
 Rev Donald A Lutz, 1930–2020
 Rev Martin John Marquardt, 1933–2022
 Rev Clarence W Pannier, 1922–2021
 Rev E Eugene Rall (Gene), 1927–2021
 Rev Carl John Richardson, 1935–2021
 Rev William R Riley, 1934–2021
 Steven B Stortz, 1964–2021
 Rev Michael E Vokt, 1957–2021
 David M Waterman, 1951–2020
 E Kathy Werning, 1925–2022
 Rev Timothy J Zimmermann, 1944–2022

Iowa West District

Rev Kenneth C Belz, 1934–2020
 Viola Ehlers, 1922–2021
 Dale L Haake, 1937–2021
 Rev Allen W Henderson (Al), 1955–2019
 Rev Charles E Horkey, 1951–2022
 Rev Duane A Jalas, 1946–2022
 Rev Andrew Glen Johnson, 1990–2023
 Rev Stephen Matthew King, 1950–2020
 Rev Lee R Mentink, 1933–2019
 Rev Gerald L Milbrath, 1934–2019
 Rev Reynold B Petersen, 1930–2019
 Rev Roland E Pillack, 1932–2020
 Rev Leland P Schmidt, 1945–2020
 Rev Donald H Winterrowd, 1937–2022

Rev Simon B Yiech, 1968–2020

Kansas District

Rev Glenn Ray Bitter, 1940–2020
 Rev Roland W Boehnke, 1929–2022
 Heather Louise Croucher, 1979–2023
 Rev Garry Ray Dassow, 1939–2023
 Rev Wendell L Haubein, 1934–2021
 Norma B Jacob, 1927–2020
 Deac Linda S Kinnett, 1950–2021
 Robert A Lehmann, 1932–2021
 Jac E Lu Ersland, 1953–2021
 Rev Michael N May, 1945–2020
 Margaret Ohlmann, 1930–2020
 Herbert E Peter, 1931–2020
 Mary Ann Stigge,* 1948–2018
 Dr Victor B Streufert, 1926–2023
 Steven Michael Vandemark, 1968–2020
 Norma Jane Weikal, 1947–2022
 Rev Robert M Ziegler, 1934–2023
 Rev Earl J Zimmerman, 1928–2019

Michigan District

Rev James L Ackerman, 1928–2020
 Rev Roger F Aumann, 1938–2023
 Rev Albert W Bahr, 1924–2021
 Virginia A Bergant, 1944–2023
 Marilyn A Beyer, 1938–2020
 Elaine C Bickel, 1947–2023
 Dr Richard A Block, 1945–2021
 Rev Arthur J Bode, 1953–2022
 Rev Paul A O Boecler, 1931–2022
 Dr H James Boldt, 1939–2019
 Ethan R Brauer, 1932–2021
 Rev George W Brinley, 1940–2022
 Rev Thomas William Bye, 1950–2021
 Kenneth F Claus, 1940–2020
 Shirley M Danz, 1941–2021
 Rev Daniel L Dockery, 1949–2022
 Rev Gary Travis Downs, 1951–2021
 Glenn R Erber, 1931–2022
 Rev Steven J Essenburg, 1952–2020
 Rev Bernhard W Filbert, 1935–2019
 Darlene N Fisceri,* 1940–2018
 Paul L Germeroth, 1929–2020
 Rev Herbert H Graupner, 1931–2020
 Walter F Gresens, 1937–2020
 Elizabeth F Grupe, 1940–2021
 Vernon C Guenther,* 1928–2019
 Rev David E Hakes, 1937–2019
 Laura Ann Havrilcsak, 1960–2022
 Rev Gary D Headapohl, 1937–2021
 Rev Harry C Henneman, 1940–2020
 Dr John A Herzog, 1946–2021
 Marvin M Himmler, 1933–2022
 Rev Dr Douglas K Janetzke, 1948–2022
 Rev Theodore R Jungkuntz, 1932–2020
 Rev David M Kaarre, 1952–2021
 Dr Roy G Kaiser, 1931–2020
 Kay A Keinath, 1950–2019
 Luther P Kell, 1949–2021
 Mary L Kell, d. 2023
 Kenneth J Klages, 1946–2020
 Allen M Knopp, 1933–2020
 Rev Fred C Krause, 1932–2022
 Rev Dale Bernard Krueger, 1931–2022
 Rev Richard Adolph Krugler, 1925–2019
 Dr Leroy D Laeder, 1932–2020
 Rose M List, 1921–2021
 John Wesley Lockhart, 1945–2019
 Lowell A Loomans, 1934–2021
 Gary P Marxhausen, 1949–2021
 Rev William D Merrell, 1945–2021
 Ellen K Mills, 1950–2020
 G David Milz (George), 1930–2021

Rev Waldemar O Neisch, 1930–2020
 Anna E Nieman, 1935–2023
 Cathy Jo Nightlinger, 1941–2021
 Lori Ann Palm, 1962–2022
 Shirley M Pankow, 1928–2020
 Rev Adolph W Pankratz, 1929–2020
 Rev John F Panning, 1927–2020
 Rev Warren L Paulson, 1932–2020
 Kathie M Pfefferle, 1950–2021
 Rev Raymond R Pollatz Jr, 1938–2022
 Warren F Priehs, 1928–2020
 Elda C Rolf, 1925–2022
 Rev Milton R Schemm, 1931–2021
 Richard H Schempf, 1932–2021
 Rev Ray E Scherbarth, 1941–2022
 Pauline E Schoenfeld Grigg, 1935–2021
 Rev John R Schreiber, 1950–2022
 Dr Roy P Schroeder, 1929–2021
 Rev Gerald E Schudlich, 1932–2021
 Robert L Schultz, 1935–2019
 Dorothy I Siefker, 1944–2022
 David R Sievert, 1964–2019
 Charles L Storck, 1933–2021
 Irene Norris Sutter, 1931–2020
 Keturah A Thunder-Haab, 1937–2023
 Rev Frederick W Traugott, 1943–2022
 Rev David M Ulm, 1954–2020
 Erich W Von Behren, 1930–2020
 Lori A Weiss, 1957–2020
 Rev Leroy R Westphal, 1932–2020
 Rev Harry W White, 1935–2021
 Susan I Yelden, 1952–2023
 Rev Kenneth E Zielke, 1935–2021
 Steven E Zill, 1954–2022

Mid-South District

Rev Richard W Ames, 1929–2022
 Rev Henry W Behling, 1932–2021
 Rev Roy William Bingenheimer, 1933–2023
 Rev William L Couch Jr, 1938–2022
 Rev Norman L Groteluschen, 1924–2021
 Dr Fred W Hagemeier, 1936–2021
 Rev Clarence W Helmich, 1935–2022
 Rev Donley D Hesse, 1932–2022
 Rev Shawn David Hunze, 1966–2019
 Rev Roy A Jacob, 1930–2019
 Rev Paul H Jilg, 1930–2019
 Dr David William Krause, 1933–2022
 Rev Joel R Krogen, 1965–2021
 Jean L Legge, 1952–2022
 Dr Erwin L Lueker Jr, 1944–2023
 Rev Jan Truman Munch, 1941–2022
 Melinda Michelle Needler, 1969–2020
 Leland A Pitsch, 1941–2020
 Rev Chris Powell, 1939–2019
 Rev David A Rubke, 1951–2020
 Rev Don L Schmidt, 1949–2022
 Rev Merlin Sepmeyer, 1925–2020
 Arlon John Steinbach, 1945–2022
 Rev William Edward Stevenson, 1938–2023
 Dr Wesley M Toncre, 1937–2022
 Rev James Carl Walter, 1953–2020

Minnesota North District

Rev Orville E Aho, 1925–2021
 Rev Robert E Behling, 1957–2021
 Rev Marvin O Blaske, 1931–2022
 Rev Walter L Brill, 1941–2021
 Dr Dennis P Brostrom, 1950–2021
 Deac Mertice Adelle Brueske, 1935–2023
 Rev David C Cloeter, 1935–2023
 Rev Harvey I Ehlers, 1931–2022
 Rev Roy M Hasbargen, 1928–2021
 Rev Gunard W Heikkila, 1941–2020
 Rev Timothy William Magill, 1967–2020

Rev Scott A Muehlberg, 1951–2020
 Rev Henry Charles Mueller IV, 1935–2022
 Rev William M Schultz, 1922–2019
 Rev William K Stockman, 1929–2020
 Rev Ronald Eugene Tibbetts, 1952–2020
 Rev Jeffrey H Walther, 1962–2020

Minnesota South District

Paul A Berg, 1951–2020
 Rev Ronald A Bongard, 1931–2022
 Rev Richard L Buege, 1928–2022
 Douglas Michael Denzler, 1972–2022
 Rev Ronald G Dommer, 1932–2022
 Dr John R Eggert, 1946–2022
 Kathryn M Ehlers,* 1947–2016
 Joseph C Fountain, 1946–2020
 Rev Eugene C Glade, 1932–2019
 Rev Herman R Hannemann, 1935–2022
 Tim Mark Hansen, 1961–2020
 Eugene W Heuton,* 1949–2019
 Rev David E Hinck, 1941–2021
 Rev Donald R Howard, 1945–2021
 Barbara Patricia Huebner, 1949–2022
 Rev Roy R Karner, 1928–2019
 Rev Luther A Koehler, 1929–2021
 Rev Albert S Kresken Jr,* 1934–2018
 Rev Richard A Krogen, 1936–2021
 Rev Robert H Krueger, 1945–2021
 Rev Steven J Kuehne, 1949–2019
 Robert W Leininger, 1933–2020
 Rev Victor Herbert Meyr, 1932–2022
 Dr Glenn W Offermann, 1936–2023
 Dr Carroll E Peter, 1929–2021
 Rev Ronald B Prigge, 1945–2022
 Christine Charlotte Ries, 1940–2022
 Rev Stanley W Rosenau, 1927–2023
 Arnold E Scholz, 1931–2021
 Rev Theodore William Schroeder, 1939–2021
 Susan E Schutte, 1949–2021
 Rev Robert E Snyder Jr, 1940–2022
 Rev Marvin L Soulek, 1948–2020
 Dr Stephen C Stohlmann, 1943–2021
 David J Stueber, 1946–2022
 Rev Gregory C Tyler, 1949–2020
 Rev Paul L Westerlund, 1938–2023
 Rev Gerald B Wunrow, 1931–2020
 Rev Ronald R Yungmann, 1936–2019
 Allan A Zeitz, 1968–2023

Missouri District

Richard W Adler, 1939–2022
 Robert Michael Alexander, 1945–2022
 Rev Quentin P Almstedt, 1939–2020
 Larry Allen Andersen, 1957–2022
 Rev Victor A Atsinger Sr, 1932–2022
 Rev Lawrence Nolan Bradt, 1966–2020
 Nadine M Brandt, 1942–2021
 Rev Stuart W Brassie, 1948–2021
 Catherine Bude, 1938–2019
 Rev Lawrence A Burgdorf, 1930–2021
 Craig Robert Busseau, 1957–2022
 Luther A De Cuir, 1941–2019
 Rev Merwin C Desens, 1936–2021
 William D Dougherty, 1935–2023
 Linda K Dressler, 1953–2022
 Rev Edwin H Dubberke, 1931–2020
 Rev Frank E Eberhart, 1941–2023
 Jimmy Lee Ebers (Jim), 1953–2023
 Timothy J Fabry, 1952–2020
 Dale B Fisk, 1940–2022
 Donald Eugene Gade, 1937–2020
 Dr James M Garrison, 1931–2020
 Dr Ralph L Geisler, 1938–2022
 Rev Jack L Gillam, 1952–2020
 Rev Arthur F Graudin, 1927–2022

Steven Paul Greimann, 1954–2021
 Dr Dale E Griffin, 1920–2020
 Rev Lloyd E Groenke, 1927–2019
 Rev Lloyd J Hackbarth, 1936–2020
 Duane E Hingst, 1931–2021
 Emil E Hoehne, 1928–2020
 Rev Darrel D Hoerle, 1932–2019
 Leland L Janssen, 1930–2021
 Rev Donald F Jenkins, 1934–2019
 Richard Alan Jostes, 1951–2021
 Dr Lowell E Kennedy, 1931–2021
 Rev Robert L Kriete, 1948–2022
 Janice Kroeger, 1942–2019
 Rev James A Lange, 1929–2021
 Robert W Lehr, 1936–2020
 Rev Walter C Lemmermann Sr, 1930–2019
 Rev Jeffrey E Lloyd, 1945–2021
 Dr John S Loum, 1948–2022
 Rev David B Marth, 1947–2021
 Rev Mark D Martin, 1957–2022
 Diane B Maurer, 1952–2021
 Rev Paul Timothy McCain, 1962–2020
 Rev Norman C Meyer, 1925–2020
 Delvin G Meyr,* 1942–2019
 Rev Dr Donald Robert Miesner, 1933–2023
 Rev Adam Mueller, 1931–2020
 Rev Herbert E Muench, 1933–2019
 Dr Norman E Nagel, 1925–2019
 Ingrid A Nebel, 1955–2021
 Rev Frazier N Odom, 1937–2021
 Donna L Oetting,* 1946–2019
 Donald Traugott Petering (Don), 1938–2023
 Rev Leonard B Poppe, 1959–2021
 Neal F Rabe, 1937–2019
 Rev James W Rassbach, 1932–2020
 Rev Thomas N Reeder Sr, 1938–2022
 Rev Alfred William Rodewald, 1925–2020
 Edgar N Roth, 1928–2022
 Dr Ellis T Rottmann, 1931–2019
 Rev Kim L Scharff, 1950–2020
 Rev Dr Alvin J Schmidt, 1932–2022
 Rev John R Schmidtke, 1962–2022
 Rev Paul V Schnelle, 1930–2020
 Rev John E Schroeder,* 1924–2015
 Rev Dennis L Schwab, 1948–2022
 Jerome T Schwab, 1929–2019
 Rev Laokouxang Seying (Kou), 1964–2019
 Gary Albert Spieler, 1948–2023
 Dennis L Stewart, 1939–2020
 Rev Milton E Stohs, 1929–2022
 Larry G Tiemann, 1946–2020
 Rev Dale H Trimberger, 1940–2021
 William L Unzicker III, 1946–2019
 Rev Otto H Urban Jr, 1933–2022
 Deac Audrey E Vanderbles, 1940–2020
 Rev William R Voelker, 1944–2021
 Aileen C Wallis,* 1932–2019
 Dr Richard H Warneck, 1935–2021
 Marilyn Webern, 1941–2021
 Rev Mark P Wenger, 1951–2022
 Rev Eldon K Winker, 1941–2021
 Rev Gerald L Wittmaier, 1944–2020
 Rev Kenneth R Young, 1929–2022
 Rev Wilfred L Ziekert, 1929–2021

Montana District

Dr William M Bliese, 1929–2021
 Rev Raymond Everet Larson Sr, 1942–2022
 Rev Robert E Mitchell, 1949–2021
 Dr Mark J Nicolaus, 1944–2022
 Jerry D Schreck, 1939–2021
 Rev Kent Charles Stenzel, 1947–2022
 Wilhelm R Wegner, 1931–2022

Nebraska District

Arlen George Ahlers, 1931–2020
 Rev Richard E Albers, 1935–2021
 Rev Theodore E Allwardt Sr, 1934–2019
 Dr Marvin M Bergman, 1934–2022
 Fred L Boerger Jr, 1929–2019
 Dr Richard E Bolling, 1927–2019
 Dr Eugene C Brott, 1933–2022
 Rev Alvin J Bruenger, 1934–2020
 Rev H John Cotton, 1955–2020
 Rev Terrence H Daberkow, 1939–2021
 Gilbert H Daenzer, 1930–2019
 Eugene R Faszholz, 1929–2021
 Betty Jean Galen, 1930–2020
 Rev Charles A Gierke, 1941–2022
 Ellen E Glanzer, 1933–2021
 Dr Larry H C Grothaus, 1930–2022
 Rev Richard L Gudgel, 1943–2022
 Dr Alan F Harre, 1940–2020
 Joanne W Heider, 1929–2020
 Paul E Heidorn, 1929–2021
 Rev Daniel E Heuer, 1956–2022
 Lucy B Honig, 1936–2019
 Rev Roland A Jank Sr, 1920–2021
 Kathleen R Kuhn, 1943–2021
 Cynthia G Kuntz, 1964–2021
 Dr Priscilla A Lawin, 1941–2021
 Julie Anne Lazarchic, 1971–2021
 Rev Donald E Levenhagen, 1934–2020
 James D Mackie, 1928–2021
 Roger Lee Mailand, 1941–2021
 Edmund R Martens, 1928–2022
 Rev Dr David P Meyer, 1937–2022
 Edward H A Mueller, 1937–2022
 Rev Stanley M Ostgren, 1935–2019
 Rev John Robert Paulson, 1939–2022
 Lavonne M Peterson, 1938–2019
 Rev Carl E Pullmann, 1930–2019
 Dr Charles A Reimnitz Jr, 1929–2019
 Rev James W Ristvedt, 1933–2022
 Rev Nathan Paul Ristvedt, 1963–2023
 Rev Randall H Russell, 1950–2022
 Rev John A Ryding, 1951–2022
 Rev Paul R Schmidt, 1925–2019
 Rev Ernest G Smith, 1929–2022
 Dr Martin L Stork, 1921–2020
 Wilbur G Tewes, 1934–2022
 Richard B Ulmer, 1931–2022
 Rev James D Wilkens, 1936–2022
 Dr D Georg Williams, 1950–2021
 Lucille M Winterstein, 1930–2020

New England District

Robert Theodore Beckmann,* 1933–2018
 Martin R Boettner, 1951–2022
 Rev Stephen R Brusco Jr, 1931–2022
 Rev Ingo Rolf Dutzmann, 1947–2022
 Rev Ralph Robert Lanphar Jr, 1959–2020
 Rev Henry C Lubben III,* 1938–2018
 Nancy Ann Lutz, 1946–2019
 Dr Robert J Meier, 1933–2020
 Rev Dr Timothy R Yeadon, 1959–2022

New Jersey District

Rev Arthur R Doring, 1932–2021
 Rev Thomas L Edge, 1935–2021
 Dr Frederick R Harm,* 1923–2018
 Rev Paul R Huneke, 1946–2019
 Rev Harry N Johnson, 1925–2019
 Rev Edward Lazarchak, 1942–2021
 George E Lofmark Jr, 1931–2022
 Rev Irvin E Pflueger, 1927–2019
 Rev Paul W Sparling, 1929–2022
 Rev Paul A Voitko, 1926–2023
 Rev John W Welge, 1946–2023

Rev Otto T Zeeb, 1922–2020

North Dakota District

Rev Lyle Reuben Kath, 1950–2020
Rev Roger Jerry Leonhardt,* 1939–2019
Dr Robert H Rowan, 1930–2022
Rev Edward J Rutter, 1921–2022
Rev Bernhard M Seter, 1952–2022

North Wisconsin District

Rev Kenneth L Albers, 1954–2020
Chris B E Allen, 1937–2019
Rev Raymond J Bell, 1957–2019
Rev Michael D Botsford, 1949–2022
Rev Robert A Buckman, 1933–2021
Rev Leonard E Erdman, 1926–2020
Glenn W Frank, 1942–2021
Rev Duane O Geary,* 1938–2018
Rev Roland M Golz, 1931–2023
Rev Thomas F Hoelter, 1947–2021
Rev Horst W Jordan, 1941–2022
John A Kupsky, 1937–2022
Rev Vilas E Mazemke, 1941–2023
Rev Allen O Montgomery, 1942–2022
Rev Edward G Olson, 1939–2020
Rev Robert W Olson, 1927–2022
Rev Gerald R Reiter, 1931–2020
Dr Walter L Rosin, 1928–2020
Rev Du Wayne R Schneider, 1938–2023
Rev Mark A Schoenherr, 1950–2022
Rev Joseph A Schultz, 1929–2022
Dr Timothy Eric Wenger, 1944–2023
Judith A Westerfeld, 1939–2021

Northern Illinois District

Rev Reuben C Baerwald, 1925–2021
Ralph H Boardman,* 1921–2015
Ardella A Boettcher, 1932–2022
Rev Paul H Brunner,* 1934–2017
Rev William T Chormann, 1943–2023
Rev Arthur J Constien,* 1934–2018
Nancy A Cordes,* 1939–2019
Dr Louis O Dorn, 1928–2020
Gloria A Elder,* 1945–2016
Elaine Carol Fick, 1957–2019
Rev Dennis G Fitzpatrick Sr, 1949–2021
Douglas E Flett, 1949–2020
Ronald August Fode,* 1941–2019
Rev Jay Warren Frazell,* 1943–2019
Zelma Ethel Fritz,* 1937–2016
Kathleen Marie Gallup, 1950–2022
Rev Paul H Garchow,* 1953–2018
Andrea Jean Gauger, 1939–2022
Roselyn M Gieschen,* 1930–2017
Dr Minnie Mathilda Gnewuch, 1934–2023
Edward R Grapatin,* 1937–2019
Dahlas A Gregory, 1950–2021
Rev James P Haberkost, 1935–2020
Ernest H Hagenmueller, 1929–2020
Rev Stanley L Harding, 1944–2022
Irma L Haseman, 1930–2019
Rev Elton N Heimsoth, 1933–2022
Rev Robert M Hess, 1928–2022
Rev Paul M Hoecker, 1944–2020
Dr Blair A Hoy, 1945–2020
Margaret R Johnson, 1937–2021
Henry Paul Kneuppel, 1929–2022
Henry E Koehler, 1941–2022
Ronald A Kraatz, 1951–2021
June E Kraft, 1932–2021
Rev Kenneth E Krause (Ken), 1955–2021
Elaine Louise Leona Kuh, 1937–2022
David W Kuhlman, 1940–2022
Dr Charles William Laabs, 1928–2022
Dr Henry Raymond Latzke, 1931–2019

William A Levenhagen,* 1930–2016
Lloyd D Liese, 1933–2022
Alvin E Loesel, 1930–2021
Rev Aden E Loest, 1932–2020
Rev Julio A Loza, 1936–2022
Dr Wayne E Lucht, 1925–2020
Lynn L Luetgert,* 1946–2015
Walter W Martin, 1930–2020
Rev Charles S Mueller Sr, 1929–2019
Muriel D Niss,* 1937–2019
Rev Mark Andrew Nordman, 1961–2021
Charles J Novak Jr, 1957–2021
Sandra S Oberg (Sandee), 1957–2023
Carolyn Ruth Ortman, 1946–2022
Darald A Pieper, 1939–2020
Rev W Gail Rabe, 1933–2021
Richard R Rose, 1951–2020
Dr Carl F Schalk, 1929–2021
Robert L Schulz, 1938–2020
Dr John L Spangler Sr, 1951–2020
Rev James P Stephens, 1940–2020
Richard F Streit,* 1927–2018
Rev Daniel J Teller, 1953–2020
Ingeborg Louise Teske, 1939–2021
Diana Lynn Theilgaard, 1958–2019
Harry A Thompson III,* d. 2018
Rev Gary G Trickey, 1944–2023
Rev Harold Irvin Wahl, 1947–2020
Rev Wesley H Wilkie, 1938–2020
Rev Eugene E Wille, 1933–2021
Elmer Lee Wuensche, 1935–2021
Rev Erhard Adolph Zeile (John),* 1925–2017
Rev James G Zimmerman, 1959–2022

Northwest District

William N Ash, 1944–2019
Rev Richard G Braem, 1928–2019
Rev Joel J Brauer, 1947–2020
Rev George J Burza, 1951–2022
Rev David Leroy Carstens, 1944–2020
Robert Eugene Christian, 1927–2023
Rev Steven Douglas Cox, 1952–2021
Rev Richard W Gerken, 1939–2021
Rev Ronald E Gocken, 1936–2022
Rev Charles Berwin Godfrey (Chuck), 1946–2020
Rev Hugo Hein, 1928–2020
Rev Martin W Heinicke, 1925–2021
Rev William B Hemenway, 1940–2023
Douglas Dwight Hensley, 1942–2022
Glenn Louis Herbold, 1932–2021
Rev Wilton E Hille, 1933–2023
Rev David A Hrachovina, 1952–2020
Rev Sidney V Johnson, 1938–2021
Rev Rolf A Junge, 1951–2021
Raymond H Knauff, 1928–2022
Dr C Douglas Kroll, 1947–2021
Rev Stephen E Larson, 1943–2021
Reuben Lester Leapaldt, 1930–2022
Rev Daniel W Lee, 1937–2020
Dr Arthur L Linnemann, 1930–2021
Vernette M Linnemann, 1929–2022
Dr Donald W Lorenz, 1927–2022
Rev Max P Metcalf, 1934–2020
Mary Lee Peek, 1942–2019
Ralph L Petersen, 1933–2021
Rev Gerald L Rabe, 1940–2020
Rev George A Rakos, 1940–2021
Rev Leon Ernest Savage Jr (Ernie), 1948–2021
Rev James H Schackel, 1935–2019
Rev John F Scheck, 1930–2022
Rev John G Scholz, 1927–2021
Rev James L Schwandt, 1932–2021
Dolores E Sharadin, 1924–2021
Dr Hans G R Spalteholz, 1930–2023
Dr Stephen F Steffens, 1942–2020

Rev David Martin Stephen (Dong Chin Kim), 1936–2021
Rev David Sternbeck, 1956–2021
Rev Bryon L Sunderman, 1956–2020
Dr Raymond W Waetjen, 1939–2022
Rev William W Warren, 1945–2020
Rev James David Webster, 1955–2021
Rev Daryl C Wildermuth, 1932–2023
Rev Herman J Williams, 1937–2022
Rev Melvin R Wolters, 1936–2021

Ohio District

Rev Von Eric Berlin, 1947–2022
Rev Alvin A Boehlke, 1936–2020
Rev George Buck Jr, 1935–2021
Rev Donald W Craig Jr, 1942–2020
Rev Herman K Dietrich Jr, 1928–2020
Rev Gary Dean Dittmar, 1952–2019
Dr Ronald E Duer, 1938–2021
Rev Donald L Frerichs, 1937–2022
Rev Mark Daniel Hanchett, 1963–2021
Rev Mark E Heuser, 1949–2022
Rev Robert H Hofener, 1930–2020
Joseph Albert House Sr, 1932–2022
Rev Floyd L Leoschke, 1927–2020
Rev Donald L Luhring, 1942–2022
Rev Alvia McEwen Martis, 1951–2020
Rev Lloyd E Nicol, 1927–2022
James M Osborn, 1951–2020
Rev George M Pohlod, 1934–2020
Rev Lyle H Rasch, 1927–2020
Judith Ann Schepmann, 1947–2022
Rev Norman H Schinkel, 1933–2019
Jess Michael Thacker, 1969–2021
Rev Roger Vernick, 1944–2022
Rev Carl E Zahrt, 1929–2022

Oklahoma District

Rev Virgil T Bening, 1944–2023
Charles R Burnett, 1943–2020
Deac Karla Abel Carter, 1948–2020
James Everett Clawson, 1949–2021
Rev Robert A Dibell, 1938–2019
Rev Barrie Emil Henke, 1945–2023
Dr Harvey Glenn Johnson, 1932–2021
Rev Glen Charles Kollmeyer, 1920–2021
Rev Fred Albert Muenchow, 1936–2022
Rev Frederick Albin Naumann, 1932–2022
Walter E Sabourin, 1983–2020
Paul D Schatte, 1957–2020
David P Von Dielingen,* 1947–2019

Pacific Southwest District

Robert D Barnes, 1934–2020
Rev Leslie C Beale, 1935–2020
Rev Norwood M Blanke, 1935–2022
Rev Ronald E Blau, 1934–2020
Dr John K Bontrager, 1923–2022
Jane A Boye, 1949–2021
Carol A Burtner, 1936–2021
Rev David R Byler, 1946–2020
Rev Kyung Jin Cha, 1940–2020
Waldo H Cloeter, 1925–2022
Harry J Cypher III, 1952–2023
Wayne W Dibos, 1956–2022
Rev William J Fackler, 1923–2023
Rev Richard B Faerber, 1919–2021
Rev Roy B Faulstick, 1935–2021
Kristy Lea Glaeser, 1960–2021
Richard Thomas Grice, 1937–2020
Dr D Ray Halm, 1941–2020
Rev Michael S Harding, 1947–2021
Ronald Vern Harman, 1932–2019
Rev August L Hauptman, 1923–2020
Rev Frederick G Hazel III (Fred), 1952–2022

Robert G Heckman, 1934–2023
 Rev Brian Thomas Henderson, 1959–2019
 Rev Robert D Hentz, 1932–2021
 Vickie L Highfill, 1947–2019
 Rev Ronald K Hodel, 1955–2022
 Dennis L Holmes, 1952–2020
 Leroy F Hotz, 1932–2021
 Dr Horace D Hummel, 1928–2021
 Rev Jon Imme, 1950–2022
 Rev Paul Jacob, 1957–2021
 John F Janzow, 1930–2020
 Rev Herman W Jonas Jr, 1940–2022
 Dale F Karner, 1950–2020
 Rev Clifford Norman Kenyon, 1937–2023
 Dr Getachew Kiros, 1956–2020
 William H Knorr, * 1929–2018
 Paul E Koehnke, 1931–2022
 Madge R Krause, 1940–2019
 Rev Johnny J Lopez, 1943–2023
 Jesus Martinez Jr, 1938–2021
 Rev Harry Alfred Matelski, 1946–2023
 Rev H Herbert Mc Cabe, 1936–2021
 Sharon Lea Meadows, * 1943–2016
 Lynn C Mohr, 1942–2019
 Dr James E Murray, 1929–2020
 Rev Luc Nguyen, 1941–2021
 Rev Paul Y Park, 1938–2021
 Katherine S Perkins, 1949–2022
 Rev Robert Eugene Persson, 1946–2020
 Milton J Pingel, * 1930–2019
 Rev Don C Preisinger, * 1924–2019
 Dr Jacob A O Preus III (Jack), 1953–2022
 Dr Bernard O Raabe, 1922–2021
 Rev Gregory Orion Rand, 1977–2021
 Rev Ronald Leroy Rehrer, 1947–2022
 Rev August K Ristow Jr, 1950–2021
 Rev Ronald Aires Ritter, 1938–2023
 Duane J Rohmaller, 1936–2020
 Rev John C Rumsey Sr, 1928–2022
 Paul Edmund Rupprecht Jr, d. 2023
 Rev Maynard H Saeger, 1925–2022
 Dolores M Salas, 1954–2020
 Kenneth Eugene Schlueter, 1935–2022
 Rev Martin Gustav Schramm, 1943–2022
 Marlin W Schulz, 1934–2021
 Rev Lowell L Siebrass, 1937–2022
 Dr Carolyn C Sims, 1944–2019
 Donald J Smidt, * 1927–2016
 Rev John K Sorensen, 1931–2019
 Dr Lloyd J Strelow, 1937–2022
 Patricia A Swickard, * d. 2018
 Rev Evan J Temple, * 1933–2019
 Rev Harold J Teuscher, 1936–2021
 Roy Elmor Thayer, * 1928–2017
 Dr Joan L Theurer, 1953–2021
 David W Toensing, * 1943–2019
 Garry Dale Unger, 1963–2021
 Rev Paulus E Voelzke, 1931–2019
 Rev Edward W Wessling, 1924–2021
 Jerome A Winterstein, * 1945–2018
 Ramon L Wittig, 1933–2022

Rocky Mountain District

Rev John A Allmann, 1934–2022
 Walter O Bartels, 1922–2022
 Rev Richard Anton Bolland, 1946–2023
 Gary W Caulkins, d. 2020
 Rev Julius B Clausen, 1949–2021
 Rev Duane Otto Daeke, 1948–2021
 Troy F Dieters, 1965–2021
 Elaine Carol Dyslin, 1940–2023
 Rev John P Gorklo, 1941–2019
 Rev John C Hetlinger, 1934–2023
 Rev John W Israel, 1930–2021
 Rev William H Keller, 1944–2022

Rev Ronald D Leach, 1934–2020
 Rev John M Petersen, 1933–2020
 Marlene Kay Proft, * 1950–2016
 John Eugene Rolf, 1953–2021
 Rev Jose Ovalle Ruiz, 1933–2020
 Rev Daniel J Sattelmeier, 1949–2022
 Rev Robert J Schrank, * 1928–2019
 Rev Virgil L Schuelein, 1933–2021
 Lois M Schuetz, 1926–2021
 John W Senechal, 1944–2019
 Chester W Shoaf Jr, 1949–2020
 Rev Frederick A Skov, 1931–2019
 Nancy C Snurka, 1944–2021
 Rev Armin F Stolp, 1930–2023
 Rev Gary R Thur, 1945–2021
 Donald R Weidner, 1947–2021
 Rev Warren H Wille, 1920–2019

SELC District

Dr David Paul Daniel, 1940–2020
 Donald G Eicholtz, 1933–2022
 Rev M Charles Groth, 1935–2022
 Rev Donald M Hayas, 1938–2023
 Rev Paul Martin Hoyer, 1954–2023
 Dr Ronald W Jones, 1945–2021
 Rev Louis C Kerestes, * 1931–2019
 Rev Noel Carl Olse, 1943–2022
 Rev Paul Visoky, 1940–2020
 Nancy R Whitney, d. 2023

South Dakota District

Rev Raymond H Adams, 1940–2020
 Rev Hyle R Anderson, 1948–2021
 Rev Charles Francis Boeder, 1933–2022
 Paul G Consoer, 1932–2022
 Rev Monty A Dell, 1945–2022
 Rev William F A Dietz, * 1931–2018
 Rev Robert H Fedde, 1930–2020
 Marvin L Sopko, 1946–2019

South Wisconsin District

Rev Ronald W P Albers, 1932–2019
 Dr Karl L Barth, 1924–2020
 Harlan H Becker, 1932–2020
 Rev Edwin C Bek, 1929–2022
 Rev Timothy J Benninghoff, 1947–2020
 Rev Robert H Bernhardt, 1931–2022
 Edward H Bernthal, * 1923–2019
 Rev Frederick A Bischoff, 1955–2021
 Elizabeth Dorothy Bliese, 1931–2022
 Rev Richard John Boeck Jr, 1952–2023
 Rev Richard W Borchers, 1929–2020
 Kimberly Ann Butz, 1968–2021
 Rev Douglas R Corniels, 1946–2022
 John W Dahm, 1943–2020
 Rev James N Daugherty, 1937–2021
 Albert W Dede, 1926–2021
 Eugene K Fiedler, 1935–2021
 Rev Floyd E Gogolin, 1936–2021
 Rev Warren A Granke, 1945–2020
 Rev Floyd W Grothman, 1927–2019
 Gene E Gruetzmacher, 1941–2021
 Norman H Hafeman, * 1924–2018
 Ronald L Hauser, 1933–2020
 Rev James L Hendrikson, 1938–2021
 Robert L Herrmann, 1932–2020
 Edward A Hessler, 1941–2020
 Albert N Jenks, 1935–2022
 David C Jording, 1944–2022
 Rev Frederick H O Jungkuntz, 1929–2019
 Rev Edward F Kletzien, * 1938–2019
 Gene Harry Kreienbrink, * 1935–2019
 Rev Jon F Leider, 1944–2023
 Rev Dana W Loney, 1959–2021
 Dale C Loomans, 1938–2022

Rev Julius E Manteufel, 1930–2022
 Alfred E Markworth, * 1941–2018
 Rev Richard J Matthies, 1934–2020
 Rev Gilbert E Mueller, 1931–2022
 Wilbert C Mueller, * 1921–2017
 Deac Karoline Lucille Nee, 1953–2020
 Rev Michael Drew Pfingsten, 1962–2022
 Dr James A Pingel, 1939–2021
 Rev William N Redeker, 1931–2022
 Rev William L Robinson, 1936–2020
 Karl Frederick Roeske, 1962–2023
 Paula Christine Rumbold, 1952–2020
 Eugene A Sattler, 1927–2021
 Rev David J Schneider, 1935–2020
 Rev Gary E Schockman, 1950–2022
 Rev Paul R Schroeder, 1933–2020
 Rev Ronald L Schultz, 1930–2021
 Rev Arthur C Senn, 1927–2019
 Rev John Arthur Siedschlag Sr, 1939–2022
 James R Spitzer, 1949–2022
 Gloria J Tonn, 1946–2021
 Karen Ann Zachek, * 1942–2019

Southeastern District

Rev Arthur H Beyer, 1938–2021
 Dr Roddy L Braun, 1935–2020
 Rev Alton J Bruning, 1938–2021
 Priscilla C Cook, 1934–2023
 Rev Floyd P Duff Jr, 1929–2019
 Rev Gary L Fisher, 1942–2021
 Donald D Frank, 1937–2021
 Sherry J Frank, * 1937–2019
 Rev Kenneth Martin Fuehler, 1944–2021
 Rev Gordon O Gabram, 1927–2021
 Rev Philip J Gerken, 1926–2022
 Rev John Edward Gaudin, 1929–2022
 Rev Dr Robert George Heckmann, 1927–2021
 Rev William H Heffel, 1954–2021
 Sharon F Hennig, 1944–2020
 Rev Phillip Bernard Kelley, 1948–2021
 Rev Teklu Telila Ketema, 1974–2023
 Rev Rudolf J S Keyl, 1930–2021
 Dr Harold L Kitzmann, 1938–2019
 John P Kosinsky, 1941–2022
 Rev Thomas J Krepps, 1955–2020
 Rev R Keith Lee, 1930–2020
 Rev John Arnold Lober, 1937–2023
 Dr Richard A Mazak, 1932–2020
 Rev John Harvey Melms, 1948–2021
 Rev Donald G Meyer, 1931–2023
 Rev Derrick Keith Miliner, 1960–2021
 Rev Leonard A Moore, 1965–2021
 Rev Dr Bernard F Nass, 1936–2022
 Rev Charles D Nenow, 1934–2022
 Rev Wayne Marshall Pask, 1947–2021
 Rev David L Pearcy, 1942–2019
 Rev Dr Eric G Peterson, 1944–2022
 Rev Lawrence C Rabon Jr, 1947–2022
 Rev H Douglas Rathjen, 1938–2021
 Rev Harold Gene Reichel, 1938–2022
 Dr Arthur W Scherer, 1939–2020
 Rev Robert H Schermbeck, 1953–2022
 Rev Kenneth E Schwengel, 1927–2019
 Rev Stephen D Sigmon, 1944–2021
 Dr Hubert H Temme, 1932–2021
 Dr Stephen W Updegrave, 1948–2022
 Dr Arthur M Vincent, 1918–2020
 Jeffrey S Wegner, 1958–2020
 Dr Richard Wegner, 1924–2020
 Rev Jim R Wesson, 1936–2022
 Rev Robert H Wind, 1926–2023
 Michael Edgar Younghouse, 1953–2022
 Rev Ward Irwin Yunker, 1974–2021
 Edwin E Zielske Jr, 1926–2019

Southern District

Rev Kenneth L Babin, 1971–2022
Rev Jerry Lee Conley, 1940–2021
Rev Robert Paul Counts, 1928–2020
Rev William D Gassett, 1955–2020
Rev David Eugene Gieseking, 1958–2021
Rev James B Marshall, 1938–2022
Lynn E Mc Peek, 1954–2022
Rev Richard H Meyer, 1922–2023
Rev William Joseph Meyer, 1948–2020
Doreen T Moyo, 1956–2020
Rev Orval D Mueller, 1937–2019
Eva M Parker, 1938–2021
Rev Norman L Schulz, 1938–2020
Rev Victor P Schulz, 1926–2020
Mablelean D Scott, 1936–2019
Rev Ronald W Seitz, 1933–2021
Rev William Henry Vogt, 1951–2021
Rev Wayne Edward Watts Jr, 1961–2022
Katie G Wiggins, 1935–2020
Dr Richard W Wismar III, 1940–2022
Paula Lorraine Wood, 1957–2023

Southern Illinois District

Larry D Becker, 1935–2020
Rev Dennis A Brandt, 1945–2022
Rev Walter E Byerley Sr, 1931–2022
Rev Charles Frederick Campbell, 1929–2019
Rev Bert H Eickhoff, 1960–2020
Rev James T Hoppes, 1939–2022
Rev Leonard C Laetsch, 1941–2021
Debra Kay Lange, 1967–2022
Rev Donald B Mc Kelvey Sr, 1933–2021
Rev Lawrence Edward Meinzen, 1925–2023
Rev Dr Herbert C Mueller Jr (Herb), 1953–2020
Agnes Carol Richter, 1932–2020
Rev E James Rivett (Jim), 1947–2020
William James Rohe (Jim), 1945–2020

Texas District

Rev Vernon Lee Appel, 1938–2021
Judith L Arldt, 1940–2021
Dr George P Ascher, 1929–2022
Rev Kenneth W Baisden, 1932–2023
Rev Hubert F Beck, 1931–2023
Rev Dewyth D Beltz, 1927–2022
Jerome Gayle Berry, d. 2023
Norman C Beyer, 1930–2020
Rev B Bruce Blakelock, 1937–2021

Dennis H Boldt,* 1942–2019
Katherine H Bolland,* 1922–2019
Rev James M Bomba, 1929–2020
Rev Robert E Boyce, 1941–2020
Rev Robert Dick Case, 1932–2023
Rev Danny Ellis Chambers, 1966–2023
Rev Terry John Coday, 1947–2021
Lillian M Deterling, 1931–2023
Rev Ned A Dobberfuhr, 1947–2021
Ruth E Doering, 1926–2020
Rev Dr James Paul Dretke, 1931–2021
Rev David Frederick Ebert, 1933–2021
Rev Herbert N Eifert, 1935–2019
Rev John E Fibelkorn, 1936–2021
Rev Ernesto L Garcia, 1937–2023
Rev Harvey A Gerdes, 1930–2021
Rev Robert C Greene, 1938–2019
Linda Lee Greenwald, 1948–2022
Rev Tom C Hadley, 1951–2023
Rev Paul W Hartfield, 1936–2021
Rev Dr L Dean Hempelmann (Dean), 1939–2021
Stephen M Henke Jr, 1944–2022
Dr Elmer M Hohle, 1930–2021
Robert D Holliday, 1938–2020
Rev Ernest R Houppert (Rod), 1954–2022
Rev Darrell K Howanitz, 1950–2020
Rev Martin O Hoyer, 1931–2021
Dr David B Joeckel, 1933–2022
Rev William A Johnson, 1929–2022
Rev Lewis Kash,* 1941–2018
Rev Lawrence E Kelm, 1939–2020
Rev Roy A Kieschnick, 1942–2020
Rev Kenneth Richard Klaus, 1948–2023
Rev Herbert L Kluck, 1929–2021
David L Koenig, 1939–2021
Rev Carroll C Kohl, 1935–2023
Rev Robert T Kuhlmann, 1932–2022
Reynold Walter Kunz, 1934–2021
Dr Howard Wayne Lacey, 1936–2021
Rev Dale C Lehfeltdt, 1935–2020
Kay E Lindsay, 1950–2021
Amy Jo Lunsford, 1965–2021
Robert G Lunz, 1931–2020
Dr Ray Fred Martens, 1933–2019
Rev Chester L Mc Cown, 1943–2022
Cynthia A Melcher,* 1955–2018
Steven A Menke, 1958–2021
Rev Erwin A Metz, 1925–2019
Rev John A Miller III, 1940–2021
Rev Howard W Mueller, 1934–2022

Ruby L Mueller, 1927–2019
Rev Alvin W Musgrove Jr, 1932–2021
Rev Richard A Nelson, 1925–2021
Rev Paul D Neumann, 1956–2021
Rev Gerald L Nichols, 1933–2021
Rev Christopher Ryan Nietubicz, 1981–2020
Rev Joseph Arthur Pelto, 1951–2023
Tina Marie Penney, 1961–2020
Judith Moria Perez,* 1937–2017
Rev Donald R Peymann, 1939–2020
Rev William A Qualman, 1952–2021
Rev Daniel B Quinn, 1956–2019
Rev Louis J Redmann (Bud), 1930–2019
Rev Leonard E Ristow, 1929–2019
Kenneth Robbins, 1947–2019
William D Rutherford, 1935–2020
Harold A Rutz, 1930–2020
Rev Dr Stephen Paul Rynearson, 1961–2022
Rev Robert W Schaibley, 1946–2022
Darrell William Schepmann, 1941–2022
Rev Alfred Scholz,* 1927–2019
Walter H Schramm, 1933–2020
Rev Wayne E Schumpe, 1939–2023
Philip A Schuster, 1938–2020
Barbara J Selking, 1956–2019
Bobette Lois Stegall, 1944–2019
Dr Peter L Steinke (Pete), 1938–2020
Rev Henry P Stoeppelwerth, 1932–2019
John R Troutman, 1932–2020
Dr M Leroy Tschatschula, 1928–2019
Rev Henry C Wied Sr, 1951–2020
John Herbert Williams, 1954–2021
Dr Bruce E Wurdeman, 1948–2020
Dr Donald Henry Zielke, 1938–2021
Lester H Zimmerman,* 1933–2016
Melvin C Zoch, 1935–2020

Wyoming District

Rev Vernon C Boehlke, 1933–2021
Carol Ann Caspersen, 1945–2021
Rev Francis Otto Koessel, 1932–2022

This list reflects all deceases reported to the LCMS Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services between July 7, 2019, and July 12, 2023.

* Deceased prior to July 7, 2019, with information received too late to be included in prior list.

INDEX

- abortion 47, 113, 129, 223–24, 227
 African ministry 36, 40, 141–42, 144–46
 Alliance Missionary Program 44, 123, 124
 altar and pulpit fellowship 36, 141–53 *passim*
 Ambassadors of Reconciliation 213
 Ankerberg, Erik 18, 46
 appeals process 174, 178, 189, 214–15
 armed forces ministry 124
 arrangements staff, convention 9, 19
 Atlantic District 11, 17, 18, 21, 23, 167
 Bahkou, Abjar 34, 95–98
 Ball, Benjamin 9, 17, 20, 23, 30, 35, 42, 55, 56, 74, 81–82, 227
 Bender, Peter 20, 23, 30–31, 37, 55
 Berg, John 23, 27
 black ministry, 150th anniversary of 223
 Board of Assignments 180, 216, 218
 boards of regents, *see* regents, boards of
 Brazil, Evangelical Lutheran Church of 20, 31–32, 36, 86, 123
 Buchholz, Kurt 37
 Bull, Bernard 18, 46
 Buss, Allan 17, 18, 23, 30, 55
 California-Nevada-Hawaii District 11, 17, 18, 21, 23
 candidate status 219
 catechesis 30–31, 37, 43, 48
 catechisms 30–31, 37, 43, 48, 50, 193
 Center for Hispanic Studies 35, 109, 119, 161, 163
 Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka 32, 148–49
 Chief Administrative Officer of Synod 9, 17, 20, 175–76
 Chief Financial Officer of Synod 9, 17, 20, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 173, 180, 199–200, 234
 Chief Mission Officer of Synod 9, 17, 18, 52, 53, 117, 125, 175, 212
 Christian conscience 70–71, 225
 Christian, Don 40, 169
 Church and Culture, committee on 23, 46–47
 resolutions on 46–47, 221–25
 church and state 224
 church plants 44, 116–17, 126–27
 Church Triumphant 243–48
 church worker debt 229–30
 church worker recruitment 119, 159–60; *see also* *Set Apart to Serve*
 church worker wellness 119–20, 131, 160, 229
 circuit visitors 39, 120, 165, 196–97, 202–3, 205–6, 209
 circuits 165, 195–97 *passim*
 electoral circuits 197, 204–6, 206–9
 visitation circuits 196–97
 Colloquy Committee 160, 164, 179–80, 236 *passim*
 Commemoration of the Faithful Departed 48; *see also* entered into rest
 Commission on Constitutional Matters 18, 27, 33, 40, 50, 149, 168, 169, 174, 181, 183, 189, 195–204 *passim*, 209–11 *passim*, 213, 216, 237 *passim*
 Commission on Doctrinal Review 18, 138
 Commission on Handbook 18, 149, 196–203 *passim*, 209–16 *passim*, 237–38 *passim*
 Commission on Theology and Church Relations 18, 29, 42–43, 58, 116–18 *passim*, 125, 138–39, 141–57 *passim*, 163, 175, 198, 221–24 *passim*, 234, 235–37 *passim*
 Committee for Convention Nominations, *see* Convention Nominations
 Communion, close(d) 153–55
 Communion, in-person 42, 152–53
 Concordia College Alabama 38, 167
 Concordia College—New York 38, 167
 Concordia Historical Institute 18, 27, 46, 139, 166
 Concordia Plan Services/Worker Benefit Plans 18, 39–40, 119, 120, 159–60, 181, 229–30, 236–37
 Concordia Publishing House 18, 28, 33, 37–38, 43, 58–59, 74, 118, 121, 139, 159–60, 166, 193, 223, 227, 235, 236
 Concordia Seminary 18, 37, 40–41, 50, 60, 107, 109–10, 125, 139, 160, 162
 Concordia Theological Seminary 18, 40–41, 60, 107, 110, 125, 146–47, 160, 162
 Concordia University Chicago 18, 61, 179
 Concordia University, Irvine 18, 37, 61, 179
 Concordia University, Nebraska 18, 61–62, 179
 Concordia University, Portland 38, 167–68
 Concordia University, St. Paul 18, 38, 62, 179
 Concordia University System 18, 38, 47–48, 59–60, 118, 155, 168–92 *passim*, 199–200, 233, 236–38 *passim*
 Concordia University Texas 40, 62, 74, 168–70, 233
 Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor 18, 38, 63, 74, 179
 conflict resolution 52–53, 233–34
 convention, Synod
 arrangements staff 9, 19
 cycle, four-year 52, 211
 delegates, advisory 11–17, 21, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 50, 65–67, 196, 198, 210
 delegates, voting 11–17, 21, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 50, 65–67, 196, 197, 204–10 *passim*, 212
 essays 91–105
 floor committees 23
 location 7, 27, 28
 minutes 27–53
 opening 27, 75–76
 preachers 20
 representatives, advisory 17–19, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 50, 65–66, 197–99
 resolutions
 Church and Culture 221–25
 Delegate 233–34
 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution 213–19
 Finance 193
 International Witness 123–27
 Life Together 134–39
 Mercy 129–33
 National Witness 115–21
 Omnibus 235–38
 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries 159–66
 Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth 227–31
 Structure and Administration 195–212
 Theology and Church Relations 141–57
 University Education 167–92
 schedule 25–26
 sermons 75–90
 staff and guests 19–20, 36–37
 Convention Nominations, Committee for 23, 31, 37, 66, 173–76 *passim*, 210
 floor nominations 31, 37–38, 66–67
 Correlation of Reports, Overtures, and Resolutions 241–42
 Corzine, Jacob 33, 43, 48
 Council of Presidents 27, 29, 35, 38, 39, 116, 118, 119, 125, 126, 135, 155, 156, 162, 164, 167, 173–80 *passim*, 186, 189, 191, 209, 211, 213, 216, 218, 219, 234, 235–37 *passim*
 COVID-19 52, 119, 131, 132–33, 138, 141, 147, 224, 227, 230; *see also* pandemic
 creation 105, 114, 155, 235
 Cross-Cultural Ministry Center 109, 161, 163, 236

- Daenzer, Sean 9, 27, 33, 45, 53
Dawn, Russell 18, 46, 99–102
Day, Bart 31
delegates, *see* convention, Synod
digital resources 121
disaster response work 45, 124, 132
dispute resolution 174, 182–84
passim, 189, 213–19 *passim*
district conventions 195–96, 198, 202, 209, 235
district officers 201–2
district presidents 17, 42, 45, 74, 119–20, 136–37, 153, 159, 161–66
passim, 169, 179, 201, 202, 207, 213–19 *passim*
district youth representatives 21
doctrinal review, *see* Commission on Doctrinal Review
- Eastern District 11, 17, 19, 21, 23
ecclesiastical supervision 44, 46, 124–25, 169, 172, 173, 182, 188–90
passim, 204, 213–19 *passim*; *see also* visitation
- Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution, committee on 23, 38–39, 48
resolutions on 38–39, 48, 213–19
education, continuing 124, 130, 163, 165
Egger, Thomas 18, 20, 40–41, 91–95, 109–11
election process 19, 29–30, 31, 52, 65–67, 195, 197–98, 200–201, 204–10 *passim*, 212, 237, 238
election results 30, 34, 41–42, 42–43, 47–48, 48–49, 51–52, 55–63
electronic voting system 28, 29, 30, 35
emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies 125, 142, 144, 149
English District 11, 17, 19, 21, 23
entered into rest 243–48; *see also* Commemoration of the Faithful Departed
- Esget, Christopher 9, 17, 23, 29, 30, 39, 50–51, 55–56, 74, 82–84, 117, 135
essayists 20
Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology 34–35, 109, 119, 161, 163
Eurasian ministry 35, 124, 147
Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan and Sudan 20, 32, 36, 44, 141–42
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil 20, 31–32, 36, 86, 123
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine 20, 32, 36, 49, 146–48
Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland 20, 32, 36, 43, 142–44
Everts, Ed 18, 44
Every One His Witness 115
- faculty appointments, promotions, terminations 174, 182, 183, 189
family devotions 231
fathers 42, 73, 129, 136, 227–29, 231
fellowship, altar and pulpit 36, 141–53 *passim*
Fiedler, David 18, 38
Finance, committee on 23, 37
resolutions on 37, 193
Finland, Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of 20, 32, 36, 43, 142–44
Finnern, Brady 17, 23, 32, 45, 52, 129
floor committees 23
Florida-Georgia District 11, 17, 19, 21, 23
Forke, Terry 17, 23, 46, 221
FOROs 126–27
Friedrich, Brian 18, 46
Frndak, Keith 18, 44
- gender 34, 43, 113, 117–18, 155–56, 168, 227, 229
Gude, George 18, 33, 50
- Haak, Nathan 9, 17, 34, 35, 38
Hagan, Robert Lee 17, 18, 23, 44, 123
Hardy, Jamison 17, 23, 30, 55
Harmelink, Daniel 18, 27, 46
Harrison, Matthew 9, 17, 18, 20, 27–53 *passim*, 67, 69–74, 75–76, 114, 125, 141–51 *passim*
hearing facilitators 213–15
Hearing Panels 188, 214–15
Hill, John 17, 23, 44, 50, 52, 159
Hispanic Studies, Center for 35, 109, 119, 161, 163
Hoem, Josemon 18, 20, 34, 50, 56, 89–90
human trafficking 45, 130
- Illinois, Central District 11, 17, 19, 21, 23
Illinois, Northern District 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
Illinois, Southern District 17, 19, 21, 23
immigrant ministry 118–19
immigration 105, 118
independent Lutheran congregations 44, 126
Indiana District 12, 17, 19, 21, 23
Institution Advisory Council 174–87 *passim*
International Lutheran Council 105, 114, 143, 148, 151
International Mission, Board for 18, 37–38, 41–42, 57–58, 123–26
passim, 136–37 *passim*, 148, 149, 204, 235
International Mission, Office of 20, 32, 35, 44, 49, 123–27 *passim*, 136, 138, 147, 149, 199, 204
international mission presentations 31, 35, 44, 49
- international partnerships 35, 123–27 *passim*
international theological education 109, 111, 125
International Witness, committee on 23, 44
resolutions on 44, 123–27
Iowa East District 12, 17, 21, 23
Iowa West District 12, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Japan Lutheran Church 36, 150–52
justification 50, 70–73 *passim*, 80, 82, 87, 98, 104, 145
- Kansas District 12, 19, 21, 23, 116
Keefe, Eden 36
Kieschnick, Gerald 20, 47, 150
Koinonia Project 29, 51, 135, 234
Kuhn, Robert 47
Kumm, Michael 18, 44
- laity 29, 52, 117, 135, 145, 163–64, 171, 176, 206, 227, 234
Lange, Peter 9, 17, 18, 20, 27, 30, 55, 73–74, 77–78
Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications 50, 74
Latin American and Caribbean ministry 124, 138
LCMS Board of Directors 18, 27, 31, 34, 44, 46, 56, 65, 168–92 *passim*, 193, 198–204 *passim*, 210, 211, 212, 214, 217, 233, 236–37 *passim*
LCMS Church Relations 20, 36, 125, 147, 150–51
LCMS Communications 19, 118, 159, 223, 230
LCMS Foundation 18, 38
LCMS Life Ministry 32, 129, 224, 235
LCMS Mission Advancement 19, 159, 230
LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services 29, 116, 174, 231
LCMS School Ministry 121, 159, 227, 230, 237
LCMS Youth Ministry 121, 159, 231
Lehenbauer, Joel 18, 141, 221
life, sanctity of 129
Life Together, committee on 23, 29, 50–51
resolutions on 29, 50–51, 134–39
location, convention 7, 27, 28
Lord's Supper 48, 104, 152–55, 157
Lueck, Dwayne 17, 23, 38, 49, 213
Lutheran academic standards 227
Lutheran Bible Translators 40
Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty 45–46
Lutheran Church—Canada 20, 36, 143
Lutheran Church Extension Fund 18, 31, 37, 43, 52, 59, 116, 133, 159, 171, 199–200, 211–12, 223, 229
Lutheran Church of Uganda 20, 32, 36, 144–46

- Lutheran Confessions 69–74 *passim*, 108, 115, 118, 120, 137, 139, 142–57 *passim*, 160, 165, 171–92 *passim*, 207
- Lutheran Early Response Team 132; *see also* disaster response work
- Lutheran education 48, 155, 237; *see also* schools
- Lutheran Heritage Foundation 43, 114, 138, 141
- Lutheran Hour Ministries 37, 121
- Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcome Standards 174–88 *passim*
- Lutheran Laymen’s League 164
- Lutheran Women’s Missionary League 36, 132, 164
- Lutheran World Federation 146
- Lutherans For Life 129
- Making Disciples for Life* 51, 135–36
- Manor, Tiffany 20, 32, 117, 131
- marriage, sanctity of 43–44, 155–56, 229
- Meador, Nathan 28, 48, 88–89
- membership formula, LCEF 199
- mental health and mental illness 35, 45, 120, 130–32
- Mercy, committee on 23, 32
resolutions on 32, 129–33
- Michigan District 12–13, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Mid-South District 13, 17, 19, 21, 23
- military chaplains 18, 21, 45
- Million-Dollar Life Match grant 32, 129
- Ministry, Office of the Holy (Public) 160–64, 236
- ministry, specific, *see* Specific Ministry Pastor Program
- Minnesota North District 13, 17, 21, 23
- Minnesota South District 13, 17, 19, 21, 23
- minutes, convention 27–53
- mission funding 124, 126
- mission priorities 136–37
- missionaries 21, 35, 41, 44, 45, 109–11, 123–25, 144–48 *passim*, 159, 160
- Missouri District 13–14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Montana District 14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- mothers 42, 73, 129, 136, 225, 227–29, 231
- Muehler, Craig 45
- Mueller, Herbert, Jr. 29, 51, 135
- multi-congregation parishes 33, 34, 116, 195–97, 200, 205–9 *passim*
- multi-ethnic outreach 223
- Murray, Scott 9, 17, 23, 29, 30, 38, 40, 46, 55–56, 74, 78–79, 167
- National Mission, Board for 18, 38, 41, 57, 117, 119, 131, 136–37, 178, 204, 235
- National Mission, Office of 20, 34, 116–21 *passim*, 130–33 *passim*, 136, 160, 174, 199, 204, 223, 229, 235–36
- National Witness, committee on 23, 34–35
resolutions on 34–35, 115–21
- natural disasters, response to 132
- Nebraska District 14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Nehrenz, David 17, 23, 34, 115
- New England District 14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- New Jersey District 14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- nomination process 37–38, 65–67, 174, 176, 201, 202–3
- nominees, slate of 55–63
- North Dakota District 14, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Northwest District 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Nour, Nabil 9, 17, 20, 23, 30, 42, 55–56, 74, 84–86
- officers of the Synod 9, 17, 21, 47, 168, 179, 187, 203
- Ohio District 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Oklahoma District 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Omnibus Resolution A 28, 235–37
- Omnibus Resolution B 28–29, 237–38
- Omnibus Resolution C 29, 238
- omnibus resolutions 28–29, 65, 235–38
- online Communion 42, 152–53
- online technology 48, 156
- opening, convention 27, 75–76
- overtures and reports correlated with resolutions 241–42
- Paavola, Roger 17, 23, 37, 193
- Pacific Southwest District 15–16, 17, 19, 21, 23
- pandemic 31, 117, 132–33, 137, 152–53
- parents, authority of 227–29
- partner/other church bodies 27, 31–32, 35, 45, 109, 111, 123–26 *passim*, 141–49, 211–12
- partnerships between churches and church entities 116, 126–27, 170–72
- pastoral formation 45, 107–9, 109–11, 119, 125, 160–62, 236
- Pastoral Formation Committee 45, 116, 162, 236
- Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries, committee on 23, 44–45, 50
resolutions on 44–45, 50, 159–66
- pastor’s wives 165–66
- persecution 43–44, 111–13, 114
- Pfarrgemeinde* 206
- Pohjola, Juhana 20, 32, 36, 43, 102–5, 112, 113, 114, 143–44 *passim*
- post-Christian 48, 105, 116, 156
- Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support 52, 164–65
- Praesidium 73–74, 141–44 *passim*, 149, 183, 191, 202–3, 234
- Preach the Word* 52, 164–65
- preachers, convention 20
- pre-call consultation 216–18
- President, Office of the 9, 20, 116, 156, 188, 208, 235–37 *passim*
- President of the Synod 9, 17, 21, 25, 27–53 *passim*, 65–67 *passim*, 69–74, 125, 141–51 *passim*, 155, 168–91 *passim*, 195, 199, 200–204 *passim*, 207, 208–15 *passim*, 225, 233
- Presidents, Council of, *see* Council of Presidents
- presidents, district, *see* district presidents
- Presidents Emeriti of Synod 20, 47
- President’s Report 28, 69–74, 125, 157
- Preus, Christian 31, 37, 46, 63
- Preus, David 44
- Prieto, Ely 45, 86–87
- procreation 155
- racism 47–48, 222–23
- Räsänen, Päivi 20, 36, 43, 111–13
- Rast, Lawrence, Jr. 18, 30, 40–41, 55, 107–9
- recognized service organizations (RSOs) 118–19, 124, 126, 129, 130, 132, 133, 211, 216–18, 230
- reconcilers 213–14
- regents, boards of
seminaries 18, 37, 48–49, 60, 200
- universities 18, 37–38, 49, 51–52, 61–63, 172, 175, 178, 181–92 *passim*, 200, 238
- regions 30, 34, 41–42, 55–58
Central 30, 38, 41, 55, 57
East-Southeast 30, 34, 41, 42, 55, 56, 57, 58
Great Lakes 30, 34, 41, 55, 56, 57
Great Plains 30, 34, 41, 42, 55, 57, 58
West-Southwest 30, 37, 38, 41, 55, 57, 58
- registered delegates and representatives 11–17, 21
- Registration, Credentials, and Elections, committee on 23, 27, 29–30, 33, 34, 36, 39, 41–42, 42–43, 47–48, 48–49, 50, 51–52
- reports and overtures correlated with resolutions 241–42
- representatives, advisory, *see* convention, Synod
- Residential Alternate Route 161, 162, 164
- residential theological education 107–11 *passim*
- Resolution Action Report 239–40
- resolutions correlated with reports and overtures 241–42
- Robson, Kevin 9, 17, 18, 52, 53, 117, 212
- Rocky Mountain District 16, 17, 19, 21, 23
- Rudowske, Rich 40
- rural ministry 126
- Sailer, Scott 17, 23, 27, 29–30, 33, 34, 36, 39, 41, 42, 47, 48, 50, 51, 63

Sanft, James 18, 39–40
 Saunders, Brian 17, 18, 23, 28, 32, 36, 42, 48, 141, 152
 Scharr, Timothy 17, 23, 33, 39, 52, 195
 schedule, convention 25–26
 Schools, Family, Young Adults, and Youth,
 committee on 23, 42
 resolutions on 42, 227–31
 schools (preschool–high school), *see*
 also Lutheran education
 homeschools 227, 230
 international 28, 237
 LCMS 42, 117–18 *passim*, 136, 155,
 159–60, 216, 227, 230–31
 Schultz, Jonathan 33, 74
 Schwan Charitable Foundation 138
 Secretary, Office of the 20, 29, 200–
 202 *passim*
 Secretary of the Synod 7, 9, 17, 27, 31,
 34, 40, 46, 52, 53, 56, 65–67, 164,
 174–76 *passim*, 184, 198, 200–202
 passim, 209–15 *passim*, 237, 239–
 40
 SELC District 16, 17, 19, 21, 23
 Self Evaluation Tool 163
 SELK 35, 36, 143
 Seltz, Gregory 45
 seminaries 18, 29, 34–35, 40–41, 44,
 45, 107–11, 118, 119, 124, 125, 126,
 130, 139, 152, 159–66 *passim*, 174–
 80 *passim*, 199–200, 224, 234, 236
 passim
 Semtex 39
 Set Apart to Serve 29, 39, 44, 45, 119,
 120, 159, 162
 sexual misconduct 39, 219
 sexuality 34, 43–44, 48, 70–71, 112–
 14, 117–18, 129, 143–44, 155–56, 171,
 227–29 *passim*
 Seyer, Kou 238
 short-term mission opportunities
 124, 127
 Sias, John 7, 9, 17, 18, 27, 34, 53, 56
 Simek, Frank 9, 17, 18
 small congregations 34, 116
 social media 47, 221–22
 South Dakota District 16, 17, 19, 21,
 23
 South Sudan and Sudan, Evangelical
 Lutheran Church in 20, 32, 36, 44,
 141–42
 Southeastern District 16, 17, 19, 21, 23
 Southern District 16–17, 19, 21, 23
 Spanish Language Hymnal
 (*Himnario Luterano*) 138
 Special Standing Rules 27–28, 33,
 44–45, 51, 65–67
 Specific Ministry Pastor Program
 109, 161
 Sri Lanka, Ceylon Evangelical
 Lutheran Church in 32, 148–49
 Structure and Administration,
 committee on 23, 33, 39, 52
 resolutions on 33, 39, 52, 195–212
surplus institutional funds definition
 199–200
 Synod/Corporate Synod 203–4
 Synod corporate entities 124, 126,
 179, 203–4, 211
 teachers 119, 133, 160, 227, 229–30
 Texas District 17, 19, 21, 23
 Theology and Church Relations,
 committee on 23, 32, 36, 42, 48
 resolutions on 32, 36, 42, 48, 141–
 57
 Thomas, Michael 18, 46
 Today's Business staff 9, 20, 35
 Uganda, Lutheran Church of 20, 32,
 36, 144–46
 Ukraine, Evangelical Lutheran
 Church of 20, 32, 36, 49, 146–48
 unity in doctrine and practice 135,
 136–37, 139, 160, 207
 University Education,
 committee on 23, 38, 40–41, 46
 resolutions on 38, 40–41, 46, 167–
 92
 vaccines 223–24, 227
 Vice-Presidents of the Synod 9, 17,
 30, 55–56, 66, 180, 191, 200–201,
 212
 rankings 30, 55–56
 virtual worship 156; *see also* worship,
 in-person corporate
 visitation 74, 168, 172–82 *passim*, 189
 voting process, *see* election process
 Walkout, the 139
 Wille, John 17, 18, 20, 23, 28, 38, 88–
 89
 Winkel model 165
 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran
 Synod 37
 Wisconsin, North District 14–15, 17,
 19, 21, 23
 Wisconsin, South District 16, 17, 19,
 21, 23
 witness training 115
 Wohlrabe, John, Jr. 9, 17, 18, 20, 23,
 30, 33, 55–56, 74, 80–81
 women, conscription of 225
 Worker Benefit Plans, *see* Concordia
 Plan Services
 worship, in-person corporate 51,
 138–39, 152, 224
 Wyoming District 17, 19, 21, 23
 young adults, retaining 231
 youth ministry 115, 137, 231
 Zagore, Robert 229



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