



**LCMS TRIENNIAL MISSION AND
MINISTRY EMPHASES AND PRIORITIES:**

IDEAS AND GUIDANCE

FOR WALKING TOGETHER

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 

LCMS TRIENNIAL MISSION AND
MINISTRY EMPHASES AND PRIORITIES:

IDEAS AND GUIDANCE

FOR WALKING TOGETHER

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (EPH. 4:1). St. Paul is speaking to walkers in the ancient church at Ephesus. Though dead in the trespasses and sins in which they once walked (EPH. 2:1-2), God’s gracious action in Christ made them alive (EPH. 2:4-5). Now, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (EPH. 2:8-9), the church walks in good works according to God’s plan and will (EPH. 2:10). As the apostle exhorts and encourages, let our walk be such that all we do, even in our administration, be done in thanksgiving to the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



LCMS BOARD FOR NATIONAL MISSION AND
LCMS BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION

THE LCMS MISSION AND MINISTRY EMPHASIS FOR THE CURRENT 2019–2022 TRIENNIUM IS ...

Making Disciples for Life

This emphasis is accompanied by **seven mission priorities** which will continue to guide the Synod's ministry through the policymaking work of the LCMS Boards for National Mission (BNM) and International Mission (BIM):

1. Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches;
2. Support and expand theological education;
3. Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries;
4. Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness;
5. Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers;
6. Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry; and
7. Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design.

Under the above-listed emphasis and priorities, the LCMS Offices of National Mission (ONM) and International Mission (OIM) provide resources for congregations, schools, circuits and districts to:

- › Evangelize and disciple the lost;
- › Retain the faithful;
- › Strengthen congregations and schools;
- › Plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multi-cultural communities; and
- › Engage in international mission in partnership with the OIM.

*The foregoing was adopted by the Synod under
2019 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-03A [Yes: 841; No: 20].*

This is your opportunity to further consider and discuss the current 2019–2022 LCMS mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities within your congregation, circuit or district.

- › **Turn to Page 4** for help with the question, “What do the Synod’s current mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities mean?”
- › **Turn to Page 8** for a brief Bible study and discussion guide on the Synod’s current mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities.

After examining the current LCMS mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities, do you have ideas for improving on them (i.e., amendments, deletions or additions)? Have something new you’d like to propose for consideration by the Synod in convention?

- › **Turn to Page 11** for help with the question, “How do I go about proposing or amending the Synod’s triennial mission and ministry emphasis and/or priorities?”
- › **Turn to Page 14** for an infographic guide to submit your ideas for the Synod’s 2022–2025 triennium mission and ministry emphases.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

INTRODUCTION

As adopted by Resolution 4-03A of the 2019 National Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Making Disciples for Life* is the Synod’s mission and ministry emphasis for the current 2019–2022 triennium. It captures both the evangelistic fervor of the New Testament (“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”) and the understanding that disciples of Jesus are taught “all that [Christ has] commanded” so that we may abide in Christ and faithfully serve our neighbor in love.

The current seven mission priorities of the LCMS — also affirmed in 2019 Resolution 4-03A to guide the work of the LCMS Offices of National and International Mission — are, by the grace of God, to complement and support the triennial mission and ministry emphasis *Making Disciples for Life*. What are the current seven mission priorities of the LCMS?

MISSION PRIORITY #1

Plant, sustain and revitalize Lutheran churches

What does this mean?

Congregations, where the Gospel is purely preached and the Sacraments of Christ are rightly administered, are vital to the task of *Making Disciples for Life*. Called to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit, congregations are assemblies of believers in Christ Jesus that are known by tangible gifts from God that create and sustain disciples and by which the church is known to the world. Luther pointed to seven such “marks” of the church:¹

- › The faithful preaching and teaching of God’s Word;
- › Holy Baptism;
- › Holy Absolution;
- › Holy Communion;
- › Called and ordained pastors;
- › Public thanksgiving; and
- › Faithful suffering under the cross of Christ.

By these same gifts, congregations reach out to those who do not know Christ to bring them into the fellowship of saving faith, where they faithfully and regularly receive Jesus in Word and Sacrament so that they might serve their neighbor with the love of Christ in their vocations.

God’s Word plants, sustains and revitalizes congregations and each disciple of Jesus in faith in Christ and love for others. Congregations confess and live under the redemptive work of Christ for sinful humanity and for all of God’s creation, embracing God’s design for men and women, marriage and family, the sanctity of human life, and the sacrificial service of the Christian toward one’s neighbor and the world around them. Christian congregations and their members share in the sweet communion of God’s love and forgiveness

¹ Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Church,” in *Church and Ministry III*, vol. 41 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 148–65.

in Christ as they forgive one another, pray for each other and the world, study God's Word together, offer themselves in acts of mercy and charity to a fallen world, and suffer joyously under the cross with fervent faith in Christ and the glorious hope of the resurrection from the dead. All of this is believed, confessed and shared for the expansion of the kingdom of God when and where our Lord pleases.

MISSION PRIORITY #2

Support and expand theological education

What does this mean?

Making lifelong disciples through the faithful catechesis of individuals and families rests upon the solid foundation and ongoing theological education of our pastors and church workers. Residential seminary education for our pastors and advanced scholarly study for our theologians are vital for the health and well-being of the church and her evangelization of the world (2016 Res. 6-02). Solid, rigorous theological education that emphasizes the study of the Scriptures in their original languages and faithfulness to the Lutheran Confessions is indispensable for passing on the Christian faith and life to the next generation of Christians through faithful catechesis. The pastor must be "able to teach," and he must "hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (1 TIM. 3:2; TITUS 1:9; TABLE OF DUTIES). "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (LUKE 11:28). "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (ROM. 10:17). Faithful service, mercy and love for one's neighbor and the world around us flow out of faith in Christ that is born from and sustained by God's Word. Such theological education enables catechesis to focus rightly upon the application of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to contemporary life and a defense of the Christian faith against challenges from societal trends and false doctrine. The task of theological education serves ongoing teaching and catechesis and involves the local congregation and school, families and individuals, as well as pastors, church workers, seminaries, universities, colleges, international schools, the boards and commissions of the Synod, and our Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs).

MISSION PRIORITY #3

Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries

What does this mean?

Human care is both the fruit of the Gospel and a confession of our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ, whose mercy and grace is extended to all without partiality through the preached Word and Sacraments, calls for the church and disciples of the Lord Jesus to reach out in mercy with human care to all who are in need and to all who suffer under the brokenness of this fallen world. For this reason, human care is performed in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries. Whether in response to a disaster or to a short-term or ongoing human need, Christians have the joyful privilege of sharing Christ's love with others in both temporal and spiritual ways. Included in such human care is the promotion of good health for church workers, congregation members and the community. All human need is rooted in the problem of sin and death, which affects all of creation and for which the Gospel of Christ is the ultimate remedy and source of renewal.

MISSION PRIORITY #4

Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness

What does this mean?

Our life together as members of the Synod — our congregations and her workers — has as its strength the unity of the Christian faith and our mutual and common commitment to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our common confession of faith in Christ calls us out of isolation to work together in love in the mission of proclaiming Christ to those far and near. As disciples of Christ and members of His Body, it is our joy in the Gospel to confess our faith to others. We have an ecumenical responsibility and privilege to boldly confess our faith to the world and to other church bodies, both those who share our confession and those who do not. It is also our joy and privilege in the mission of proclaiming Christ to the nations to join with other churches, partner churches, service organizations, mission societies and other church groups who share our confession of the Gospel.

MISSION PRIORITY #5

Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers

What does this mean?

Pastors and professional church workers are first and foremost disciples of the Lord Jesus. They cannot give to others in the work to which God has called them what they themselves have not received and continue to receive in their own lives. The baptismal life of contrition and repentance that is comforted, strengthened and sustained by the Gospel of Christ and His Sacraments is central to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of every disciple of Jesus and especially our church's workers who are charged to care for others. The Synod and districts, in partnership with RSOs and support agencies, provide ongoing help, support and encouragement to our church workers.

MISSION PRIORITY #6

Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry

What does this mean?

Our schools and youth ministries catechize the next generation of Christians through the living and vibrant heritage of our Lutheran ethos (2016 Res. 8-01A) and in preaching and teaching the faith. Children at every age level are taught to listen to God's Word, to receive His gifts in the Divine Service and catechesis, to pray, to confess, and to live joyously in love for others in their vocations. Youth ministry focuses on equipping our youth to remain faithful to Christ as they encounter the most pressing challenges to the Word of God from a godless society. Our schools and youth ministries are engaged in the promotion of both church-work vocations and faithful service to society in secular callings. Enhancement of our schools includes an emphasis upon doctrine and practice that is faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, curricula that is informed by the educational and catechetical reforms of the Lutheran Reformation, schools that are closely aligned with our congregations, affordable tuition, recruitment and training of Lutheran teachers and administrators, and resources for assisting congregations in the establishment of new schools.

What is the Lutheran ethos? It is:

- › Daily prayer that utilizes Holy Scripture, Luther's Small Catechism, the hymnal and the liturgical tradition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church;

- › The centrality of the forgiveness of sins;
- › Memorization of Holy Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism;
- › Ongoing training of teachers in Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions;
- › Integration of our scriptural and confessional worldview with music and all the arts, sciences and academic disciplines, recognizing these disciplines as gifts of God in their own right;
- › An understanding of the place of law in the secular and spiritual kingdoms;
- › Honor and respect for parents and authorities as representatives of God;
- › A partnership and involvement with parents in every aspect of their child's education and spiritual growth; and
- › The promotion of Christian vocation characterized by faith in Christ and love for one's neighbor.

MISSION PRIORITY #7

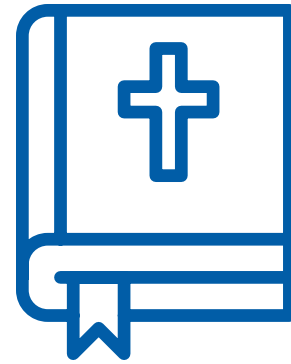
Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design

What does this mean?

In making lifelong disciples, our Synod is committed to promoting and strengthening God's gift of Christian marriage and family life in a culture that is becoming increasingly secularized and anti-Christian. God has created mankind in His image (GEN. 1:26-27) and has designed the family wherein each member is given a holy vocation. Yet, this created order is under attack by the sinful flesh, the world and the devil. A Christian view of marriage, life and family is in accord with the Word of God and embraces and confesses the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. (See 2016 Res. 14-01; 14-02A; 14-03A; 14-04; 14-08A; 16-02A; 16-03.)

What does such support and strengthening of the family include?

- › The defense and nurture of the vulnerable and defenseless from the threats of abortion; euthanasia; sexual and domestic abuse; neglect and abuse of the elderly, infirm and disabled; and any medical and/or technological manipulation that seeks to change the very good creation of male and female, or that strives to modify what it means to be *human* according to the Word of God.
- › The service of men and women who are single in the Body of Christ, either by choice, gift or circumstance (MATT. 19).
- › The biblical understanding of being a single man (MATT. 19), a husband (GEN. 1-2; EPH. 5:25-33) or a father (GEN. 1; PROV. 22:6).
- › The biblical understanding of being a single woman (MATT. 19), a wife (GEN. 1-2; EPH. 5:22-24) or a mother (GEN. 1; TITUS 2:3-5).
- › The biblical understanding of sacrificial love, mutual submission, headship and subordination within Christian marriage and family, and how this manifests itself in the church (EPH. 5:1-6:9).
- › Serving families and individuals who suffer from the pain and isolation of barrenness, divorce, death, disability and other manifestations of the brokenness caused by original sin.
- › Providing support and encouragement to find fulfillment in how God has created us as male and female, and to receive His gifts of marriage and family with joy.



Making Disciples for Life and the Seven Mission Priorities of the LCMS

THE CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

“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. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (MATT. 28:19–20). Baptizing into Christ and teaching His Word is central to the pattern of making disciples of Jesus for life! Jesus’ catechesis of His disciples made it possible for them to be faithful in their vocations, enduring persecution, confessing Christ and loving their neighbor as Christ had loved them. As the New Testament record makes clear, the apostles continued Jesus’ catechesis in the task of *Making Disciples for Life*.

The Book of Acts clearly establishes that which is foundational for the church: the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. The preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name is always done “according to the Scriptures” of the Old Testament and is creedal in nature, proclaiming all that Christ has done through His suffering, death and resurrection. This content and pattern of preaching was established by Jesus after His resurrection (LUKE 24:44–49; MATT. 28:16–20). Those who are called to repentance and faith by the apostolic preaching are baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (ACTS 2:38–39). This pattern of preaching and baptizing in the Book of Acts demonstrates the teaching of the Augsburg Confession that centers on the justification of sinners before God by grace through faith:

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. (Augsburg Confession, Article IV)

So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [JOHN 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [JOHN 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake. (Augsburg Confession, Article V)¹

¹ Paul T. McCain et al., eds., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 33.

There is no set form of church polity or church government in the Book of Acts. The church is created by the Word of God, and the church is governed by the Word of God. Jesus sent out His apostles to preach the Gospel “according to the Scriptures” of the Old Testament. As the Word was received, converts were baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. The newly baptized “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (ACTS 2:42).

Congregations of baptized disciples continued to gather around the preached Word and “the breaking of bread” in the Divine Service. Men were trained and ordained by the apostles to be pastors (elders) of these congregations (TITUS 1:5-9). Their work centered in the ongoing teaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments. The congregations also sent out missionaries to spread the Gospel and assist congregations in other parts of the world (ACTS 13:1-3). The church — her ministers and the baptized faithful — continues to train, call and ordain pastors and missionaries today for the same purpose.

Faith in Christ manifests itself in acts of mercy and charity toward the needy and persecuted Christians, as well as in the temporal support of faithful ministers of the Gospel (MATT. 25:34-40; ACTS 4:32-35; 11:27-30). Faithful teaching of the Gospel (catechesis), which grounds the faith of the disciples of Jesus in the apostolic and prophetic Scriptures, is the most important work of the holy ministry in the Book of Acts and for the church in every age. The preaching of the Gospel and the church’s confession of the truth does not flinch in the face of opposition and persecution (JOHN 15:18, 20). The apostles boldly confessed the faith before both religious and civil authorities (ACTS 4:17-20; 26). Wherever the Gospel and Sacraments are faithfully preached and administered, persecution and suffering follow as testimony of the church’s faithfulness to Christ (MATT. 16:18; 28:20; ACTS 4:23-31). Persecution comes both from unbelievers on the outside of the church and from false brethren from within (ACTS 14:1-7; 15:1-11).

The confession of the truth of the Gospel in creed and preaching, and the faithful administration of the Sacraments of Christ, are those things that create and constitute the church. What the church does in her life, worship, service and suffering identify her in this world as the holy bride of Christ. Luther’s seven “marks of the church” are in evidence throughout the Book of Acts and the missionary journeys of Paul. They indicate how the church is to be recognized in the world and what gifts she possesses²:

1. The Holy **Word of God** (orally preached, taught and confessed).
2. The **Sacrament of Holy Baptism** (taught, believed and administered).
3. The **Sacrament of the Altar** (rightly administered, believed and received according to Christ’s institution).
4. The exercise of the **Office of the Keys** publicly. “Where one sees sins forgiven or reproved in some persons, be it publicly or privately, one may know that God’s holy people are there.”
5. The **calling of men** into the Office of the Ministry to preach, to baptize, to absolve and to administer the Sacraments.
6. The use of **prayer, public praise and thanksgiving to God** according to the Scriptures. (The Lord’s Prayer prayed and taught; psalms and other spiritual songs used in accordance with the Word of God and true faith; also, the creed, the Ten Commandments and the catechism used in public.)
7. The **enduring of suffering and persecution** (the holy cross). “They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord’s Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ.”

² LW 41: 148-65.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Making Disciples for Life is Jesus' Great Commission to the church and her ministers. The mission priorities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod lay out for the Synod how the Offices of National Mission and International Mission are to carry out our Lord's Great Commission.

Study and discuss the seven mission priorities of the LCMS, utilizing the preceding essay on “The Church in the Book of Acts” and the assigned Scripture references under each mission priority. How does each mission priority capture themes highlighted in the essay and in the Scripture references cited? What other Scripture passages or references from the Lutheran Confessions might underscore each mission priority?

MISSION PRIORITY #1

Plant, sustain and revitalize Lutheran churches

Scripture reference: Acts 14:21–28

MISSION PRIORITY #2

Support and expand theological education

Scripture reference: 2 Timothy 3:10–4:5

MISSION PRIORITY #3

Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries

Scripture reference: Romans 15:25–28

MISSION PRIORITY #4

Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness

Scripture reference: 1 Peter 4:7–11

MISSION PRIORITY #5

Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers

Scripture reference: Galatians 5:22–6:2

MISSION PRIORITY #6

Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry

Scripture reference: Deuteronomy 6:4–7

MISSION PRIORITY #7

Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design

Scripture reference: Ephesians 5:15–6:4

Challenge question: At the conclusion of your study and discussion, are there any themes from the Scriptures concerning the mission emphasis *Making Disciples for Life* that are not captured by the current mission priorities of the Synod?

Overtures to the Synod in convention: On the basis of your study and discussion of the Synod's mission emphasis and mission priorities, would you consider recommending to your congregation, circuit convocation or district an overture to the national convention that would refine, expand or alter our triennial mission and ministry emphasis?

The Boards for National and International Mission warmly welcome your feedback to the Synod's chief mission officer, Rev. Kevin D. Robson (Kevin.Robson@lcms.org), to assist in our assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities. We look forward to continuing to work together in this important task.



LCMS TRIENNIAL MISSION AND MINISTRY EMPHASES AND PRIORITIES: SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

How are you involved in proposing or amending actions taken by the Synod?

Even as we are each called by name and washed into the name of our God, so we are all called to be part of the body, His church. We read in the Scriptures that the church met to discuss the issues affecting the body at large, the individual congregations and even the individuals who make up the church (ACTS 15; ROM. 12; 1 COR. 11-12). We, too, in the LCMS gather together to discuss things that affect us all. We govern ourselves. We are prayerful stewards. We devise and implement plans, policies and procedures to serve our Lord Christ and His people.

One such gathering is our triennial Synod convention. At the most recent convention in Tampa (2019), amid discussions and study of God's Word and in fulfillment of LCMS bylaws established in support of the Synod's restructuring in 2010, convention delegates again adopted a triennial mission emphasis and in so doing also affirmed seven continuing mission priorities for the Synod. These belong to the Synod; they were voted on by the representatives of our districts, circuits and congregations.

Why are the triennial mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities important? What role do they play in our life together in the Synod?

The triennial mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities adopted by Synod in Convention form the "establishing framework" for the work done by national Synod, districts and congregations. At the national Synod level, the emphasis and priorities drive the ends policies established by Boards for International and National Mission (BIM and BNM); the development of strategic and operational plans by the Offices of International and National Mission (in fulfillment of BIM and BNM ends policies), as well as the other Synod units (Pastoral Education, Mission Advancement and Communications); and day-to-day decision-making by Synod executive leadership, including the president of Synod and management staff, in fulfillment of strategic and operational plans. Moreover, all of the Synod's districts, circuits and congregations are encouraged to embrace the Synod triennial mission and ministry emphasis and mission priorities and attain goals corresponding thereto in their working and walking together as God's people.

How do I know that Synod is doing what the members of Synod want?

The current seven Synod mission priorities reflect our agreement regarding how we will work together in the glorious calling from our Savior to be His body. These priorities guide the shaping and fulfillment of ends policies and actions, especially when decisions are made concerning how to live out the mission and how to focus our efforts. They form the scaffolding around which the most important work of our Synod is done, based on the foundation of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. They are constant reminders — "Let's get back to what's most important to us as a church body."

A bit of history ...

The current triennial mission emphasis, *Making Disciples for Life*, was newly adopted in 2019. It replaced *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*, which was first adopted in 2013. Six of the current seven mission priorities were adopted in 2013, with a seventh being added in 2016. All seven mission priorities were re-confirmed with no changes at the 2019 convention. All of which is to say, every convention since the Synod's restructuring in 2010 seems to have taken the general position that its triennial mission emphases and priorities are to be long-standing and robust, holding up across triennial convention cycles.

These are not “here today and gone tomorrow” statements, nor are they “shelved” between conventions. They constitute the “living framework” for mission and ministry planning that reflects and drives the continuous, sustained nature of the church's work, both on the national (Synod) and local (district, circuit and congregation) level. On that basis, the Synod in convention thus far has taken a posture that our mission emphases and priorities generally should not be localized or time-bound to the near term, since these guide the long-term work of the Synod, districts, circuits and congregations.

What else might I consider about the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases and priorities?

This resource is meant as a helpful guide to encourage you to become familiar with the emphases and priorities. Read them. Study them. What do they mean? How would it look if these priorities were enacted? Do you agree that these are the priorities according to which our Synod ought to accomplish its work? How do these mission priorities reflect the life of your congregation? Would you like to orient your congregation's work to align more closely with one or more of these priorities? Do you have some suggestions for revision or elimination of any these priorities? Do you have an idea for an additional priority that might encourage the church to further live out our calling in Christ?

The mission emphases and priorities drive the decisions made at the Synod level. And these decisions in turn affect you through your district, circuit and congregation — all of us in our life together. You are warmly invited to take part in the ongoing conversation to help improve, implement and enrich these emphases and priorities.

The BNM and BIM ask you to join in this ongoing discussion about the work of God in this world, especially as He works within and through the LCMS. Do these current mission emphasis and priorities of the Synod sit well with you? Is something missing? Do you think we could word them better? Synod Bylaw 4.2.1 (d) states, “The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention.” You are part of the process to implement and improve them. In that, you are essential.

Overtures to amend the wording of the current mission emphasis and seven mission priorities (to clarify, amplify, regroup, provide course correction) are legitimate, appropriate, and welcomed! (We've seen some of this in the way of overtures submitted to recent (i.e. the 2016 and 2019) conventions. See the convention workbooks at lcms.org/convention for examples.

What may my congregation consider as we study the emphasis and priorities?

How do the current mission and ministry emphasis and priorities line up with the work of your congregation or school? Do they sound like things your church seeks to do? Do they sound foreign to your situation? Are there some that encourage you to continue in the work already going on? Are there some that open new ideas and new vistas of ministry that you had not yet considered?

What's next? Any tips on how to proceed?

If you would like to amend the Synod's current mission and ministry emphasis and/or priorities or propose new ones, there are some things to keep in mind:

- › Mission and ministry emphases and priorities to be adopted by the Synod national convention normally would not reflect an opportunity or issue(s) affecting only one district or overseas foreign mission area of Synod.
- › Mission and ministry emphases and priorities to be adopted by the Synod national convention normally would not reflect a discrete, time-bound, short-duration project or just one operating unit within the corporate Synod structure. The convention delegates could be convinced otherwise, but an overture going in the other direction (proposing localized or time-bound priorities) probably will need to argue the case in the overture's WHEREASes.
- › Mission and ministry emphases and priorities to be adopted by the Synod national convention are most effective when worded succinctly, using individual words, phrases or sentences, not paragraphs or essays.
- › Mission and ministry emphases and priorities to be adopted by the Synod national convention ought to be inspirational and lend themselves to the setting of specific desired outcomes, goals and progress measurements.
- › The author of an overture for a "new" mission priority might consider whether it fits "under" a current mission priority and whether that current mission priority might be better modified or amended to fit the author's intended concept. The layering of more mission priorities on top of a rather large list of current priorities (seven) might make nothing a priority.

Study. Discuss. Revise. And pray that God's Kingdom would certainly come among us also!

The Convention From Overture to Action

In 2021, pastoral and lay delegates will gather in the 35 districts of the Synod for their 2021 district conventions. Together, they'll make important decisions regarding the business of their districts, and direct other work toward the 2022 convention of the Synod. But how does it all come together? How is input provided? Follow the road of an overture to a district convention!



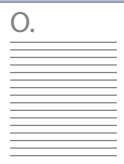
OR



This means you!

Your LCMS member congregation can bring your ideas or concerns before your circuit's forum or your district's convention.

2021



LCMS congregations and circuits write and submit overtures to the president of their district.

overtures due:

Date set by each district

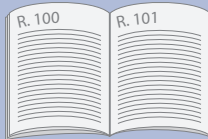
Overtures are reviewed by the president, accepted (or not) and assigned to a floor committee.



Floor committees determine content and priority of resolutions.

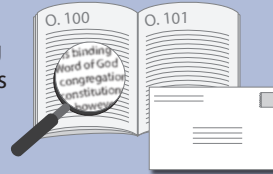


The proposed resolutions are made available in *Today's Business* (may occur immediately prior to district convention).



Today's Business available by: **Date set by each district**

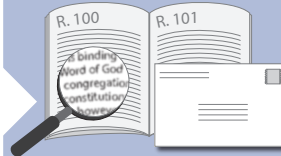
Congregations, pastors and lay delegates, among others, express comments on overtures in the *Convention Workbook* to their district secretary.



comments due: **Date set by each district**

The district publishes accepted overtures in the *Convention Workbook*, generally both in print and online.

Convention Workbook available by: **Date set by each district**



Responses to the proposed resolutions may be submitted to the chairman of the appropriate floor committee.

responses due: **Date set by each district**

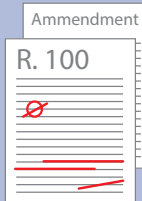
Open hearings are held by floor committees to receive input on resolutions.



All are welcome to participate at the open hearings.

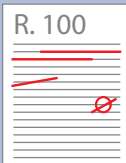
Generally, immediately prior to district convention

Convention delegates review, discuss, amend and vote to adopt or decline resolutions.



R. 100

☐ **ADOPT**
☐ **DECLINE**



Floor committees finalize resolutions to be presented to the convention delegates for consideration.

Occurs during convention

Resolutions impact work of the district and may forward overtures to the Synod convention.



Overture

A recommendation in the form of a proposed resolution requesting action on the part of the convention.



Resolution

A formal, written proposal that certain actions be taken or that a certain statement express the sense, opinion, desire or will of the assembly.

Floor Committees

All reports and overtures accepted by the president shall be referred to floor committees appointed by the president.

Check **with your district** for more information and updates.