2019 CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Making Disciples for Life
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) gathers once every three years for a national convention, which is the principal legislative assembly for the church. While the convention is a time for worship, fellowship and sharing information, its primary purpose is to conduct the church’s business. Delegates from each district gather to take official action to amend the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws, consider reports and overtures, adopt mission priorities for the Synod, provide program direction, authorize affiliation or discontinue affiliation with other church bodies and much more.

Prior to the most recent Synod convention, held in Tampa, Fla., in July 2019, 590 overtures were submitted to the LCMS Office of the President. Overtures are proposals for resolutions to be presented at the convention, requesting that the delegation take action on some matter. These overtures are printed in the Convention Workbook made available in April prior to the convention. Floor committees then review all the overtures and reports and prepare resolutions to present to the convention delegation for consideration and action.

Resolutions were presented and adopted at the 2019 Synod convention over a period of 4.5 days of business. The Synod thanks the many delegates who studied and debated the issues, listened to reports and information, and made decisions to adopt or decline the resolutions presented.

The following pages highlight several resolutions adopted at convention. To see all the resolutions presented, go to the 2019 Convention Proceedings found here: lcms.org/doc/2019-proceedings
Resolution 1-01A, “To Encourage God’s People to Engage in Active Witness”
Over the years, the Synod in convention has encouraged congregations to make witnessing and evangelism a top priority in their ministry efforts. This resolution calls on LCMS districts, congregations and others to utilize the *Every One His Witness*® (*E1HW*) evangelism program, while also encouraging the LCMS Office of National Mission to create more *E1HW* resources and to make them more widely available to LCMS entities.

Resolution 1-02, “To Encourage the Planting of Churches”
By adopting this resolution, the Synod in convention reaffirms the LCMS’ first mission priority to “plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches.” The resolution also encourages congregations, circuits and districts to think strategically and plan collaboratively to establish new mission plants.

Resolution 1-03, “To Study Shared Ministry among Small Congregations”
More than 15% of the Synod’s congregations currently operate in dual- or multi-congregation arrangements, and this is likely to increase in the future. This resolution asks the LCMS Office of National Mission, in collaboration with the Council of Presidents, to prepare a report for the 2022 convention with recommendations to assist small congregations in developing strategies related to shared ministry.

Resolution 1-05A, “To Strengthen Multi-Ethnic Outreach”
Many congregations of the LCMS are located in areas with diverse cultures, races and age groups, but the LCMS remain ethnically homogenous. This resolution encourages LCMS districts, congregations and pastors to look for ways to reach out to these populations and bring them into the church. It also calls on the LCMS Office of National Mission to provide resources to assist with this, while reaffirming programs that form church workers from different ethnic groups.

Resolution 1-06A, “To Support Marriage, Life, and Family”
Changing cultural views on marriage and life are undermining the family and causing harm to society. With this resolution, the Synod in convention asks the LCMS Office of National Mission to implement the seventh mission priority (“Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God’s design”) by generating resources and strategies to counter the culture, while also encouraging, uplifting and equipping the Body of Christ in all three areas.

Resolution 2-06, “To Encourage Support of Short-Term International Mission Activities”
The LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM) encourages short-term international mission activities that are in line with what the church believes, teaches and confesses. This resolution calls for the “LCMS Best Practices in Short-Term Mission” document to be revised by the OIM and the Board for International Mission to clear up any confusion in this matter.

Resolution 2-07, “To Strengthen and Encourage the Partnership of our Congregations in International Mission through the Board for International Mission”
Natural disasters, terrorist activities and other types of unrest place an ever-greater burden of responsibility both on those sending missionaries and those who are sent. Therefore, this resolution reaffirms the voluntary partnership of congregations described in Bylaw 3.8.3 and gives thanks for the 19,602 contributors who gave more than $41 million to support missionaries through the LCMS Office of International Mission.

Resolution 2-09, “To Encourage and Support International Theological Education by the Synod and Our Seminaries in Aid of World Lutheran Churches”
Many world Lutheran churches, including our long-established international partner churches, look to the Synod’s seminaries to assist them with theological education. This resolution endorses our seminaries’ continued engagement in this work through collaboration with the Board for International Mission, the chief mission officer, the Office of International Mission and the Office of Pastoral Education.
Resolution 3-01, “To Commend and Give Thanks for the Work of Synod regarding Disaster Response”
LCMS Disaster Response partners with districts, Recognized Service Organizations and other partners to serve many people during and after hurricanes, earthquakes and other disasters. This resolution gives thanks to God for this work of the church and encourages the Synod to continue to stand ready to serve as needed when disasters strike in the U.S. or around the world.

Resolution 4-03A, “To Commend to Synod Priorities for Mission and Ministry Emphasis for the 2019–2022 Triennium”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention adopted Making Disciples for Life as its mission and ministry emphasis for the 2019–22 triennium and directed the Offices of National Mission and International Mission to provide resources to congregations, schools, circuits and districts to help them carry this out.

Resolution 4-05, “To Commend the Celebration of the 175th Anniversary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 2022”
April 26, 2022, will be the 175th anniversary of the founding of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Resolution 4-05 asks the LCMS president’s office to coordinate a date for Synodwide celebration of this milestone, so that all LCMS Lutherans would be encouraged to seek new opportunities for the future of our joyful ministry.

Resolution 4-11A, “To Encourage the Study of the Doctrine of Close(d) Communion and Faithful Practice in All Congregations”
By passing this resolution, the Synod in convention resolves to encourage the study of God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions by all members of the Synod in order to educate about the necessity of adhering to the practice of close(d) Communion.

Resolution 5-07, “To Clarify the Relationship between LCMS Partner Churches and the Lutheran World Federation”
The LCMS is not a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which is a proponent of women’s ordination, acceptance of the LGBT lifestyle, and the use of a higher critical approach to interpreting Scripture. However, some of the Synod’s partner churches are. This resolution asks the LCMS Office of the President to compile information about this and to make recommendations to the 2022 Synod convention on addressing the relationship between partner churches and the LWF.

Resolution 5-08, “To Commend and Support the International Lutheran Council”
This resolution gives thanks for the International Lutheran Council (ILC), of which the LCMS is a part; commends the ILC for its work in strengthening worldwide Lutheran churches; and encourages LCMS members to learn about the organization and continue to support it.

Resolution 5-09A, “To Confess the Biblical Six-Day Creation, to Encourage Pastoral Conferences to Study Our Synod’s Statements on Creation, and to Help Congregations Concertedly Address Issues Related to the Intersections of Faith and Science”
This resolution calls on pastors to discuss with each other and with their people, especially their young people, issues related to the intersection of faith and science. By leading thoughtful discussions on these topics, Lutheran laypeople will be able to remain faithful to their confession, while honestly addressing the findings of scientists and the challenges they raise for Christian thought.

Resolution 5-11, “To Address Questions about Unity in Doctrine and Uniformity and Variety in Practice”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention directs the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations to prepare a study document on the issue of the relationship between unity in doctrine and uniformity and variety in practice, together with a Bible study on this issue specifically designed for congregational use, discussion and guidance.
Resolution 6-01, “To Support and Participate in the Comprehensive Church Worker Recruitment Initiative”
In fall 2018, the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, under the chief mission officer and in collaboration with participants of a special Pastoral Formation Summit, launched a comprehensive, multiyear church worker formation initiative to address an anticipated shortage of ordained and commissioned ministers. This resolution calls on all constituents of the LCMS to commend, financially support and directly participate in this initiative.

Resolution 6-02, “To Promote Residential Seminary Education as the Preferred Option for the Preparation of Men for Pastoral Ministry”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention reaffirms that residential seminary education is the preferred option for men studying for the pastoral ministry. It also calls for those in the Synod to recruit and direct men to the residential route, and asks the Pastoral Formation Committee to evaluate the recommendations of the 2016 Res. 13-03 Task Force and deliver a report to the 2022 convention.

Resolution 6-03A, “To Enhance the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program”
For over a decade the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program has provided the LCMS an opportunity to care for flocks in specific Word and Sacrament ministry contexts. This resolution commends SMP pastors and vicars for their service, while also calling on the appropriate groups to work to enhance the curriculum and standards of the SMP program between the two seminaries, draft guidelines to enhance the mentorship and supervision of these pastors, and report on the optimal timing for vicarage and ordination at the 2022 convention.

Resolution 6-04, “To Support, Encourage, and Expect Continuing Education for all Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Pastors”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention affirms its desire for all LCMS pastors to be engaged in continuing education from the time of their first call and to keep current the self-reporting question on the SET. Pastors are encouraged to utilize Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS), resources from the Synod’s seminaries, and other qualified continuing-education experiences.

Resolution 6-05, “To Thank Those Involved in Rostering Licensed Lay Deacons”
This resolution thanks all those who assisted in carrying out 2016 Res. 13-02A, including the LCMS Colloquy Committee and regional colloquy committees, district and Synod staff, the faculties of the Synod’s two seminaries, and all licensed lay deacons (LLD) who through the SMP program or SMP colloquy have joined or will be joining the ministerium of the LCMS.

Resolution 6-06, “To Give God Praise and Glory for Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne’s 175th Anniversary”
Since its founding in 1846, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), has provided the church with nearly 10,000 pastors and missionaries. As the seminary begins its 175th academic year in September 2020, the people of the LCMS are encouraged to give thanks to God for His grace to us through CTSFW and to continue partnering with CTSFW in its mission to form servants for Jesus Christ.

Resolution 6-07, “To Support and Utilize Preach the Word”
The LCMS president’s office initiated Preach the Word as an ongoing project in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation to help pastors work together to improve their preaching through video modules and by interacting with seminary professors and fellow preachers. This resolution encourages pastors and congregations to make use of Preach the Word for their continuing education.
Resolution 7-02, “To Nurture Our Lutheran System of Higher Education”
The institutions of the Concordia University System (CUS) have been serving as lights of the Gospel for
more than 150 years. This resolution calls upon the Synod to support the CUS by affirming the Lutheran
identity efforts of the CUS schools, affirming that the schools educate both church workers and laypeople, and
promoting education opportunities and teaching opportunities at the schools.

Resolution 7-03, “To Direct a Collaborative Process to Propose a New Governance Plan”
Higher education faces an uncertain future. To help ensure the institutions of the Concordia University
System (CUS) can withstand future ups and downs, this resolution asks the Synod’s Board of Directors, with
the involvement of other partners, to propose a new governance plan for the CUS for consideration by the
2022 convention. This report shall be disseminated to the Synod for review no later than 15 months prior to
the convention.

Resolution 7-08, “To Aid Our CUS Schools in Clear Confession”
As educational institutions of the LCMS, the colleges and universities of the Concordia University System (CUS)
confess the faith of the church. This resolution affirms that all students at CUS schools who seek to come and
learn should be welcomed with love and respect; however, it also prohibits the affirmation or celebration of sinful
behavior through groups, clubs or official campus activities. The Synod president and other appropriate parties are
encouraged to exercise ecclesiastical and other supervision over these institutions.

Resolution 8-03, “To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod”
Following resolutions adopted at the 2010 and 2016 Synod conventions, the LCMS has continued to expand
financial transparency. This resolution gives thanks to God for the resources He has given and commends the
LCMS chief financial officer and accounting department, while encouraging the Synod and its other entities to
continue timely and transparent reporting.

Resolution 11-01A, “To Give Guidance and Encourage Action on Beginning-of-Life Issues”
The 2016 LCMS convention approved the formation of a task force to study issues relating to procreation,
fertility and care for the unborn. This task force’s recommendations, adopted in this resolution, are to
commend the paper “The Child as a Gift of God” to the Synod for study and reflection, to urge the director of
Life and Health Ministries position be filled, to encourage the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
to revisit its documents on beginning-of-life issues, and to encourage LCMS members and entities to give
increased attention to these issues.

Resolution 11-02A, “To Encourage Faithfulness regarding Marriage”
Public opinion, popular culture and government decisions cannot change what God has established. Therefore,
with this resolution the Synod in convention reaffirms its commitment to the biblical definition of marriage,
and agrees to teach and confess the scriptural doctrine and practice of marriage with renewed effort.

Resolution 11-03A, “To Encourage Synod to Develop Resources to Aid Congregations and Schools regarding
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues”
LCMS church workers and laity have asked for guidance in pastoral care for those struggling with same-sex
attraction and gender identity issues. This resolution addresses those requests by encouraging LCMS pastors
and congregations to minister compassionately to those who are struggling, while affirming biblical truth and
utilizing resources from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Concordia Publishing House
and other sources.
Resolution 11-04A, “To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities”
Racism denies the biblical truth that all humanity has a common origin in Adam and is contrary to the law of love. Therefore, this resolution calls on the Synod to publicly condemn the sin of racism in all its manifestations, while working toward racial reconciliation and equality within the church and society. In addition, LCMS members are encouraged to utilize the 1994 CTCR document *Racism and the Church.*

Resolution 11-05A, “To Encourage Responsible Citizenship and Compassion Toward Neighbors Who Are Immigrants Among Us”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention commends for study and discussion the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations’ report *Immigrants Among Us: A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues* (2012), together with the Bible study based on the report. Members of the congregations of the Synod are encouraged to see immigrants and strangers as their neighbors, while sharing the Gospel and giving a bold witness against inhumane treatment and attitudes toward immigrants, refugees and minorities.

Resolution 11-07A, “To Remember the Persecuted Church”
Around the world, Christians continue to be killed and church properties damaged or destroyed due to the faith. With this resolution, the Synod in convention encourages Lutherans to pray for Christians who are being persecuted, support the LCMS Office of International Mission, and utilize resources such as the “Pray for Us” calendar and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations’ Bible study *Why Are You Persecuting Me? A Christian Response to Hostility and Persecution.*

Resolution 12-01A, “To Commend and Give Thanks for our Lutheran Early Childhood Centers, Elementary Schools, and High Schools”
The establishment of Lutheran schools has been a priority of faithful Lutherans since before they joined to form the Synod. This resolution encourages all congregations to support, revitalize and plant school ministries in their areas, while commending the Blue Ribbon Committee for Lutheran Schools and giving thanks for all those who serve in Synod schools.

Resolution 12-02A, “To Exhort the Congregations of the LCMS to Actively Encourage Future Lutheran School Teachers”
A Lutheran school with a strong Lutheran ethos has LCMS-trained teachers who are committed to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, yet the number of new commissioned teachers has steadily declined since 2005. This resolution encourages congregations to support Lutheran administrators and teachers, while also working to raise up future Lutheran school teachers.

Resolution 12-03A, “To Encourage Lifelong Catechesis in the Home and Church”
It is the duty of parents to pass the faith on to their children. With this resolution, the Synod in convention encourages congregations to equip parents, guardians and members to be lifelong learners of the faith through the use of the Bible, the Small Catechism, the Lutheran Confessions and other resources.

Resolution 12-04A, “To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation”
Beginning in 2019, the LCMS Mid-South District began implementing the *Generation to Generation* pilot study in conjunction with the Concordia Center for the Family at Concordia University Wisconsin. This resolution asks district presidents and staff to read the findings of this study by the end of 2020 and look for ways to implement the recommendations in their own ministries. District presidents should then include the results from their own districts in the 2022 Workbook.
Resolution 12-05A, “To Take Further Steps in the Retention of College-Age Students in Synod Congregations”
LCMS Youth Ministry’s study “Retention of Lutheran Millennials: 2017 LCMS Study of Young Adults” found that the LCMS retains only one in three member children into adulthood. This resolution encourages pastors and laity to read the study. It also asks LCMS Youth Ministry to develop a resource to help churches retain post-high school youth and calls on LCMS U to create a user-friendly database to help parents and church workers connect young people to local ministries near their new school or job.

Resolution 12-06A, “To Create a Searchable Database for ‘Cradle-to-Grave’ Resources”
The modern world challenges many of the tenets of the Christian faith. That’s why this resolution calls on Concordia Publishing House (CPH) to continue to produce a searchable database of its discipling resources arranged according to stages of life. The resolution also asks CPH to identify areas where future resources are needed and to fill those gaps.

Resolution 12-07B, “To Strengthen the Family as the Center of Discipleship”
With this resolution, the Synod in convention calls on ordained and commissioned ministers, congregations and schools to focus on equipping parents, grandparents and other faith leaders to instill an active Lutheran faith in the home. The resolution also encourages the use of resources such as LetUsPray and Making Disciples for Life in this task.