



2016 **CONVENTION** **RESOLUTION UPDATE**



© 2017 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
888-THE LCMS • *lcms.org*

This work may be reproduced by a churches and schools for their own use.
Commercial reproduction, or reproduction for sale, of any portion of this
work or of the work as a whole, without the written permission of the copy-
right holder, is prohibited.



Dear Delegates!

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Many things have been moving according to the directives of the 2016 LCMS Convention. We've gathered together a report for you which includes snippets on progress.

I am *most* pleased with the progress on Resolution 1-01 "To Expand Evangelism and Encourage Use of *Every One His Witness*™." Staff have been training folks far and wide in this very natural way of reaching people in our individual spheres of life. Many districts are all in.

The new *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* is fantastic. It was field tested, and many improvements were made based on the church's suggestions. It will come off the press just about Reformation Day 2017.

Of course, at this moment we are deep into the work of disaster response as a result of Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Hurricane Irma in Florida and the southeastern U.S. The Synod's outpouring of love and mercy at such times is a wonder to behold. And we are known worldwide for our collective work.

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you" (2 COR. 4: 8-12).

Amidst hardships on every side, we move forward. We know full well the challenges that our churches and workers are facing. In the past ten years, the percentage of those who claim to be Christians in the U.S. dropped from 78 to 71 percent. We have learned a tremendous amount about what's driving the decline of the LCMS. The Synod won't die. But we likely will decline by some 500,000 over the next 15 years before we level off and begin to grow again, due to the passage of the baby boomer generation. Even if our adult conversion rate were to greatly exceed that of the Mormons (highest among American religious groups), it would still be nowhere near sufficient to avoid the decline.

We've learned some good things along the way. We are better at adult conversions than the Southern Baptists. (Who'd have thought?). Our current child-rearing-age members are having more children than the general population and, in fact, are having enough children to replace the World War II generation now going home to be with Jesus.



It is critical that we brace for the demographic storm and plan for it. A great deal of our synodical effort is geared toward that very thing. That makes evangelism vital for individual souls, and a church that will continue to reach out vibrantly. Along with outreach, retention of the baptized and confirmed is doubly vital. Along with continued outreach to people and places where it is supremely difficult for us to achieve self-sustaining congregations, we much have laser-like focus on planting churches in areas that are family-friendly and demographically friendly to the LCMS and its convictions. We now know that there are hundreds and hundreds of such places in the U.S., and we know that many such places lack LCMS congregations!

It is vital for the LCMS to retain and strengthen its deep Lutheran convictions. The Lutheran Confessions are not antiquated. They provide clear biblical parameters for our mission. We must retain the clear teaching of the Bible on the wonderful blessing of the priesthood of believers (the right and necessity of every Christian to speak Christ's word), and the office of the ministry. Together, these form the foundation for mission.

At the LCMS headquarters, we are doing more with less. Several factors have squeezed resources, not least of which has been a slumping farm economy. The Synod Board of Directors set expenditures at \$4 million less than last fiscal year. The directors also are fully engaged in seeking reasonable cost savings by sharing services with Concordia Plans Services, Lutheran Church Extension Fund and the LCMS Foundation.

The international front continues to offer opportunities unheard of until our times. Some 25 church bodies around the world are seeking church fellowships with the LCMS. Our missionaries are in high demand. The challenges are unending.

I hope this little update, along with all the info on specific items from the convention, will be of service and interest to you.

Please pray for us. I remain ever indebted to you for your love and service to the church.

In Jesus,

Matt Harrison

PRESIDENT, THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD



Introduction:

The Synod offers this publication to help LCMS pastors, laity, leaders, delegates, church workers, etc., stay up-to-date on important information pertaining to resolutions adopted at the 66th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, held July 9–14, 2016, in Milwaukee, Wis., including progress being made per those resolutions. The report also includes updates on some of the overtures placed in the Omnibus A Resolution as an appendix on Page 56.

Please note you can read each resolution in its entirety in *Convention Proceedings 2016*, available at lcms.org/convention. For your convenience, a link on the left-hand side of this webpage allows you to download the complete document.

For general questions regarding any resolution or convention matter, please call the Office of the President at 888-THE LCMS (843-5267), ext. 1407, or 314-996-1407. You can also email any question you may have to Barb Below, assistant to the president, at barb.below@lcms.org or call her at 888-THE LCMS, ext. 1413 or 314-996-1413. Barb will be happy to assist you.



Resolution Number: 1-01

To Expand Evangelism and Encourage Use of Every One His Witness™

Resolution Summary: This resolution adopts *Every One His Witness* as the Synodwide evangelism program, encourages its use and authorizes Synodwide offerings for the purpose of creating and distributing resources.

Progress Report: The workshop materials for the Core Module of *Every One His Witness* has been field-tested, and a website for the program's Context Modules has been developed. Preparations are underway to offer the Core Module as a resource kit to be distributed through Concordia Publishing House in September 2017. This kit will enable congregations, circuits, mission societies and any interested groups to conduct the Core Module workshop under the direction of a local workshop leader. Participants completing the Core Module workshop will have access to the Context Modules via the website. The first of the Context Modules, "Witnessing to Mormons," is complete. Over 40 additional Context Modules are planned. The Synod can faithfully receive and manage donations restricted by the contributor exclusively for *Every One His Witness* so those gifts are not used for other purposes. Contact Mission Advancement at 888-930-4438 or email mission.advancement@lcms.org for more information.

Quote: "*Every One His Witness* gets evangelism right. The program understands the blessing and depth of Lutheran theology and how that is put into practice, as we love our neighbor in the most basic Christian way — sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ." — Rev. Randy Blankschaen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Pensacola, Fla.

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/witness-outreach. The downloadable Reporter informational insert, "LCMS Witness & Outreach: *re: Vitality* and *Every One His Witness*," also is available at blogs.lcms.org/2017/lcms-witness-outreach-revitality-and-every-one-his-witness.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 131.

Resolution Number: 1-02

To Encourage Church Planting throughout the Synod and Supporting the Mission Field: USA Initiative

Resolution Summary: In adopting this resolution, the convention delegates call for a "concerted effort be made to equip and support" the *Mission Field: USA* church planting initiative and use of related resources.

Progress Report: The LCMS Office of National Mission has published a new church planting print/e-book resource. The print resource was sent to each district and has been integrated at both seminaries. A supplemental e-learning resource will be made available in the near future. Currently there are six called national missionaries serving in struggling communities. Our first medical mercy team has served in the United States, and now participants in Lutheran Young Adult Corps are serving in urban communities. The LCMS Church Planting program ministry also has been working with LCMS Rosters & Statistics to track the number of new missions being planted through LCMS districts.

Quote: "We are grateful for our all who participated in and helped to get *Mission Field: USA* moving in the right direction. There is still much work to be done to ensure a full pipeline of future missionaries and supportive mother congregations, identify adequate funding and start new missions where currently there is not a strong Lutheran presence. Church planting has been thought to be the most impactful means for reaching the lost, and this is a watershed moment for the LCMS: to plow the soil and plant the seed as the Lord of the harvest has called." — Rev. Dr. Steve Schave, director of LCMS Church Planting

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/churchplanting, and read the Reporter Online article, "Empowerment Center, including Lutheran Hope Center, opens at Ferguson's 'ground zero'" blogs.lcms.org/2017/empowerment-center-opens-at-fergusons-ground-zero.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 132.





Faithfully Waiting for God's Timing

A new national missionary pastor is an answer to prayers for the faithful families of El Calvario Lutheran Church in Brownsville, Texas.

Story by Pamela J. Nielsen | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford

Once again, it's Gospel-planting season in Brownsville, Texas.

This past April, church members sat in the fellowship hall and fretted. There was a weariness in their voices as they talked about efforts to keep the church running without a shepherd.

"We've been praying for years for a pastor, because we cannot afford a pastor," said Danny Hopinks. "I always thought that the church was going to die when the pastor left, but it hasn't died. Thank God for that."

"We always kept worshipping God every week — we never stop, every week."

You hardly notice El Calvario Lutheran Church as you drive by it in an aging part of town. But appearances often deceive. The small, white, century-old former store building, battered by time and weather and neglected by

economic necessity, is home to the faithful flock who gather, in season and out, at this church in Brownsville.

A few blocks away, aging building line the downtown streets. Once-grand storefronts, built more than a century ago, offer food, clothing and other colorful merchandise. The plethora of items draws a steady stream of Mexican citizens over the Rio Grande River border bridge. Car trunks, backseats and pushcarts overflow with items carried back.

Brownsville, long plagued by unemployment, is leveraging an economic upturn. A wide range of industries — including manufacturing, automotive, medical, retail, space and aviation, international logistics, and food processing — provides steady employment for those with specific skills and education.

The state of Texas is investing heavily in the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, a regional university and leading institution for Hispanic engineers and research in the aerospace industry. A new medical school and research center are set to open yet this year.

Looking Back and Eyeing the Future

On a typical Sunday morning, the church fills with members from other parts of the city, where new homes and neighborhoods draw residents eager to make a good life with their families.

"There's a lot of very poor families," said Gloria Palacios, describing the old neighborhood around the church. "We [the congregation members] don't really have people from here that attend church."

Palacios and her fellow parish members talk about the opportunities to share Christ in the neighborhood. They reminisce about a time some years ago when they had both a pastor and a director of Christian education who led a vibrant outreach to the neighborhood.

Recently, a young construction worker passed members conversing on the sidewalk next to the church. He remembers coming to El Calvario's after-school program as a young boy to do homework, play and learn Bible stories and songs.

"You should do that again," he says as he gives them his address and phone number. "I would like to help."

"The [LCMS] Texas District had subsidized El Calvario for well over 50 years and had made the difficult, but understandable, decision [three years ago] that limited mission funds needed to be invested in other areas of the state with growing Latino populations," said the Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez, director of LCMS Church and Community Engagement, which includes the strategic development of Hispanic ministry.



With the encouragement of Texas District Mission Facilitator Rev. Michael Newman, Hernandez traveled to Brownsville to deliver the Sunday sermon, lead Bible class and visit the members.

"After church, former pastor Steve Morfitt (now a district mission trainer) and I sat around the table and brainstormed," said Hernandez, who knew that the Synod does not subsidize individual congregations.

How do you call a pastor you desperately need but cannot afford?

Morfitt and Hernandez worked out a plan to revitalize the parish, plant a new church in the north Brownsville neighborhood, where many first- and second-generation Hispanics live, and begin ministry on the University of Texas campus just three blocks from the church.



With the new plan in sight, Hernandez brought the Rev. Steven Schave, director of the Synod's new church-planting initiative, Mission Field: USA, to Brownsville.

"Brownsville is a modern-day Ephesus," said Schave, determined to make it a new *Mission Field: USA* site. "It's an international seaport and a corridor into Mexico, Central and South America."

A Missionary for a Modern-Day Ephesus

On July 31, Hernandez joined area clergy and the saints at El Calvario for the installation of their new missionary pastor, the Rev. Dr. Antonio Lopez, one of the Synod's new national missionaries placed through the Office of National Mission.

Lopez, who is fluent in Spanish, will not only serve the congregation, but his missionary call includes the expectation that he will help start a campus ministry at the University of Texas and a new church plant in north Brownsville.

Lopez said he feels led by God and is "excited to see what the Lord is going to do."

Lopez has always considered himself a missionary, even before he was ordained, pointing to Jesus' words in Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" — a message for *all* Christians. There's no distinction, he said, "between being a Christian and sharing your faith." He believes that "evangelism begins in your home, in the family."

In God's Time

"[We are] just overjoyed, because we've prayed for this for years ... we were just waiting to have our pastor," beamed long-time member Sara Zambrano following the installation service. "God answered our prayers, and we knew that He would and He did, at the right time."

Thanks to this new model of partnership with districts and a growing network of support that includes congregations and individuals from across the Synod, congregations in forgotten cities like Brownsville once again have pastors who will care for the faithful and reach out to the lost.

"I'm so proud of my church," said one member of El Calvario. "I pass by here every day and tell everybody, 'Look! That's my church; it's there! Look at my church!'"



Resolution Number: 1-03

To Expand the Work of Revitalization and Encourage the Use of the re:Vitality Program

Resolution Summary: This resolution encourages the Office of National Mission (ONM) to continue development of the *re:Vitality* program and authorizes Synodwide offerings for the purpose of developing and distributing program materials.

Progress Report: Development of *re:Vitality* resources continues with emphasis on developing partnerships with LCMS Districts through which the ONM trains and supports facilitators, coaches and coordinators identified by the Districts. The self-assessment tool and the outreach module, “Connect To Disciple,” are in use across the Synod. Three additional modules are in active development. “Shepherding the Strays” (ministry to inactive members) and “Joining in God’s Mission” (strategic planning for congregations) are being field-tested in congregational workshops. “Members of One Body” (assimilation and incorporation) is being prepared for piloting. Six additional modules are planned for the first phase of *re:Vitality*.

Every donation will allow these resources to be offered at little to no cost to congregations. Synod can faithfully receive and manage donations restricted by the contributor exclusively for *re:Vitality* so those gifts are not used for other purposes. Contact Mission Advancement at 888- 930-4438 or mission.advancement@lcms.org for more information.

Quote: “*re:Vitality* equips and encourages congregational leaders to the things that we do because we are the Church, not because we are a church in decline. It is focused on planting and watering ... and expectantly waiting for the Lord to give the growth.” — Rev. Dr. Mark A. Wood, director of LCMS Revitalization

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/revitalization. The downloadable Reporter informational insert, “LCMS Witness & Outreach: *re:Vitality* and *Every One His Witness*,” also is available at blogs.lcms.org/2017/lcms-witness-outreach-revitality-and-every-one-his-witness.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 132–133.

Resolution Number: 1-04

To Encourage Immigrant and Refugee Outreach

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for the Synod to work through districts to locate at least 12 locations over the next triennium to send national missionaries where there are significant immigrant and refugee populations.

Progress Report: The LCMS Office of National Mission is working with domestic ethnic mission societies to develop more resources that are language-specific for worship, education and outreach. In cooperation with districts, all six of the first LCMS Church Planting national missionaries are located in a cross-cultural context (e.g. on the border of Mexico). Ongoing discussions with districts are underway to develop sustainable future opportunities for six additional national missionaries. Showing mercy to those in dire need as it is connected to Word and Sacrament ministry remains vital to reaching out to immigrants and refugees.

Quote: “There is no denying the massive shifts in demographics in the United States, which has brought the world to our doorsteps, and opportunities abound to welcome the neighbor and tell the Good News. It is fantastic that there is a resolution to reach those least like us in the LCMS, but this is not about institutional preservation. It is important, because God has called us to reach the least and the lost in these dark and latter days. It has been wonderful to see our districts, seminaries and mission societies collaborating to find ways to best reach out to immigrant and refugee populations coming to America.” — Rev. Dr. Steve Schave, director of LCMS Church Planting.

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/social-issues/immigration.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 133.



Resolution Number: 1-06

To Celebrate Legacy of Rosa J. Young and Encourage Launch of Rosa J. Young Academies

Resolution Summary: Through this resolution, the delegates honor Dr. Rosa J. Young as a leader and pioneer in the development of the College of Selma, Alabama, and other schools in the southern states and call for the Synod to commend and support the development of the proposed Rosa J. Young International Academies as a model for reaching a new generation.

Progress Report: The celebration of the legacy of Rosa J. Young culminated in the production of *The First Rosa* documentary, sent out to Synod congregations, schools and district offices. National showings of the documentary occurred at the biennial LWML convention, the LCEF Fall Conference, the National Youth Gathering and other large screen events including seminary and CUS campuses. Significant legal, organization, and strategic work continues toward the creation of The Rosa J. Young Academies Foundation, Inc., aiming for the opening of the first academy by 2019.

Quote: “The Rosa J. Young Academies will be a renewed mission effort to reach urban, inner-city and rural families through quality, values and religious education, where possible, using mercy ministry as a catalyst to serve, and ultimately, to be Christ to those in those communities as Rosa did over 100 years ago. We are praying that by 2027, the 150th anniversary of LCMS in Black Ministry, there will be at least five regional Rosa J. Young Academies operating in partnerships with districts, local congregations and regional leaders.” — Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray, director of LCMS Black Ministry

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/thefirstrosa, and read the *Reporter Online* article, “LCMS Black Ministry looks to expand education, outreach nationwide” blogs.lcms.org/2017/black-ministry-looks-to-expand-education.

See *Convention Proceedings* 2016, Page 134.

Resolution Number: 1-07

To Encourage and Support Hispanic Ministry Initiatives

Resolution Summary: After giving glory to God and thanks to the LCMS Hispanic Ministries, this resolution calls for the Office of National Mission (ONM) to provide a renewed emphasis for ongoing and new Hispanic ministry work.

Progress Report: The ONM has sought to respond to this resolution through intra-departmental collaboration. LCMS Black Ministry, Hispanic Ministry and Urban & Inner City Mission have opportunities to combine their resources and expertise to specific settings: for example, in the current triennium in urban Peoria, Illinois, and Waterloo, Iowa, all three program ministry directors presented and consulted together to bring their ethnic ministry expertise to area congregations. *Mission Field: USA's* urban ministry component worked with Hispanic Ministry to preserve a critical border ministry and plant a new Hispanic congregation to serve second- and third-generation Mexican Americans in North Brownsville, Texas. Such cooperative efforts will continue to maximize efforts to

support the ongoing ethnic outreach efforts of districts and congregations.

Quote: “The LCMS *Mission Field: USA* initiative has recognized that Hispanic ministry is vital to the future of our mission in the United States. The need for community development, education and human care has never been greater in our Hispanic communities. The continued burgeoning population growth of Latin Americans in the U.S. only strengthens our resolve for new Lutheran missions that focus on *Witness, Mercy and Life Together*.” — Rev. Dr. Steve Schave, director of LCMS Church Planting.

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/hispanicministry, and read the *Reporter Online* article, “Synod ‘sends’ missionaries to Ferguson, Brownsville” blogs.lcms.org/2016/missionaries-to-ferguson-brownsville.

See *Convention Proceedings* 2016, Pages 134–135.



Resolution Number: 2-01

To Thank God for Faithful Service of LCMS Missionaries

Resolution Summary: The convention delegates expressed thanks and appreciation to all who have served in the LCMS international mission and encourages the Office of International Mission to coordinate a reunion for LCMS missionaries in the coming triennium.

Progress Report: The LCMS Office of International Mission and Mission Advancement staffs have been working to identify donors to make this event possible. To date, no gifts have been received for this reunion.

Quote: “As the LCMS celebrates the 125th anniversary of sending our first missionary during the 2019 Convention, it will be a time for former missionaries to gather with one another to re-establish important friendships and collegial ties, and for these missionaries to join delegates in giving God thanks for all that He has done through LCMS

missionaries and for the blessings to sustain them during their time of service.” — Rev. John A. Fale, executive director of LCMS Office of International Mission

Additional Information: To learn more about LCMS missionaries, visit lcms.org/service.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 137.

Resolution Number: 2-02

To Thank God for Increase in the Number of LCMS Career Missionaries and Invite Further Increase and Support for Synod's Mission Work

Resolution Summary: The LCMS in convention gave thanks for all individuals, congregations and entities that have supported LCMS missionaries, recognizing that an increase in missionaries necessarily results in a proportionate increase in mission operational costs and encouraging prayerful consideration of giving for mission operational costs.

Progress Report: The Office of International Mission works closely with the Synod's Communications and Mission Advancement teams and Mission Central to inform LCMS members of what God is doing through LCMS missionaries, as they bring the Gospel of Jesus and His mercy to all the world, inviting prayerful consideration of supporting these missionaries and their important work. As of July 3, 2017, there are 115 career missionaries and 28 Globally Engaged in Outreach missionaries (typically serving 2 years) serving in 34 countries and have a team of staff in St. Louis and around the world that care and support these missionaries now serving. Additionally, we

continue to recruit, train and send new missionaries as God provides.

Quote: “WE have done NOTHING here at the Lord's Mission Central ... it's all MIRACLE STUFF that could have come only from the hand of our Heavenly Father. We are such great believers in the fact that God is still CALLING His people at just the right time as is so clear in Acts 2:39 ... The promise is for YOU and your children and for all who are far off in the hills of Western Iowa, for all whom the Lord our God will CALL!” — Gary Thies, Mission Central

Additional Information: To learn more about supporting missionaries, visit lcms.org/missionarysupport, and read the *Lutherans Engage the World* online article “Sharing God's Word in Santo Domingo and Beyond” engage.lcms.org/santo-domingo-and-beyond-summer-2017.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 137–138.





‘A Global Perspective’

Linking congregations and missionaries in God’s mission

Story by Kevin Armbrust | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford | Summer 2017

“Supporting a missionary gives our members a global perspective,” observed the Rev. Douglas Breite, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo. Trinity has been a Together in Mission (TIM) congregation for the last 20 years.

The TIM program links congregations with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) missionaries to foster a relationship to spread God’s Word both domestically and throughout the world. Congregations involved in the program support one or more missionary families through ongoing pledges of support.

Connected to the Church At-Large

The LCMS sends missionaries to both foreign and domestic destinations, and Trinity supports one of each. The Rev. Micah Glenn serves in Ferguson, Mo., where he leads outreach to youth and adults, and the Rev. Peter Kolb, based in Hong Kong, serves as the Asia regional chaplain.

While some missionaries are sent to plant new Lutheran churches, others support the Gospel proclamation efforts of indigenous Lutheran church bodies. By participating in the TIM program, congregations like Trinity are connected to the global mission of God.

Together in Mission is designed to cultivate a partnership between missionaries and congregations, groups and organizations within the LCMS. This relationship proves mutually beneficial in many ways.

“When a missionary comes to visit, it is an encouragement for us to share our stories and to make sure that we are in mission here,” said the Rev. Chip Winter, director of ministries at Christ Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb. He said the missionary also visits with the children at their school, which gets them excited “about mission work and opens to them another avenue through which they consider church work.”

The congregation has a long history of supporting LCMS missionaries, and it currently supports five. In addition, Winter noted that the congregation also goes on short-term mission trips and seeks opportunities in the community to share the love of Christ.

A Partnership in the Gospel

Together in Mission has linked career and long-term missionaries to LCMS congregations and groups since 1982.





Often, a TIM congregation makes a one-year renewable commitment to support a missionary family. The congregation, as it is able, can seek to increase this commitment over time as the Lord allows it to fulfill its pledge. This ongoing support helps facilitate the work of missions across the globe and in the United States.

Missionaries work in situations in which they cannot earn what is needed for daily bread from those whom they serve. Their support comes from people who are often geographically removed from their work. Yet that support is essential and brings geographically disparate people together in the common work of the Gospel.

The missionary benefits from the support to care for his or her family with all that is needed for this body and life. This support allows the missionary to work in the mission field as God has called him, according to His will.

The congregations, groups or organizations involved in TIM benefit from their connection with the Church and the Gospel in a larger context. Regarding his congregation's involvement in the TIM program, Breite observed that this experience has "given our members a worldwide missional perspective. We have a school and meet the needs of our community the best we can, but this helps us recognize that the Gospel is needed throughout the world."

TIM congregations also benefit from the relationship developed with the missionaries and their families. Regular communication — through newsletters, social media and occasional Skype calls — helps the congregation stay current with the work taking place on the mission field and the status of the missionary family.

When Glenn or Kolb are on home service, Trinity invites them to preach at the Sunday services or to lead a

Bible class. Breite said these opportunities allow the members of Trinity to "stay up-to-date on their mission activities" and to reconnect with the people involved in the work.

Opportunities to Connect

In 2013, the Synod in convention set before the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM) Resolution 1-11, a challenge to double the number of career missionaries. The resultant efforts have been blessed so that over 100 missionaries now serve in various locations.

Each deployed missionary returns to the U.S. for a visit every two years. This trip provides the opportunity to visit congregations either to thank current donors or to broaden their base of support, and it also allows them to rest and reconnect with family and friends. Many of the missionaries called and placed as a result of the 2013 resolution are scheduled to return home this summer for this home service.

This also is a time for the Synod at-large to renew her commitment to pray for the work of the Kingdom done through missionary families. Daily family and individual as well as corporate prayer is an important component in the church's support of her missionaries.

These missionaries are all able to serve thanks to your support.

"The support that we get from donors is what makes the work we do possible. It provides for my family's school, house, food and so many more things," Glenn said. "Most importantly, it keeps me in the field to preach the Gospel to people who have never heard it."

Resolution Number: 2-03

To Commend and Support Synod's International Schools and Their Role in the Church's Mission

Resolution Summary: Thanking God for the mission and ministry of the three international schools (Hong Kong, Hanoi and Shanghai), delegates encouraged that (1) these schools faithfully bear the Synod's confession and support its objectives and (2) LCMS educators apply to work in them. Delegates also asked the Board for International Mission (BIM) to establish policies conducive to supportive partnerships, internal Synod advocacy and due consideration of opportunities to plant new international schools.

Progress Report: Before and since the Convention, the BIM has been giving substantially increased attention to international school operations, governance and coordination in their policy monitoring, review and development work. The Chief Mission Officer and Office of International Mission (OIM) executive leadership have continued to foster tighter integration of the schools' operations and plans with OIM's Asia Region strategy. Human resource discussions are underway toward implementation of an LCMS international schools coordinator/advocate position.

Quote: "The Synod is presented with a multitude of mission opportunities through these world-class, highly-respected educational institutions — they are financially strong; campuses are expanding and serving thousands of students. It is most appropriate that the Church continually strive to keep the Christ and the Gospel at the very center of our work here." — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS Chief Mission Officer

Additional Information: To learn more about LCMS international schools, visit lcms.org/internationalschools.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 138–139.

Resolution Number: 2-04

To Reaffirm LCMS Military Chaplains' Right for Free Exercise of Religion in Face of LGBT Inclusion in the Armed Forces

Resolution Summary: Taking up this most critical matter for LCMS clergy with the Chaplain Corps, this resolution calls for the Synod to support the rights of military chaplains to abstain from rites, rituals, etc., that are contrary to one's conscience and confession.

Progress Report: The Ministry to the Armed Forces continues to work with the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, who work with Congress to ensure protections for religious liberty and religious accommodation continue to be included in the National Defense Authorization Act and supported by the Department of Defense. The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty is comprised of veteran service members. Their purpose is to defend and maintain religious liberty and the freedom of expression and conscience that the Constitution guarantees our chaplains and those whom they serve. Through their efforts of weekly meetings with Congress and other collective efforts, laws and policies have been passed to protect chaplains' right of

free exercise. The effort is now to ensure the Department of Defense honors those protections.

Quote: "The chaplains of the LCMS expressed that they are extremely grateful for their church who through this Convention resolution gave them support and encouragement. We have received confirmation in a letter dated 29 September 2019 from the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy that LCMS Chaplains would not be forced to compromise their conscience and religious beliefs and will be able to continue to be free to be faithful to God, their confession and their conscience." — Chaplain Craig Mueller, U.S. Navy Capt. (Ret.), director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

Additional Information: To learn more about the Synod's Ministry to the Armed Forces, visit lcms.org/armedforces, and read the *Reporter Online* article, "Synod, other advocates speak for religious liberty in secularized military" blogs.lcms.org/2017/religious-liberty-in-secularized-military.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 139–140.





Protecting troops' religious freedom: LCMS calls for clear DoD guidance

By Roger Drinnon

In light of the Department of Defense's (DoD's) recently mandated LGBT Pride Month and its new policies for transgender service members which among other things advocate in-service gender transitions while serving in the military, the LCMS has sent a request to the Secretary of Defense to ensure specific protections for chaplains, service members, medical personnel, DoD civilians and other DoD-affiliated employees.

The Synod's request, signed by LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison and Chaplain (U.S. Navy Capt. Ret.) Craig Muehler, director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, calls for specific protections for expressing personal religious beliefs to be codified in DoD and service-specific guidance, as service members purportedly are experiencing increasing restrictions on living out their faith in their military vocations.

"Current DoD and service-specific policies and guidance for religious protections do not provide sufficient protections," the Synod's request states, "as they allow for implementation of a wide range of subjective religious restrictions based on what a local commander deems as contrary to 'good order and discipline.'"

Earlier this year, the Synod in convention adopted Resolution 2-04, which reaffirms LCMS military chaplains' rights of free exercise of religion in the face of LGBT inclusion in the armed forces, and Resolution 14-01 to encourage intentional leadership in matters of religious freedom. The Synod in convention also adopted Resolution 14-09, which commends the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations document "Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective."

"The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod clearly spoke in convention this summer that we as a Synod will continue to stand together to support the free exercise of religion and the right of conscience for our LCMS members [and those of other faith groups] who selflessly serve our nation in the military," said Muehler. "The Department of Defense needs to ensure safeguards are in place to protect the rights of those who wish to abstain from any event, practice or activity that will force them to compromise their deeply held religious belief on homosexuality or gender orientation."

He said the request has been sent directly to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) and to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Peter Levine, who oversees the AFCB, Sept. 8. As of Sept. 15, it remains unclear when and how DoD officials will respond.

"We stand to protect service members' God-given, constitutionally protected religious liberties and right of conscience," said Muehler. "No American, especially those who wear the uniform, should be denied their religious freedom or be forced to go against their conscience. The men and women in uniform serving on the front lines to defend our nation should not be penalized for exercising the same freedoms they are fighting to protect."

Muehler said the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty has applauded the Synod's efforts to protect religious liberty in the military, and the organization has shared the Synod's request with other faith groups who might make similar requests to the Defense Department.

Resolution Number: 3-01

To Commend and Encourage Work of LCMS Disaster Response

Resolution Summary: This resolution gives thanks for the mercy work of LCMS Disaster Response and calls for the continuation of the production of resources, with special emphasis on developing Spanish resources.

Progress Report: LCMS Disaster Response has produced resources for laity affected by disaster such as *The Lord's Mercy Endures Forever: 40 Daily Devotions of God's Comfort and Trusting in His Love*. To assist spiritual care givers and volunteers, we have produced visitation guides which include, *Bringing God's Comfort and Peace in Tragedy* and *Spiritual Care Companion for Times of Disaster*. For church workers, we published, *The Mercy of God in the Cross of Christ*, a 539-page book of 40 essays on mercy work and disaster response. To spiritually care for children after natural disasters, we produced a five-day Vacation Bible School-style program titled *Camp Courage*.

We have translated over 40 essays into Spanish which will be given to Spanish-speaking pastors across the United States and Latin America

Quote: "In addition to helping out with physical needs, LCMS Disaster Response proclaims the Gospel in the wake of tragedy. We have focused on creating resources for lay volunteers to be ready to give the hope of Christ to those whose lives have been destroyed by disaster. We have been intentional about caring for the forgotten victims of disaster, the young, the elderly and the millions of Spanish-speaking immigrants who often live in the path of Hurricanes, floods and tornadoes." — Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson, director of LCMS Disaster Response.

Additional Information: To learn more about LCMS Disaster Response, visit lcms.org/disaster.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 141.

Resolution Number: 3-03

To Encourage Synod to Educate and Advocate for Persecuted Christians

Resolution Summary: This resolution acknowledges the ongoing persecution and suffering of Christians around the world and calls the Synod to encourage pastors and congregations to be better informed on the matter, calling for all LCMS publications to become effective information sources and direction as to specific ways to help.

Progress Report: The May 2017 issue of the *Lutheran Witness* focused on persecution and the hope and relief that comes only in the Gospel.

In partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS, Washington, D.C.), the Synod funded an intern position that primarily focuses on development and provision of resources pertaining to persecuted religious minorities.

The LCMS Office of International Mission has also recruited and deployed missionaries to work alongside the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK), our

German partner church Germany, as they care for Middle Eastern refugees. The LCMS also funded Lutheran Hour Ministries to provide relief and care for persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

Quote: "Throughout history, when religious minorities around the globe have been persecuted, the United States has fought for their protection and provided safety and a new start in the United States. This is God's work, protecting the most vulnerable." — Linda Hartke, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Additional Information: To learn more about persecution, visit lcms.org/social-issues/persecution, and read the May 2017 issue of *Lutheran Witness* at blogs.lcms.org/2017/lutheran-witness-may-2017.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 142.





Praying in faith and love as the Body of Christ

by D. Richard Stuckwisch | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford

When we're hit with the news of major disasters, as in the recent cases of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma and the wildfires in the West, it is instinctive for Christians to respond with prayer, and rightly so. It is fundamental to the Christian faith and life that we are to pray "without ceasing" (1 THESS. 5:17; LUKE 18:1), especially in the face of such overwhelming hurts and hardship, which demonstrate our desperate need for the Lord and His mercy. We call upon His Name because we cannot save ourselves.

We pray together

Not only do Christians pray in quiet solitude, and Christian fathers with their households and families, but so also does the Church in each place gather together as the Body of Christ for the Word of God and prayer. The Apostles and the early Church prioritized this practice of prayer, along with "doctrine, fellowship, and the Breaking of the Bread" (ACTS 2:42), both before and after the Day of Pentecost had come. And our Lord Himself promises that wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in the midst of them; their prayers are heard and answered for His Name's sake (MATT. 18:19–20).

The Church's daily prayer offices (Matins, Vespers, Compline, Morning and Evening Prayer) are an opportunity to hear the Word of God; to pray, confess and sing the

Word of God; to call upon the Name of the Lord in prayer, praise and thanksgiving; and to live and breathe together as fellow members of one Body in Christ.

To be sure, there are always things for which we ought to pray, whether in general or particular. We are sinful people living in the midst of sinful people in a fallen and perishing world, so there will be no lack of trouble. At the same time, we have the command and promise of our Lord that we should pray in the joyful confidence of His cross and resurrection (JOHN 16:20–28). In Him, God's answer to all our prayers is "Yes" and "Amen" (2 COR. 1:18–20). So does the Church also respond to disasters by coming together to call on the Name of the Lord.

What good is prayer?

Yet there are those who would say, "You're *praying* for us? What good is that? Why don't you do something, or at least send tangible assistance?" It is likely that we have felt the same way at times, when we've been in great distress and received nothing but promises of prayer. So, how should we respond to such complaints?

Let us first of all understand that faithfulness in prayer is a good work and a discipline of faith and love. Prayer *is* "doing something," and it ought to be approached seriously. It requires time and energy, thoughtfulness and commit-

ment and persistent patience. It turns us outside of ourselves in faith toward God and in consideration for our neighbors.

Prayer and service

Let us therefore also understand that, as we pray and intercede for those in need, we are also offering up ourselves to serve those neighbors, as the Lord enables and provides us with the opportunity to do so. Prayer, self-sacrifice, good works of service and tangible assistance are not mutually exclusive and competing alternatives. They run together like the offerings and the prayers in the Divine Service.

Christians respond to major disasters, and to the hurts and hardships of their neighbors, in many ways. They work within their respective vocations and stations in life. They contribute and serve as they are able, according to their means and abilities. They confess God's Word and faith as opportunity affords. And in every case, "at all times and in all places," they pray in accordance with the Word and promises of God. Faith and love thus work together.

Making time for prayer

So do not neglect to pray as you go about your days and as you gather together with your family at home. Prayer is not a pointless exercise. Where you have not been faithful in prayer, repent, and do better. And as you pray and intercede, so also work and contribute with the strength and means your Lord provides.

Likewise set aside the time to be gathered together with your brothers and sisters in Christ — at the Church's daily prayer offices, where possible, or by inviting others to share a meal and pray with you and your family — so that you might be strengthened in your faith, in your prayer and confession and in your sacrifice and service by the fellowship of the Body of Christ. Even if you feel you are strong and have no need of help, be gathered together with your congregation anyway, so that you might strengthen and support your pastor and fellow parishioners in taking up the Sword of the Spirit in the bond of Peace (EPH. 4:1–7; 5:15–21; 6:16–20).

In this way, let us pray together as our Lord has taught us, and not lose heart (LUKE 18:1).



Resolution Number: 3-04

To Create Task Force for Study of Issues Relating to Procreation, Fertility and Care for Unborn

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for the Synod president to appoint a task force within the Office of National Mission to study issues surrounding fertility and procreation; gather points for consideration; coordinate discussion; and identify actions leading to the production of resources to these issues.

Progress Report: The Office of the President has constituted the task force to hold its first meeting in September 2017. Task force members include: the Rev. Larry Vogel; the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer; Dr. Andrea Pitkus; Dr. Donna Harrison; Dr. Debra Grime; the Rev. Dr. Kevin Voss; the Rev. Dr. Jim Backman; the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender; the Rev. John Pless; the Rev. Dr. Joel Okamoto; the Rev. Michael Salemin; and Dr. Ann Stillman. A task force report is to be completed by December 2018 with accompanying recommendation to the 2019 Synod convention.

Quote: “The task force is being gathered to continue informal conversations that have taken place over the last several years facilitated by LCMS Life Ministry. Several procreation and fertility issues continue to raise questions and concerns for LCMS families, especially as medical technology continues to rapidly advance, and we have precious few helpful resources to address these medical and ethical concerns. The formation of the task force will ensure the 2019 Synod convention can direct the CTCR and others to prioritize and respond to identified concerns.” — Rev. Bart Day, former executive director of LCMS Office of National Mission.

Additional Information: To learn more about LCMS Life Ministry, visit lcms.org/life-ministry.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 143.

Resolution Number: 3-05A

To Give Thanks to God and Encourage Support for the Ministries of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Services in America and Lutheran World Relief

Resolution Summary: This resolution recognizes the LCMS long history of working with these entities and encourages congregations and individuals to consider support of and involvement in the mercy work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), Lutheran Services in America (LSA) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR).

Progress Report: In March 2017, a nine-member LCMS delegation attended the LIRS “Refugee Summit” in Washington, D.C. Synod leaders and LIRS officials agreed to stay connected in finding ways to inform LCMS people of strategies in dealing with displaced or newly arrived people. LIRS was a showcased ministry partner at the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering. Their presence included an interactive and educational space in the exhibit hall, a workshop on ways congregations serve immigrant and refugees in their

communities, and a major presence at the 5K Fun Walk/Run. Proceeds from the run (\$30,000) were donated to LIRS and programs that assist congregations in their sharing of the Gospel with refugees. LCMS Communications, working through the Office of National Mission, exhibited at the LSA’s May 2017 convention in Washington, D.C.

Quote: “Youth Gathering participants gained a deeper understanding of ways to serve and support immigrants in their local context and across the country, including resources for how their congregations can work together to bring the Gospel to refugees and new citizens.” — Rev. Mark Kiessling, director of LCMS Youth Ministry

Additional Information: To learn more about refugee and immigration issues and what the Synod and other organizations are doing to help, visit lcms.org/socialissues/immigration, and read the *Reporter Online* article, “Gathering 5K run/walk nets \$30,000 for LIRS,” at blogs.lcms.org/2016/gathering-5k-runwalk-nets-30000-for-lirs.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 143–144.



Resolution Number: 4-02A

To Reaffirm “Witness, Mercy, Life Together” as the Mission and Ministry Emphasis for the 2016–2019 Triennium

Resolution Summary: In this resolution, delegates overwhelmingly adopted the threefold emphasis, including six mission priorities carried over from the prior triennium while adding a seventh: “Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God’s design.” They also ask that special focus be given to: (1) ministry to/with people of all nations, (2) preaching/Bible study and (3) visitation.

Progress Report: The threefold emphasis and seven mission priorities have garnered intensive efforts in the policy-making/revision/monitoring activities of the newly-elected Board for National Mission (BNM) and the Board for International Mission (BIM). For instance, the BNM recently held an extensive “What does this mean?” dialogue with Office of National Mission program staff during its June 2017 regular meeting. The BIM is systematically working through its policy corpus to ensure that it adequately reflects all seven mission priorities, searching for “gaps” and tightening language to provide improved guidance for the Office of International Mission’s strategic plans and operations.

Quote: “LCMS staff in our Offices of National and International Mission are not about ‘inventing’ program priorities and trajectories not previously rooted in Convention action and corresponding BNM and BIM policy. Resolution 4-02A is the Synod at her best, walking together as one.” — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: To learn more about the Synod’s mission priorities, visit lcms.org/about. Informative Reporter inserts on what national and international missionaries are doing can be downloaded at: blogs.lcms.org/2017/lcms-witness-outreach-revitality-and-every-one-his-witness and blogs.lcms.org/2017/discover-ways-to-support-lcms-missionaries.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 145–146.

Resolution Number: 4-03B

To Convene Task Force to Review Recognized Service Organization Program and Bylaws

Resolution Summary: In this resolution, delegates authorize the formation of a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) task force to review and report on the history of the RSO program, determine needs and benefits to the Synod and recommend changes (up to and including program elimination and/or replacement), while ensuring that such recommendations maintain key relationships with agencies that reflect the mission and ministry, program activity, doctrine and practice of the Synod.

Progress Report: The task force, constituted per resolution by identified Synod senior leadership representatives and two RSO Chief Executive Officers, has met three times since the inception of its work in October 2016. Efforts are initially focused on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the program as currently administered; studying and properly characterizing the entire portfolio of organizations currently carrying RSO status; and considering program purposes, flow of benefits to both the Synod and

RSOs and several detailed operating questions. The Task Force will offer its first report and recommendations to the Synod Board of Directors and President by Aug. 1, 2018.

Quote: “This is a complex assignment, but we are proceeding in an orderly fashion that we expect will bear much fruit. We treasure our RSOs; they are virtual extensions of our congregations and districts in mission and ministry.” — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: To learn more about RSOs, visit lcms.org/recognized-service-organizations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 146–147.



Resolution Number: 4-05A

To Continue and Expand the Koinonia Project

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for the continuation and expansion the Koinonia Project, assigns responsibility for project oversight to the Synod Praesidium and identifies three areas of focus: 1) the Council of Presidents (COP) continue the Koinonia Project using study groups at every meeting and report to the 2019 Convention; 2) Each district president promote the Koinonia Project within his district and report to the district in 2018 and the Synod in 2019; 3) All members of the Synod be encouraged to follow the principles of the Koinonia Project when disagreements arise.

Progress Report: The Synod Praesidium is working with the leadership of the COP to follow through on these requirements. Every COP meeting includes significant time for study and discussion within the various groups of district presidents. Much more needs to be done to promote the Koinonia Project within districts, however.

Quote: “We have made a good beginning in certain areas, but we have much more work to do, under the guidance of the Spirit in the Word of God.” — Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, LCMS first vice-president

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 148–149.

Resolution Number: 5-07

To Affirm and Encourage Work of the International Lutheran Council

Resolution Summary: This resolution gave thanks for the International Lutheran Council (ILC) and urges the continued and increased support of the ILC.

Progress Report: Since its inception in 1952, the ILC has grown to 39 member churches from every continent, representing 3–4 million Lutherans. The ILC has several membership applications waiting for approval in its 2018 world conference. The ILC has the potential to greatly impact world Lutheranism over the next several years. Despite budgetary challenges, the LCMS continues to support the ILC through membership dues and provision of staff time to assist in program development. The support of the LCMS over these years has been a tremendous blessing.

Quote: “The Lord of the Church provides opportunities for each generation to collect a harvest for the kingdom of God. While churches in the West appear to be declining, the churches of the Global South are rapidly growing.

We are at a nexus point where the churches of the West can help ensure the churches of the Global South retain a strong Lutheran identity. The churches of the Global South help encourage the Western churches who see the Lord’s working great things. This is the time for the International Lutheran Council to take a global stage to uphold the historic Scripture teaching and fidelity to the *Lutheran Confessions*.” — Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III, ILC executive secretary, director of LCMS Church Relations

Additional Information: To learn more about the ILC, visit ilc-online.org, and read the *Reporter Online* article, “Wittenberg an ‘apt’ choice for Sixth ILC World Seminaries Conference,” at blogs.lcms.org/2016/wittenberg-hosts-sixth-ilc-conference.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 157.



Resolution Number: 5-08

To Commend and Encourage Informal Conversations with Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)

Resolution Summary: This resolution gave thanks for the WELS and ELS for the increasingly cordial relationship and strongly encourages discussions with each synod to continue.

Progress Report: Since 2012, the ELS, WELS and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have held informal conversations together. These discussions have been very helpful in eliminating caricatures and misunderstandings each synod has held about the others since fellowship was suspended in 1955 by the ELS and in 1961 by WELS. The informal conversations have shown that the three synods agree more than they disagree. Although there are no immediate expectations of restoring fellowship, these beneficial conversations between the synods are planned to continue for the immediate future. The next planned conversation is scheduled for December 2017.

Quote: “It has been a joy to meet with and talk with faithful Lutherans from the WELS and ELS. We pray that the Lord would continue to bless this endeavor and, Deo volente [God willing], grant a restoration of fellowship between the three synods at some point in the future. Even if the three synods are not brought back together, the conversation and contact between the synods has been a tremendous blessing.” — Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III, director of LCMS Church Relations

Additional Information: To read more about LCMS Church Relations, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/president/church-relations, and read some history on the discussions in the *Reporter Online* article, “LCMS, WELS, ELS release report on years of informal discussion,” available at blogs.lcms.org/2015/lcms-wels-els-report.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 157–158.

Resolution Number: 5-09

To Commend and Encourage Interchurch Conversations with Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

Resolution Summary: This resolution gave thanks for the ACNA and NALC for the increasingly cordial relationship and strongly encourages discussions with each synod to continue.

Progress Report: Discussions between the ACNA and the LCMS were initiated largely in view of growing societal pressures to abandon historical and Biblical views on marriage and sexuality. In the ACNA, the LCMS found a great ally in these culture wars. The NALC was formed in 2013 upon the ELCA decision to allow congregations to call practicing homosexual pastors and bless same-sex marriages. The NALC sought to return to a scriptural/confessional position in several areas. NALC/LCMS discussions have resulted in a study and the release of a statement on the Holy Scriptures. A collection of essays on Law and Gospel, “The Necessary Distinction,” was jointly produced by the NALC

and LCMS, and will be published by Concordia Publishing House, fall 2017.

Quote: “The seeds of the Reformation lived on in Anglicanism and after 500 years brought this group of Anglicans seeking to be faithful to the Scriptures into discussion with the Missouri Synod. In conversing with the NALC, the LCMS is providing support and leadership in world Lutheranism, proclaiming the truth in love and upholding the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.” — Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III, director of LCMS Church Relations

Additional Information: To read more about LCMS Church Relations, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/president/church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 158.



Resolution Number: 5-10

To Commend and Encourage Faithful Teaching of Article on Which Church Stands or Falls

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), in consultation with the seminary faculties, to prepare a biblical and confessional study of the doctrine of justification.

Progress Report: The CTCR is planning a series of studies on the doctrine of justification, roughly on a month-by-month basis, that will be available for congregational and circuit use, beginning in September. One goal of the study approach is to examine the classic foundational texts on justification. Another is to show that the doctrine of justification, broadly speaking, relates to all of Scripture and is crucial for sound exegesis and Bible study. The recommended studies will include materials prepared by Concordia Publishing House, as well as CTCR-drafted materials (including materials drafted by professors from both seminaries) to be made available by download. Completion of the materials for September and October will take place this summer.

Quote: “Justification is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls. When we get it wrong, we leave people with their own attempts at self-justification, doomed to failure. We pray God’s blessings on the Synodwide study of this vital doctrine, especially as we observe the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (2017).” — Rev. Larry M. Vogel, associate executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 159.

Resolution Number: 5-11A

To Protect Christian Consciences and Address Conscription of Women

Resolution Summary: This resolution acknowledged the complex and important matter of conscription of women into the armed forces and resolved that the “LCMS in convention strongly oppose any legal action that forces the compulsory service of women in the military” and called for the swift conclusion and widespread distribution of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) study on Women in Combat.

Progress Report: The 2013 Synod convention (Resolution 2-12A) asked the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to prepare a study on the employment of women in military combat. Significant progress on this assignment was made, but the study was not completed by the 2016 Synod convention. 2016 Resolution 5-11A was adopted “To Protect Christian Consciences and Address the Conscription of Women,” and to encourage the CTCR to “continue their diligent and beneficial work as tasked by the 2013 convention (Resolution 2-12A) to study the issue of employing women in combat and bring it to a

swift conclusion for widespread distribution and use in the church.” The CTCR anticipates completion of this report by the end of 2017, at which time it will be released publicly for study and use by the Synod. Congress has not introduced legislation regarding the conscription of women into the armed forces and compelling them to participate in direct combat.

Quote: “This is an important, sensitive and timely issue. It is my hope that the CTCR study — when completed — will be helpful in providing guidance and direction regarding this issue within the Synod and perhaps even outside our circles.” — Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 159–160.



Resolution Number: 5-12

To Commend and Encourage Use of Luther's Catechisms

Resolution Summary: This resolution reaffirms the importance of Luther's Small Catechism as a handbook for faith and life and encourages publication of a revised *Explanation of the Catechism* in 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations explore the creation of an annotated and expanded edition of the Large Catechism.

Progress Report: The "Catechism Explanation Drafting Committee" finished its work in 2016. The LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and its staff reviewed and revised their draft, adopting it in February 2017. The Office of the President subsequently reviewed and made several adjustments and improvements to the draft (with the concurrence of the CTCR staff), placing the draft into the Synod's doctrinal review process in April 2017. As of this writing, this final draft has passed doctrinal review and is in the hands of Concordia Publishing House to prepare it for publication, God willing, later this year. Please note that the 1986 translation of

Luther's Small Catechism itself remains unchanged. The *Explanation of the Catechism*, on the other hand, has been expanded and updated for 21st century use. The Synod at large needs to be made aware of this new resource so that it will be broadly used. The Synod in this resolution also reaffirmed the necessity of faithful catechesis for the church's mission. We believe this new text will help us do exactly that.

Quote: (overheard in the CTCR) "This is great material. We have to get this out so that it can be used!" — Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, LCMS first vice-president

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations. To learn more about the revised *Explanation of the Catechism*, visit blogs.lcms.org/2016/catechism-explanation-revision-ready-for-review.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 160–161.

Resolution Number: 5-13

To Reaffirm Scriptural Teaching re Royal Priesthood and Office of Public Ministry

Resolution Summary: This resolution acknowledged the misunderstandings that have arisen in recent years regarding the right or responsibility of laity in the church and the office of public ministry and encouraged the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to complete the requested study of the royal priesthood prior to the next convention.

Progress Report: A CTCR subcommittee is presently considering a draft report on the royal priesthood, which originated with a request made by the Synod in 2007 (Res. 1-03). The draft is both exegetical and historical, with due consideration of the relationship of the royal priesthood to the office of the public ministry. Practical considerations of the royal priesthood will be addressed in committee in the ongoing process of preparation of a draft for plenary consideration.

Quote: "We are pleased with the progress on this assignment that has occurred in recent months and anticipate being able to meet the convention's requirement of a report prior to the next convention." — Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 161–160.



Resolution Number: 5-14

To Reaffirm Biblical Teaching on Man and Woman in the Church

Resolution Summary: The LCMS in convention asks the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), in consultation with the seminary faculties, to continue and complete the study on the “order of creation.”

Progress Report: In 2016 (Res. 5-14), the Synod asked the CTCR “to continue and complete (by the end of the triennium) a biblical, confessional and historical study of the concept of the order of creation, examining its relevance to various questions about the service of men and women in the Church and society today and also taking into account continued disagreements and discussion in the Synod about the service of women in certain lay positions and offices of leadership (e.g. congregational chairman or vice-chairman).” The CTCR has developed and approved a plan for examining the concept of “the order of creation” from various perspectives: exegetical (Old Testament and New Testament); historical; systematic; and practical. Potential drafters have been identified, and draft work has begun on specific portions of this major project.

Quote: “Clarity is needed — both terminologically and theologically — on the biblical teaching of the ‘order of creation,’ a concept which has been consistently affirmed by the CTCR and the LCMS. The CTCR’s goal and intention is to provide such needed clarity in this report as the Synod continues to discuss and address various questions on the service of men and women in the home, church and society.” Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director LCMS of the CTCR

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 162–163.

Resolution Number: 5-15

To Address Questions re the Sacrament of the Altar

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for the completion of a study document on the issue of intinction for use by the Council of Presidents.

Progress Report: The study has been completed and has been forwarded to the Council of Presidents (COP) for their use.

Quote: “We pray the Lord’s blessings on the COP, as they consider pastoral and practical questions and concerns regarding this matter of sacramental practice.” — Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To learn more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 163–164.



Resolution Number: 6-01

To Create a Pastoral Formation Committee

Resolution Summary: This resolution creates the Pastoral Formation Committee to be comprised of the Chief Mission Officer, the two seminary presidents and the executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education. The committee will ensure that the Synod's objective of training pastors is fulfilled consistently, recommend any new routes leading to ordination for approval by resolution of the Synod, consider long-term strategic direction of pastoral formation within the Synod and facilitate discussion with the two seminary boards of regents.

Progress Report: The Pastoral Formation Committee initially met in January 2017 to assess its objectives and provided a review at the boards of regents annual joint meeting. The committee has since met to consider and/or provide direction for the Joint Seminary Fund, curricular developments, recruitment/enrollment, routes to ordination and the Global Seminary Initiative. A fall 2017 committee meeting will advance the aforementioned objectives along with further collaborative efforts at the next joint boards of regents meeting, August 2018.

Quote: "The effectiveness of the Synod's work in our national and international mission fields is interwoven with excellence in the formation of pastors well-prepared to serve in the Office of the Holy Ministry. Our two seminaries are distinctive Lutheran gems, globally recognized for their Scriptural/confessional faithfulness and expertise. The committee's intention is to foster areas of fruitful cooperation, both existing and new, between these marvelous institutions." — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: To learn more about seminary education, visit lcms.org/seminary-education.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 165–166.

Resolution Number: 6-02

To Uphold the Scriptural and Confessional Qualifications of the Office of the Holy Ministry

Resolution Summary: The convention expressed strong concurrence with established scriptural and confessional qualifications for service in the Office of the Holy Ministry and confirmed that a "proper call" entails three biblical/confessional mandates: (1) examination — the candidate must be personally and theologically qualified for the office; (2) call — affirming that God Himself calls a man through the Church; and (3) ordination — understood as the entire Church's confirmation of the "proper call" (The Augsburg Confession, Article XIV) and as an inherent component of transcongregational church fellowship.

Progress Report: The Pastoral Formation Committee (Resolution 6-01) is planning to review admissions and certification standards with the seminaries prior to their consultation with the Council of Presidents as directed in the first Resolved of Resolution 6-02. The executive director of Office of Pastoral Education will also carry out preliminary preparatory work for the consultation with the Council of Presidents.

Quote: "The dignity, the desire, and the joy of the true coworker of God [pastor] is to draw ever more his community of believers into their freedom and its worthy use, to encourage them and lead them ever more in the exercise of their rights ..." — Rev. F.C.D. Wyneken, Second LCMS President (1810–1876), "On the Spiritual Priesthood and the Office of the Ministry," 1852 Synodical Address.

Additional Information: To learn more about seminary education, visit lcms.org/seminary-education.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 166–168.



Resolution Number: 6-03

To Affirm the Master of Divinity Route at the Synod's Seminaries

Resolution Summary: By adopting this resolution without objection, the Synod overwhelmingly affirms “the most complete means of preparing a man for the general responsibilities of the pastoral office and a lifetime of service is the residential Master of Divinity route” at our two seminaries. This full residential experience has always been our ‘gold standard’ for pastoral formation;” men are thus encouraged to apply for admission to the Master of Divinity programs at the Synod’s seminaries.

Progress Report: This resolution serves as a foundational statement even as the Pastoral Formation Committee (2016 Resolution 6-01) continues dialogue and planning with all involved stakeholders over the future of LCMS pastoral formation. In its work, the Pastoral Formation Committee will be holding to the importance of and making efforts to maintain and strengthen the residential Master of Divinity route to ordination and Synodwide recruitment of qualified candidates into the same.

Quote: “To me, the joy of residential seminary education and sending men out on vicarage is that through it all, we trust and take comfort that the Lord is at work doing as He promises, preparing men to be faithful shepherds of His own flock through a process which appears to the world to be not so comfortable, not so easy.” — Rev. Jacob Sutton, pastor of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Terre Haute, Ind.

Additional Information: To learn more about seminary education, visit lcms.org/seminary-education.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 168.

Resolution Number: 6-04

To Encourage and Support the Global Seminary Initiative (GSI)

Resolution Summary: Through the adoption of this resolution, convention delegates affirmed the blessings of the Global Seminary Initiative (GSI), and calls the Synod to send qualified instructors to teach at and support partner seminaries; support the formation of the next generation of international teachers/church leaders by enabling them to study at LCMS and regional seminaries; and sponsor conferences and continuing education seminars particularly in East Africa. The convention mandated that these efforts “be undertaken when sufficient resources are designated and secured for that purpose.”

Progress Report: A GSI Steering Committee, chaired by the executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education, meets twice a year to oversee GSI plans and operations. Funding, all coming from restricted donations, has seen shortfalls versus expectations since the convention, adversely affecting GSI operations in both U.S. and overseas contexts. LCMS seminaries and LCMS Mission Advancement are working closely to take mitigating actions and to

develop and execute a well-coordinated, robust plan for improved, sustainable support from donors and constituents. Implementation is slated for fall 2017 and beyond.

Quote: “In most parts of the world today, we have partner churches who firmly believe that one of the best qualities of the LCMS is our theological education. It is our niche, and we are well-positioned to make the most of it by assisting these partner churches.” — Rev. Dr. Albert Collver III, director of LCMS Church Relations

Additional Information: To learn more about supporting the GSI, visit lcms.org/makeagift/gsi. An informative infographic also is available for download at blogs.lcms.org/2016/theological-education-around-the-world.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 169.





A Moment Decades in the Making

In a remote village in northern Togo, a pastor is able to share God's Word — the result of decades of mission work in the country.

Story by Peter Slayton | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford

Lambombik is not a Christian, but on a day this past February, he heard God's Word from one of God's shepherds — something that would not have been possible just a few years ago.

During Harmattan in Togo — the time of year when the north wind blows off the Sahara Desert, drying out eyes, kicking up dust and grit everywhere, and creating a perpetual haze easily mistaken for smog — it is not possible to reach Lambombik's village of Sankpong by plane. The village, which is in the far northern reaches of Togo about an hour from the closest city of Dapaong, is sometimes only reachable by motorcycle down the rough dirt road. Yet, God's Word has had a profound impact on Sankpong since the Rev. Remi Lare Lambon planted a Lutheran church here during his vicarage a few years ago. Michel Paru, president of the congregation, said that before the church was here, the village was full of hatred and conflict. But now, he said, "these things have diminished greatly. We have compassion for one another. It has changed lives a great deal."

On that February day, Lambon visited the home of Kanlou and SaaLalipak Lamboni, Lambombik's brother and sister-in-law. Their home is simple: huts made of mud brick and grass thatch that encircle an open-air common area.

Kanlou has done well in his business — well enough to afford a few rooms made of cinder blocks with tin roofs. Walls between each hut complete the compound. Just outside, a deep green mango tree reaches for the

sky and spreads its branches wide — an excellent gathering place during the heat of the day.

It's a simple visit under the mango tree. There is prayer, a devotion on Rom. 1:8–12 and pastoral care, particularly for SaaLalipak. Like his brother, Kanlou does not attend church with her.

In the cool shade of the mango tree as the searing sun climbs the sky, both Kanlou and Lambombik sit quietly and hear God's Word. That Word begins to do its work in them. As the visit comes to a close, Lambombik expresses interest in attending church soon because he has been impressed with what he has heard. He also has noticed the changes in the village. The youth are more respectful, and there is more harmony. He hopes the work Lambon is doing strengthens and grows.

Training Pastors

This moment has been decades in the making. LCMS mission work first began in Togo in 1981 when the Rev. Walt DeMoss started working in Lokpano, a village two hours outside of Dapaong. DeMoss and his wife, Helena, along with other LCMS missionary families, worked in northern Togo, planting churches and training evangelists for nearly 20 years. To this day, the Christian doctrine course they developed based on Scripture and the Small Catechism is still in use, helping the Togolese understand the Christian faith and grapple with the animistic and Muslim world-views that surround them. The work begun by DeMoss and others grew, until in the late 1990s it was time to establish a more formal program to put in place the last piece needed for national pastors to be ordained and sent out: a theological training center. Located in Dapaong, this new center was called the Centre Lutherien d'Etudes Theologiques





(CLET), or the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies in English. The first Togolese pastors for the young Lutheran Church of Togo (ELT) were ordained in 2002.

“Before 2002, because of the work of Rev. DeMoss and those who followed, we had trained evangelists but we did not have any ordained pastors,” said the Rev. Kolani Lambon Lare, president of the ELT. “Now we have 19 ordained pastors and 24 evangelists.

Lare was in that first graduating class in 2002 and was ordained when he completed his vicarage. Lambon followed the same course, completing his studies in 2011. He was ordained in 2015.

What started as a center to train Togolese pastors has since expanded into an international partnership between confessional Lutheran church bodies across Francophone Africa — all the countries in Africa that speak French as the national language. Today, men from Togo study with men from the Ivory Coast, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and even from far off Burundi.

The CLET compound doesn’t look much different from other schools in the area. But one thing sets it apart: its singular focus on teaching men the pure Word of God.

“The in-depth theological education is the most important thing that takes place here,” emphasized the Rev. Souk Kombondjar, director of the CLET, “so that the students may preach purely the Word of God and rightly administer the Sacraments.”

The campus itself aids in maintaining this focus. The classrooms, offices and chapel are arranged around a towering cross in the center of the campus. The education is further reinforced by a daily schedule that revolves around the prayer offices of Matins and Vespers, where students find great joy in strengthening their practical knowledge of the historic liturgy and caring for their future congregations through faithful worship practices.

The LCMS has provided theological educators like the Rev. Micah Wildauer to assist in the education of more men who would be pastors. Wildauer describes the CLET as a place that “brings men of all ages from throughout Francophone Africa to form them and to train them to preach the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen again for our salvation.”

Building Up the Church

The Rev. Frederick Reinhardt, LCMS missionary and area facilitator for Francophone Africa, has been encouraged to see the mission work done by the LCMS in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s pay off as congregations have formed national church bodies.

Each of these Francophone Lutheran church bodies contributes to the financial well-being of the CLET, but it is the LCMS they look to for theological education. “The LCMS as a church body is very well-known for its top-notch education. Our Lutheran schools and seminaries are world-renowned,” Reinhardt explained. “We bring that expertise to Africa so that the churches here can learn and one day have independent educational institutions of their own.”

Looking toward the future, the hope is that more French-speaking Lutheran church bodies will join in this partnership to train pastors and send students like Lambon to the CLET in Dapaong so that Christianity can grow throughout Africa.

Thanks to the education and training Lambon received at the CLET, he was able to tell Lambombik — and many other unbelievers — of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. The seed has been planted. There is a church and pastor to water it. The Holy Spirit is present in Word and Sacrament, and that seed will grow in Sankpong as He wills it. Because of decades of dedicated mission work in Togo, this same story is repeating itself across Francophone Africa as pastors are trained at the CLET and sent out to the harvest.



Resolution Number: 6-05

To Encourage Movement toward an Alternative to Federal Student Loans for Seminarians

Resolution Summary: This resolution acknowledges that the Synod's seminaries currently participate in the Title IV Federal Student Financial Aid program, but express a preference going forward to withdraw from such funding (chiefly, its student loan program). The resolution's proposed course of action is for seminary administration representatives to investigate the privatization of seminary student loan financing with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and/or the Lutheran Federal Credit Union, and if feasible, to put such privatization in place.

Progress Report: The newly-constituted Pastoral Formation Committee (2016 Resolution 6-01) intends to take up this issue on its fall 2017 meeting agenda and identify appropriate action step(s).

Quote: "Thanks to donors, we have been blessed to make great progress in making seminary tuition affordable to students. They are also counseled about debt. That said, it remains necessary for many students to take out loans, and right now, these come from the federal government. Knowledgeable observers believe the day is coming when the federal government will refuse loans to seminary students. Fulfilling Resolution 6-05, making available educational loans apart from the government and its strings, will be important to produce the pastors the Synod needs." — Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Additional Information: To learn more about supporting LCMS seminarians, visit lcms.org/make-a-gift/pastoral-formation-and-care.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 170.

Resolution Number: 6-06

To Encourage Use of Existing Training Programs for Pastoral Ministry in Immigrant and Challenging Ministry Settings

Resolution Summary: With ever-growing immigrant/ethnic U.S. populations, LCMS pastoral formation programs must effectively address significant needs in cross-cultural ministry settings. Such programs currently include the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), the Center for Hispanic Studies, the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, and Bilingual Pastoral Formation for Latinos. The convention strongly endorsed such initiatives and commended them to congregations and districts, affirming the Synod's "long-standing commitment to a well-trained clergy, formed through its seminaries."

Progress Report: The "encouragement" and "continuation" (including adequate funding) called for in Resolution 6-06 will certainly be considered in the ongoing work the Pastoral Formation Committee (Resolution 6-01) and addressed in the anticipated report of the Resolution 13-03 Task Force — addressing future church leadership needs, offering

strategies for reaching increasingly diverse populations and exploring alternative methods for ministerial preparation in the light of changing needs.

Quote: "Per Resolution 6-06, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, transformed 'Bilingual Pastoral Formation for Latinos' into an approved program now called 'SMP—Español/English.' [We are] now forming bilingual pastors in a program we have operated for many years, reflecting our goal to train pastors to serve in Spanish-speaking contexts." — Rev. Dr. Arthur Just, chairman and professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSF); director of Spanish-Speaking Pastoral Formation, CTSF; missionary, LCMS Office of International Mission.

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 170.



Resolution Number: 7-01A

To Adopt Lutheran Identity Statement for CUS Institutions as Prepared by CUS Presidents

Resolution Summary: Resolution 7-01A adopts the Lutheran Identity Statement developed by the Concordia University System (CUS) and adopted by the institutions. The resolution requires monitoring of Lutheran Identity Compliance via an annual report to the CUS and a compiled report to the Synod in Convention.

Progress Report: The CUS institutions submitted their initial reporting at the end of the 2015-2016 Academic Year. These reports were submitted following a reporting template based directly upon the points of the Lutheran Identity Statement. Initial reporting has been very favorable and clearly indicates compliance with the Lutheran Identity Statement. Institutions are now preparing to develop updated reports on the subsequent Academic Year, which will be due to the CUS by December 1, 2017. The CUS will include a summary report in its report to the 2019 Convention of the Synod.

Quote: “The efforts of the institutions to demonstrate their compliance with the Lutheran Identity Statement have been very helpful in understanding their commitment to the Church, its mission and its teachings.” — Rev. Dr. Paul A. Philp, CUS director of Institutional Research and Integrity

Additional Information: To learn more about the CUS, visit cus.edu.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 171–172.

Resolution Number: 7-02B

To Preserve Concordia Colleges and Universities as Institutions of the Church and Strengthen Their Structural Bonds with Synod

Resolution Summary: Resolution 7-02B continues the work of the 2013 Convention Resolution 5-01A Task Force on Structure and Governance for the universities. The new task force is to continue to study matters of governance at the universities and make recommendations for bylaw changes to the next convention.

Progress Report: The task force met in December 2016 to continue its work. Several areas of potential changes in current bylaws were discussed. The Task Force was to meet in March 2017, but the meeting was postponed until August. When the Task Force convenes in August 2017 it will begin preparing a draft of its report, which is due to Synod president by the end of the year. Input has been solicited from the institutions and others regarding the work of the task force. Bylaw changes regarding appointments to each Board of Regents by the Presidium have been fulfilled with initial appointments. Changes related to the vetting of board members appointed by a Board of Regents are being transacted in accordance with the bylaw requiring review prior to appointment.

Quote: “The Task Force is working diligently to present a series of proposed changes that will enhance and strengthen the connection of the colleges and universities to the Synod while ensuring that they are well-served by their governance structures.” — Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, president of the Concordia University System

Additional Information: To learn more about the CUS, visit cus.edu.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 173–175.



Resolution Number: 7-03A

To Amend Certain Concordia University System Bylaws

Resolution Summary: The resolution amends several bylaws related to the Concordia University System.

Progress Report: The bylaw revisions have been enacted and are being followed by the Concordia University System (CUS) Board of Directors. Matters related to policy development remain ongoing as the board and the institutions of the CUS identify needed policies and create them. This includes matters related to issues of dispute resolution with linkages to the appropriate Synod processes.

Additional Information: To learn more about the CUS, visit cus.edu.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 175–177.

Resolution Number: 7-05A

To Endorse Roster Status for Graduates of Classical Liberal Studies and Other Teacher Education Programs.

Resolution Summary: This resolution endorses programs of classical training at several Concordia University System (CUS) institutions and calls for the development of standards for graduates of these programs in the area of teacher education. The resolution also seeks the development of a track for roster status of these graduates.

Progress Report: The CUS Board of Directors appointed a small committee to develop a set of standards for these classical teacher training programs. The standards were developed and adopted by the CUS Board at their May 2017 meeting. The standards were forwarded to the Office of the Secretary of Synod in advance of June 2017 deadline. The committee also began the work of developing a plan regarding roster status. This process remains ongoing as part of a larger discussion that will need to take place regarding roster status and commissioned minister categories.

Quote: “The development of a set of standards for classical teacher education is an excellent first step towards formalizing these programs within institutions of the CUS. We look forward to the quality graduates who will eventually serve in various locations within the Synod.” — Rev. Dr. Paul A. Philp, CUS director of Institutional Research and Integrity

Additional Information: To learn more about the CUS, visit cus.edu.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 177–178.



Resolution Number: 7-06B

To Assist Our CUS Institutions in Demonstrating Our Common Confession

Resolution Summary: The resolution changes the bylaws regarding the process for prior approval of theological faculty.

Progress Report: The resolution has engendered discussion regarding the most efficient way to manage the process for prior approval related to those teaching theology as adjuncts. This process is still being reviewed and developed. The initial process has been completed for several candidates being considered for full-time theology positions and worked very efficiently and well. Further study of this process may suggest a need for recommendations for revision to be made by the 2019 Convention of the Synod.

Quote: “The process was effective in its initial use for reviewing full-time candidates for two of our schools; continued work remains to refine an adequate means to manage review of adjunct faculty.” — Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, president of Concordia University System

Additional Information: To learn more about the CUS, visit cus.edu.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 178–179.

Resolution Number: 8-01A

To Encourage and Strengthen the Lutheran Ethos of our LCMS Early Childhood Centers, Elementary Schools, and High Schools

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention through this resolution gives thanks to all those who have faithfully served in our LCMS schools and calls the Office of National Mission (ONM) to provide guidance to congregations and schools in implementing the Lutheran ethos as characterized in the resolution.

Progress Report: The School Ministry department of the Office of National Mission has developed a variety of resources that are designed to support the engagement of a faithful and confessional Lutheran ethos in our schools. “It’s Still All About Jesus,” the 2017–18 *Chapel Talks* booklet for Lutheran Schools, explores the various Old and New Testament names and titles for Jesus in conjunction with the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. It contains resources for individuals tasked with leading weekly chapel services to students of all ages in Lutheran and Christian schools.

Bible verses, weekly hymns and speaking points make up only a portion of the great content of this year’s Chapel Talks. In addition, *The School Shepherd*, provides a monthly article designed to encourage and equip school pastors for building and maintaining impactful relationships within their school community.

Quote: “The free and accessible resources that have been developed at our synodical office provide doctrinally sound, ideas and encouragement for our people involved with our school schools who are intent upon strengthening the Lutheran Ethos of LCMS Early Childhood Centers, Elementary Schools and High Schools.” — Terry L. Schmidt, director of LCMS School Ministry

Additional Information: To learn more about school ministry, visit lcms.org/school-ministry. Resources are available at luthed.org.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 181–182.





Lutheran School Accreditation

Accreditation helps schools provide quality education coupled with the love of Christ.

Story by Jeni Miller | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford

When it comes to sharing the Gospel, few organizations open more doors than our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) schools. There, the good news of Christ is shared with thousands of children and families. During the 2015–16 academic year alone, 2,336 students in LCMS schools were baptized into God’s family.

“What’s interesting today is that so many people are not coming [to our schools] for religious reasons,” explained Terry Schmidt, director of LCMS School Ministry. “They have other motivations on their dashboard: a school with sound academics that is safe, affordable, convenient. Many of our schools enroll more non-Lutherans than Lutherans, which is great because the real reason we exist is to proclaim Jesus to children and families. They’re going to get Jesus in our schools.”

To help bolster the schools’ success, LCMS School Ministry provides support all year long through mailings, social media, consulting, conferences, service contracts, leadership coaching, National Lutheran Schools Week materials, Chapel Talks resources and numerous other services.

Perhaps one of the most unique and important services they provide, however, is school accreditation.

Meeting the Mission in Cedarburg

“National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) is a tool, created and operated by the LCMS, to accredit Lutheran schools,” Schmidt shared. “Right now, we have 690 accredited schools. These and other schools that are involved with an accreditation process demonstrate a commitment to quality and improvement, and they’re completely engaged in making the school the best it can be in serving its students.”

Among the 690 is First Immanuel Lutheran School (FILS) in Cedarburg, Wis., with Principal Dawn Walker, who helped guide the school through its accreditation in 2015.

“Completing the accreditation process is like taking an assessment,” Walker said. “A good assessment shows you where you are in relation to a set of standards. We wanted to see where we were in relation to the NLSA standards so we knew what we needed to improve as a school to be the best we can be as we strive to offer a quality Christian education to our students.”

Throughout the accreditation process, First Immanuel found much to celebrate and maintain, yet there also were a few areas of improvement that came to light.

“First of all, we learned what we were doing well,” Walker recalled. “It’s hard to know this until someone from the outside comes in to evaluate you. It was rewarding to learn that many of the things we had implemented over the last several years were well received and had become an effective part of our ministry at FILS. We also learned what we can improve; the accreditation process led to us creating a new dismissal procedure, since we scored low in this area. As we came up with this new process, I witnessed our entire FILS staff working together to share ideas, develop a



process and fine-tune the steps to come up with a dismissal procedure that is working fabulously.”

According to Schmidt, parents, congregational stakeholders and others need to be assured that their school “strives to serve students well and with intent, with a commitment to quality Christian education.” In addition to the satisfaction it brings to the school and its families, accreditation, while voluntary, is often worth the effort and expense, since some states offer a monetary award, reimbursements and tax credits for being accredited.

First Immanuel member Laurie McGraw and her husband enrolled their two boys — Grant, now in eighth grade, and Reid, now in sixth grade — in the school after visiting nine different schools in their community.

“Our boys ... have been at FILS since kindergarten for Grant and 3K preschool for Reid,” McGraw explained. “It was hard to narrow it down, but then it just became clear. [On] our first visit to FILS, we were immediately greeted by Pastor Jon [van Slidrecht], and he talked with us. The kindergarten teachers and principal at the time were very friendly, and we were looking for a school for both kids to be at through eighth grade.”

Since then, the McGraw family has appreciated the improvements that have resulted from the accreditation in 2015.

“We’ve heard about the accreditation process the past few years, and I believe it’s brought good changes to the school with a higher level of academics, security and safety for the kids,” McGraw said. “I love that the kids love to go to school! They don’t want to miss a day and enjoy doing their projects, sports and being with friends.”

Of course, the most compelling reason for seeking accreditation through NLSA is to determine where a school excels and where it is weak in its religious education and spiritual life. According to Walker, “the benefit of NLSA specifically is that not only are we evaluated on standards to which all schools are held, we are evaluated on how we are meeting the mission of the LCMS and our relationship with the LCMS church that supports and guides our school.”

From Schmidt’s perspective, “NLSA is the perfect tool for Lutheran schools because not only does it evaluate the school as a whole, but it delves into the spiritual aspect of the school, evaluating and recognizing strengths and addressing concerns. It’s designed specifically for our schools and the religious component of our schools.”

And that religious component is a huge draw for families in the community, and one key aspect of Lutheran schooling that encourages families to come, stay and see their children’s Lutheran education through.

“The kindness and encouragement at school continue with the kids at home, [on] their sport teams or [with] community people they’re in contact with,” McGraw said.

For many families, the accreditation status of a school is just the icing on the cake, another attractive feature that sets the local Lutheran school apart from others in the area, opening doors to Gospel-sharing that might not otherwise take place.

A Team Effort

According to an NLSA document explaining its approach, “accreditation involves a school in a rigorous self-study process in seven distinct areas that are related to school quality: purpose, relationships, governance, professional personnel, teaching and learning, student services, and facilities.”

The self-study helps a school evaluate its actual conditions that are strong indicators of school quality, using an objective, evidence-based approach. Then, an NLSA team visits to assess and confirm what the school found throughout the course of the self-study.

“It [was] a team effort because, in order to be successful and paint the best picture of your school, everyone needs to be involved,” Walker explained. “This included administration, pastors, teachers, students, parents, stakeholders and the NLSA visit team. A lot of work needs to be done by all of these people!”

Walking Alongside Schools

“LCMS School Ministry supported FILS by providing a specific process to follow,” Walker said. “The accreditation information is well presented, and the instructions are very specific and thorough! They provide suggestions for what can be used as evidence. Through the network LCMS School Ministry has created, we are provided guidance by our district executive and the district NLSA representative — this is extremely helpful to a principal who has never led a school through the process before.”

Since school accreditation is a rigorous and often intense process for schools, LCMS School Ministry has made it a goal to walk alongside schools throughout accreditation, helping to ensure success for the benefit of everyone involved.

“We don’t just provide the platform, but truly the opportunity for schools to study who they are and to plan intentionally for improvement,” Schmidt said. “The accreditation process is a roadmap for getting that done, and NLSA is the only [accreditation agency] that assigns a consultant to assist the process at the school, so they can work with experienced, well-trained people who will walk alongside them and ensure success. We never go in with the intent of the school not making it; we want them to conclude [the accreditation] successfully.”

With LCMS School Ministry partnering with schools, not only through the accreditation process but as a partner in the Gospel, more and more families will continue to be served with a quality education coupled with the love of Christ.

“We have loved the years at FILS for our kids and family,” McGraw said. “It’s hard to believe they will be going onto high school, college and beyond before we know it! I believe ... they are given a great faith foundation here and will be able to build on it as they go into their futures.”



Resolution Number: 8-02

To Recruit and Equip Lutheran Administrators for Service in Early Childhood Centers, Elementary Schools and High Schools

Resolution Summary: The convention delegates in this resolution acknowledged the Synod's long history of assisting Christian parents in their vocation through Lutheran schools and with competent faithful school administrators. The Office of National Mission and LCMS School Ministry are directed to provide for the preparation of early childhood and school administrators and to fund programs to recruit and equip such prospective administrators.

Progress Report: In response to the growing shortage of Lutheran school leaders, LCMS School Ministry has re-engaged an improved and enhanced School Leadership Development (SLED) process to recruit and prepare the next generation of Lutheran school leaders. Thirty participants have been selected to be involved with training that began June 26, 2017, at two national SLED events over the course of the 2017-18 school year. At these events, candidates receive leadership training designed specifically for school leaders serving in Lutheran schools, are mentored by well-respected, experienced administrators, and complete

a major project that will benefit the schools where they currently serve. After their training concludes, participants will receive the School Leadership Endorsement from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which enhances their eligibility for accepting calls as Lutheran school administrators. Additionally, participants can select the option to complete SLED for three hours of graduate credit from a Concordia University. This event was largely made possible through the receipt of a generous grant.

Quote: “With the coming tsunami of baby-boomer retirements and administrative attrition in our schools, SLED will provide a pool of Christ-centered, well-trained people who are qualified to lead our Lutheran schools.” — Terry L. Schmidt, director of LCMS School Ministry

Additional Information: To learn more about school ministry, visit lcms.org/school-ministry. Additional resources are available at luthed.org.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 181–182.

Resolution Number: 8-03A

To Support the Quality and Sustainability of Lutheran Schools through Work of Blue Ribbon Committee on Lutheran Schools

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention directs the Office of National Mission to continue the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Lutheran Schools previously established by the 2013 LCMS convention. The committee is to determine causes for the decline in the number of schools and in total student enrollment; identify alternative models for funding Lutheran schools with an emphasis on making schools affordable for all families; and explore and report on alternative forms of education, including but not limited to: classical education, online education, flexible scheduling, hybrid homeschooling and international student ministry, as a means of enriching and augmenting the impact of our schools in our communities and reaching children and their families for Christ.

Progress Report: The Blue Ribbon Committee has met three times, has established a strategic direction and has begun to implement the strategic elements of their work. Surveys have been developed and will be administered at the beginning of the new school year. Committee members have been charged with assignments that will provide valuable statistical information and suggestions for enhancing the work of our schools and their impact on our congregations and communities. The committee is to report its work to the 2019 Synod convention.

Quote: “Let us work together to be more deliberate in promoting the Christian uniqueness of our schools and our Lutheran identity as we promote and market our schools.” — Jeffrey Beavers, committee chairperson

Additional Information: To learn more about the Blue Ribbon Committee, visit lcms.org/2017/creative-solutions-for-lutheran-education.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 183.



Resolution Number: 9-02A

To Assure Uniformity of Relationship and Asset Disposition Language in Governing Documents of Corporate Agencies of the Synod

Resolution Summary: The Articles of Incorporation and other governing documents of separately incorporated agencies of the Synod have been subject to a variety of requirements for relationship and property reversionary language over the years, some of which have reportedly raised issues in certain legal jurisdictions, and none of which were uniformly or universally implemented. The “Resolution 4-11 Task Force,” as suggested by a joint meeting of the Commissions on Constitutional Matters and Handbook and the Council of Presidents in 2014, worked with Synod’s legal counsel, incorporated feedback from the incorporated agencies, and proposed new requirements, which Resolution 9-02A adopted as Bylaw 1.5.3.6. The resolution requires all agencies to incorporate suitable language in their governing documents and to submit them to the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) for review in time for the CCM to report on compliance to the 2019 convention.

Progress Report: The indicated bylaw changes have been incorporated, and the CCM is soliciting governing documents for review. In response to the first few documents reviewed, the CCM issued a clarifying Opinion, 17-2811, indicating its expectation that the relationship and asset disposition (property reversionary) language indicated in Bylaw 1.5.3.6 is to be incorporated, at least, “in the agency’s foundational governing document.” Agencies are urged, as soon as possible, to submit their governing documents to the CCM for review.

Additional Information: To learn more about the CCM, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-constitutional-matters.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 185–186.

Resolution Number: 9-04A

To Improve Disclosures Related to Financial Gifts from God’s Stewards for Special Appeals

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention encourages the LCMS Board of Directors and national leadership to continue to pursue improved processes for reporting and increased transparency of financial reporting, especially as it relates to giving to special appeals.

Progress Report: Reports on emergency disaster response appeals are publicly available as online, downloadable PDFs (lcms.org/disaster) and include revenues, program expenditure by category, beginning and ending balances and fundraising costs. The report for the 2016 National Offering is available online (lcms.org/national-offering), including disbursements for work and remaining available balance. Unrestricted and restricted contributions were disclosed to the Synod in 2014, 2015 and 2016 via an annual special issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. An internal audit of fundraising performance, program costs and net revenue disbursements from the LCMS Joint Seminary Fund was conducted, with results disclosed in a report sent to both LCMS seminaries. The Board of Directors established a policy placing prudent limits on fundraising costs, which is disclosed on the Synod’s website (lcms.org/makeagift/faqs).

Annual costs for Advancement work are disclosed in budget summary documents and audited financial statements made available online (lcms.org/bod).

Quote: “We continue to look for new ways to roll this type of reporting out for other categories of giving, with progress limited only by our internal capacities and available time or financial resources for this kind of work,” said Mark Hofman, executive director of LCMS Mission Advancement. “I am more than happy to receive constructive comments on this matter and answer questions regarding the appeals we put before God’s people.”

Additional Information: To learn more about the Synod’s financial reporting, visit the following links:

- lcms.org/2016/national-offering-receives-315000;
 - lcms.org/national-offering;
 - lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=4372 (PDF download);
 - lcms.org/disaster;
 - lcms.org/bod (budget summaries and audited financial statements);
- and
- lcms.org/makeagift/faqs.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 189.



Resolution Number: 10-05

To Encourage Greater Use of LCMS Communication Resources

Resolution Summary: The time, talent and treasure invested by the LCMS Communications Department to produce the many Synod print and online publications is acknowledged in this resolution. This resolution encourages pastors and church leaders to urge their people to make use of the many resources conveying the work of the national church walking together for the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Progress Report: LCMS Communications continually encourages the people of the Synod to avail themselves of the array of resources the department produces. It does this through advertising (usually cost-free), online marketing, social media and other means. The department has upped its sharable content and made it easier for pastors to receive bulk subscriptions — at no cost to their congregations — to *Lutherans Engage the World* magazine. Further, the Communications unit, working in tandem with its ministry clients, creates winsome campaigns enabling people to learn more about, if not participate in, the work of the Church.

Quote: “We are promoting our communications resources all the time. What we need — and what, frankly, was the intention of this resolution — is for LCMS leaders across the country, not least our pastors, to help us to do this.” — David Strand, executive director of LCMS Communications.

Additional Information: Learn more about LCMS Communications publications at lcms.org/resources/publications.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 193.

Resolution Number: 10-06

To Promote the Use of Synod Stewardship Services

Resolution Summary: This resolution encourages districts to engage the aid of the Office of National Mission's (ONM) Stewardship Ministry and send a representative to the District Stewardship Leaders Conference and trainees to stewardship training events.

Progress Report: Representatives of about two-thirds of the Synod's districts met at the District Stewardship Leadership Conference (DSLCL) in February 2017. This was a wonderful way for district leaders to share ideas and make contacts both with each other and the Synod Coordinator for Stewardship and Assistant Coordinator for Stewardship. Several workshops focusing on stewardship (The Philippians Workshop), congregational planning, and Synod and national demographics (Generational Generosity Workshop) have been held due to the relationships built at the DSLCL.

Quote: “We love to travel around the Synod to work with our district stewardship partners in these valuable teaching and training efforts. Workshops for the circuit level have been very popular and we are scheduling 9–12 months out. Contact us at lcmsstewardship@lcms.org.” — Rev. Heath R. Curtis, coordinator of LCMS Stewardship

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit lcms.org/stewardship-ministry.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 194.



Resolution Number: 11-10

To Authorize Review of Synod Nominations/Elections Processes

Resolution Summary: This resolution designates a task force to “review existing nominations bylaw procedures in the interest of combining them into a comprehensive process with appropriate time frames to facilitate convention preparations.” The task force is to publicize recommendations one year prior to the 2019 convention and is then to incorporate feedback and offer a final report and proposed bylaw changes to the 2019 convention.

Progress Report: The Council of Presidents named English District Secretary Rev. Luke Zimmerman and Wyoming District President Rev. John Hill to the task force, and the Board of Directors named Kathy Schulz, Barb Below and the Rev. Dr. Raymond Hartwig. At the task force’s first e-meeting (March 29, 2017), the present and former Secretaries of the Synod presented an overview of the nominations and elections processes, especially in the light of fairly significant process changes made by the 2016 convention and, further, in light of technological aids being adopted

in the Secretary’s office. The task force noted that its task is narrow, to deal with timeline- and process- related issues, not to develop a whole new way of doing Synod’s nominating. In that vein, the task force asked the Secretary for an update at a suitable time as to how the 2016 changes and technological advances impact process and timeline. At that time the task force will determine if any bylaw changes need to be contemplated.

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 203.

Resolution Number: 11-14

To Clarify Function of Committee for Convention Nominations in Interim between Issuing Final Report and Convention

Resolution Summary: The Committee for Convention Nominations (CCN) often has a need to update its work between the submission of its final report and the convention (as nominees’ situations change, and they decline their nomination, or difficulties are encountered in finding sufficient nominees and alternates for some positions). Resolution 11-14 designates the “Bylaw 3.2.5” committee of the CCN to act on behalf of the full CCN to adapt its report as necessary between its issuance and the conduct of elections at the convention.

Progress Report: The policy requested will be noted in the CCN manual. The Commission on Handbook is considering whether this is the best solution to the problem and whether it, or some modification thereof, might best be incorporated into the bylaws.

Additional Information: To learn more about Synod conventions, visit lcms.org/convention.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 208.



Resolution Number: 12-02A

To Encourage Calling Church Workers on Candidate Status

Resolution Summary: District presidents continue to provide pastoral care for church workers on candidate status, put additional procedures in place regularly to review their status closely and annually report to the Council of Presidents the names of all ministers of religion — ordained who are on candidate status. Along with seminary leaders and the Council of Presidents, the Synod's Chief Mission Officer and the executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education are to explore the development of programs that would aid willing candidates that they be better prepared for reentry into active ministry.

Progress Report: District presidents have begun Resolution 12-02A's mandated annual reporting of the names of all ministers of religion — ordained who are on candidate status. Reviews are focused on understanding the needs of each situation. The Pastoral Formation Committee also has on its agenda the possible development of programs at both seminaries that would help candidates be better prepared for reentry into active ministry.

Quote: "Intentional care for church workers — ordained or commissioned — who are without calls [inadvertently] can be overlooked. Resolution 12-02A is a first step to improving care and concern for those on candidate status." — Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck, executive director of LCMS Pastoral Education

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 222–223.

Resolution Number: 12-03

To Amend the Bylaws on Candidate Status

Resolution Summary: Resolution 12-03 eliminates noncandidate status and gives all workers who hold either noncandidate or candidate status as of July 13, 2016, a new term of candidate status, to extend up to 10 years (or beyond, with a five-year extension granted by the Council of Presidents). The requirements of annual reporting to and evaluation by the district president—along with other bylaw criteria for maintenance of candidate status—remain in force.

Progress Report: With the help of a clarifying opinion by the Commission on Constitutional Matters (Opinion 16-2795), the Council of Presidents, Office of Secretary and Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services implemented the roster actions required in the resolution. It was noted that the elimination of noncandidate status as an option will make it important for candidates and district presidents to indicate in their documents any limitations on the workers' ability, at the present time, to consider or accept a call to ministry. This (together with the annual

review of those ordained ministers on candidate status being conducted under Resolution 12-02A) will help keep calling entities apprised of which candidates might be available for particular areas and circumstances of service. Also as a result of this resolution, the Council of Presidents is considering a clearer restatement of Bylaw 2.11.2.2 [c]'s criteria for the granting and continuation of candidate status.

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 223.



Resolution Number: 12-06

To Care for Returning Missionaries and Military Chaplains

Resolution Summary: Many missionaries and military chaplains serve in positions which eventually conclude, and as a result, the missionary or chaplain may be available for and desire a call to serve elsewhere. The Offices of National and International Mission are to annually report to the Council of Presidents the names of those who have not received a call since returning. District presidents are to encourage congregations to call such candidates.

Progress Report: As a standard practice, the Offices of National and International Mission and the Ministry to the Armed Forces consistently notify the respective district president of each missionary or military chaplain whose conclusion of service is pending. A regular annual process is yet to be developed for reporting the names of all former missionaries and military chaplains who have not yet received a call. Meanwhile, it appears that this particular mandate already has been met by the Council of Presidents' fulfillment of Resolution 12-02A.

Quote: "Ministry to the Armed Forces makes it a practice to stay in touch with all military chaplains who are transitioning out of the military. We offer encouragement to the chaplain and his family and stay in touch with the respective District President to assist with the transition. We are available 24/7 to assist the chaplain and his family as they transition from military life to civilian life." — Chaplain Craig Muehler, U.S. Navy Capt, (Ret.), director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 227.

Resolution Number: 12-14

Regarding the Right of an Accuser to Appeal When a District President Fails to Act or Declines to Suspend

Resolution Summary: The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) Opinion 16-2791, answering a pre-convention question of Floor Committee 12, concurred with the 1956 convention that when a district president has failed to act or declined to suspend an accused member, the Synod president has a constitutional authority (Const. Art. XI B 1–3) to hear an accuser's appeal for action and act as the district president might have. After considerable discussion of the floor committee's proposal (Resolution 12-01A), the convention adopted Resolution 12-14, directing the Secretary of the Synod to consult with the Council of Presidents for at least six months and develop bylaw language to "implement expulsion processes consistent with and not contradicting the Constitution of the Synod" on this particular point, with the language to be adopted under the procedure of Bylaw 7.1.2.

Progress Report: An extended consultation was held with the Secretary at each of the four meetings of the Council of Presidents following the convention; in April 2017, a draft was presented and comments received. The draft received the input and approval of the CCM and the Commission on Handbook and was finally adopted by the LCMS Board of Directors, May 19, 2017, completing the Bylaw 7.1.2 bylaw amendment process. With these amendments finalized, the 2016 *Handbook* was published and delivered by the end of June 2017. *Standard Operating Procedures Manuals* are presently under revision and should be completed in September 2017.

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 223.



Resolution Number: 13-01A

To Exalt and Equip the Blessed Partnership between the Royal Priesthood and the Office of the Public Ministry

Resolution Summary: After giving thanks for and encouraging the continuance of lay training in the districts, universities and college-based programs, this resolution calls the Synod president to convene a task force to foster the relationship between the royal priesthood and the office of public ministry.

Progress Report: The task force appointed by President Harrison has begun to meet and has appointed a drafting committee to prepare a basic outline and document for its next meeting. The drafting committee is working through the summer of 2017. After the drafting committee completes its rough draft, the full task force will meet in September 2017 to consider the draft.

Quote: “The Synod has held a constant, biblical view of the complementary relationship of the royal priesthood and the public ministry since Walther’s *Kirche und Amt*. God willing, we will build on a solid foundation and “foster the relationship.” — Rev. Larry M. Vogel, associate executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 235–236.

Resolution Number: 13-02A

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention gave thanks for the men who have served as licensed lay deacons often with great sacrifice and through this resolution brings the licensed lay deacons functioning as pastors onto the Synod’s roster of specific ministry pastors (SMP).

Progress Report: Significant progress has been made — policy manuals are prepared and approved by the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Colloquy Committee according to the procedure outlined in the resolution; instructions have been provided to the district presidents and affected licensed lay deacons so that they might apply for colloquy to the SMP roster of the Synod; and at least two “seminary intensive” courses have been held for deacons applying for colloquy. District presidents are helping licensed lay deacons prepare colloquy application packages; regional colloquy committees will be formed yet this year; the Colloquy Committee and the district presidents will work to shepherd through the process those deacons functioning as pastors. There are

about 250 men across the Synod for whom this resolution requires they enter a colloquy process. We pray most will be finished or on the way by summer 2019. Much work remains. We seek to implement, in a caring and helpful way, a basic principle — those whom the church sends to do pastoral work should be clearly recognized by the church as pastors.

Quote: (overheard at a seminary intensive course) “I’m really glad I came — this class has been very helpful. You are going all out for us.” — Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, LCMS first vice-president

Additional Information: To learn more about the colloquy process, visit lcms.org/colloquy-ministers-of-religion-commissioned.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 236–238.



Resolution Number: 13-03

To Address Future Church Leadership Needs in Light of Current and Future Challenges

Resolution Summary: Recognizing the need to provide Word and Sacrament ministry in an environment of increasing challenges for congregations, the Synod in convention called for the establishment of a task force to review and make recommendations regarding how to prepare men for the ministry to reach the increasing diverse population and to address needs of congregations.

Progress Report: The first meeting of the task force was held April 19, 2017, with the election of task force officers: Leo Mackay (chairman), Jamison Hardy (vice-chairman) and Bradd Stucky (secretary). The task force discussed numerous topics related to their charge concluding in a draft framework to address four areas: Needs of Parishes, Candidate Identification, Alternate Routes, and Offices and Finance. With a task force report to be submitted to the next regular convention, an aggressive timeline and use of sub-committees will be implemented so to complete the task force's assignment.

Quote: "The committee is excited about the opportunity the task force represents to aid the Synod in meeting our pressing challenges to provide for clerical leadership in the church — now, and into the future. In this task, we are aided by the prayers of our co-religionists, and steeled by the clear guidance of Scripture and the Confessions." — Dr. Leo Mackay, chairman of the Resolution 13-03 Task Force

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 238–239.

Resolution Number: 13-04B

Resolution Summary: The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force Report, called for in the Resolution 5-14A of the 2013 LCMS convention and submitted for consideration to the 2016 convention, recommended eligibility for regular colloquy be clarified in the Synod's bylaws. This resolution adopts Bylaw changes to provide the requested clarification.

Progress Report: The major addition to the bylaw requirements for colloquy under this resolution states: "[Life-long] 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." These bylaw additions are included in the 2016 Handbook and explained in the current policy manuals of the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry. The policy manuals have been promulgated to the districts for consideration by prospective colloquy applicants. They are also available on the webpage of the Office of the President at lcms.org.

Quote: "These new policy manuals clarify well the responsibilities of all concerned in the colloquy process." — Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller, first vice-president and colloquy committee chairman

Additional Information: To learn more about the colloquy process, visit lcms.org/colloquy-ministers-of-religion-commissioned.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 239–240.



Resolution Number: 13-06

To Fund Seminary and University Education ("Mustache Resolution")

Resolution Summary: In a lighthearted moment of convention, this resolution was adopted to raise awareness and funds for church worker education. All of Synod was encouraged to vote for the best mustache between Montana District President Rev. Terry Forke or LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison. Each dollar submitted equaled one vote cast for the favorite mustache. Funds were to be raised by Dec. 31, 2016, and the recipient of the smallest amount of dollars (votes) raised would have his mustache shaved off.

Progress Report: Voters declared Montana District President Terry Forke to have the best mustache in the Synod by more than 3,742. The public shaving of President Harrison's mustache was set for Jan. 4, 2017, at the Liberty Conference in Washington, D.C., attended by 350 college-age students and campus ministry workers. In a twist of fate, due to a previously scheduled videography commitment, President Harrison could not shave off his mustache that day, and President Forke, willing (kind of), sacrificed in Harrison's stead and shaved off his mustache. After Forke was clean shaven, President Harrison stepped in and had his mus-

tache shaved off too. The crowd cheered wildly for both men! Total funds raised were \$22,632.

Quote: "President Harrison sure did look different without his mustache and appeared as if he was in some pain without it." — Anonymous staff person

Additional Information: Read more about the Mustache Resolution at lcms.org/2017/mustache-resolution-winner.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 240.

Resolution Number: 14-01

To Encourage Intentional Leadership in Matters of Religious Freedom

Resolution Summary: By adopting this resolution, the Synod in convention recognizes the opportunity for the LCMS to respond to the ongoing intrusions of religious freedoms. The "Free to be Faithful" campaign has for several years helped people understand and speak about important topics. The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty has been established as a permanent presence in Washington, D.C. under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Greg Seltz. This resolution calls for the Synod to pray for our country's leaders, use "Free to be Faithful" resources, and encourage the support for the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty.

Progress Report: We have more than doubled the content size of the quarterly "Free to Be Faithful" (FTBF) e-newsletter, now received by more than 17,000 people. Religious-liberty issues recently addressed include the Trinity Lutheran Church preschool playground in Columbia, Mo. (the subject of a recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which found in favor of the church); a bill in St. Louis that would make abortion advocates a

protected class; and multiple other issues. Recently, FTBF efforts have centered on an information campaign to raise awareness — from a faith and conscience perspective — of the implications of physician-assisted suicide. Working with the Office of the President, LCMS Communications promoted the news of the Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz accepting the call to be the first executive director of the Synod's new Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty.

Quote: "The Free to be Faithful newsletter is superbly done — always timely, relevant and fully engaged in the most pressing issues of faith and public policy regarding the issues we Lutherans care about most. Also, I love the way the newsletter doesn't just convey information but encourages readers to engage. That is foundational." — Tim Goegelein, vice-president of External Relations for Focus on the Family and member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Va.

Additional Information: The Synod's Free to be Faithful resources are available at lcms.org/social-issues/free-to-be-faithful. Also, Worldwide KFUE Free to be Faithful discussions are led by host Kip Allen on the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 2:30 p.m. Central time on kfuo.org, and broadcast archives are available.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 241–242.





Supreme Court delivers landmark ruling in favor of LCMS church preschool

By Roger Drinnon

The U.S. Supreme Court handed down its ruling June 26 in the case of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod church preschool, determining 7-2 that the state of Missouri's barring of the church from a government aid program was unconstitutional.

While the LCMS was not a party to the litigation, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys represented Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo., in *Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS) v. Comer* (formerly *Pauley*).

The case came about after Trinity was invited to apply for the 2012 Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant Program to resurface its playground with recycled tire products to be provided by the supposedly neutral state program. The grant program was offered to Missouri nonprofits as a means to recycle scrap tires, in an attempt to reduce the amount of tires in landfills and to foster children's safety.

"The government should treat children's safety at religious schools the same as it does at nonreligious schools," said ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman in his statement after the ruling. "The Supreme Court's decision today

affirms that common-sense principle and the larger truth that government isn't being neutral when it treats religious organizations worse than everyone else."

"The Supreme Court's decision today demonstrates the support of the principle that the government cannot treat religious organizations differently than other organizations just because of what we believe," echoed LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. "Despite this case being about a preschool playground, a seemingly mundane and simple matter, this is a very big win for the fair and equal treatment of religious organizations."

After applying for the playground-resurfacing program, Trinity Preschool later was deemed ineligible for the state grant program solely because the preschool is operated by a church.

After soliciting nonprofit organizations across the state to apply for the program and listing Trinity near the top of all applicants, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources decided Trinity's learning center was ineligible for the program based on an interpretation of a state-constitution provision prohibiting government aid to religion.

ADF is a non-profit legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith. Its attorneys contended the case was a question of whether states can exhibit "hostility to religion" by barring churches from state aid programs solely because they are religious organizations. In oral arguments April 19, ADF attorneys asserted such discrimination violates the Free Exercise and Equal Protection Clauses of the First Amendment.

"Equal treatment of a religious organization in a program that provides only secular benefits, like a partial

reimbursement grant for playground surfacing, isn't a government endorsement of religion," said Cortman. "As the Supreme Court rightly found, unequal treatment that singles out a preschool for exclusion from such a program simply because a church runs the school is clearly unconstitutional."

The LCMS announced June 20 that the Rev. Dr. Gregory P. Seltz, speaker for "The Lutheran Hour," officially accepted the Synod's call to be the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) executive director in Washington, D.C. The LCRL provides input, education, advice and resources in the areas of marriage, life issues and religious liberty and seeks to actively engage in discussions and establish partnerships, as appropriate, with individuals and groups in Washington, D.C.

"I look forward to my role with the LCRL and engaging on issues like this that impact religious organizations," said Seltz. "One of the three areas of work will be to defend religious freedoms, liberties and rights of conscience for people of faith as provided to us by our founding fathers in the Constitution."

In 2015, the LCMS participated in an amicus brief for the case. Amicus briefs provide pertinent information to the court regarding a case, alert the court to the ways in which the case may affect people outside of the two parties involved, and help draw public and media attention to an

important issue. That amicus brief is available for download at lcms.org/board/amicusbriefs.

Harrison said the Synod now will be looking more closely at the specifics of the high court's decision and its implications for religious liberty.

Resolution Number: 14-02A

To Confess Sanctity of Marriage

Resolution Summary: This resolution strongly confesses that God created and sanctified marriage to be between one man and one woman and calls all baptized children of God to live out our vocation as people "shaped by God's Word and His forgiving love" and to respond with mercy to those wounded by sin. The Synod is to continue to speak, teach and equip people to articulate and support the biblical view of marriage.

Progress Report: While LCMS Communications continues to provide both online and print articles regarding marriage, including the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) 1981 Report, *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*, the Office of National Mission (ONM) is currently developing theological resources around the seventh mission priority, "strengthening Lutheran families." These resources will include materials to support marriage. The Lutheran Youth Fellowship Poll conducted at the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering surveyed the concerns of young people in the Synod. The survey results

stated that, while 34.3 percent of youth surveyed favored gay marriage, 16.5 percent more youth are unsure in 2016 about gay marriage than in 2013. These results indicate youth are raising questions, and the role of the parents, school and church in teaching the biblical view of marriage is very important.

Quote: "The sanctity of marriage is under Satan's determined attack because it lies at the heart of the Gospel. The ONM is working to produce materials that explore and explicate marriage, life and family as a tightly-woven Gospel tapestry. The more clearly we can see these Gospel connections, the more joyfully our confession of marriage becomes a song of praise to Father, Son and Holy Spirit." — Rev. Jonathan Lange, consultant of Marriage, Life & Family, LCMS Office of National Mission

Additional Information: To learn more about this issue, visit lcms.org/social-issues/marriage.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 242.



Resolution Number: 14-03A

To Respond Compassionately to Challenges to Biblical View of Marriage and Human Sexuality

Resolution Summary: The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) is to update its 1981 Human Sexuality report to address contemporary challenges to the estate of marriage. The Office of National Mission (ONM), Concordia Publishing House and the Synod's seminaries are to provide resources to minister to those struggling with same-sex attraction.

Progress Report: The CTCR's 1981 *Human Sexuality* report has served the church well, being repeatedly commended by the Synod for study/guidance. Recent societal, cultural and legal changes have raised new questions regarding human sexuality and present new challenges concerning marriage. The CTCR has developed and approved a plan to produce an update on the 1981 report. Draft work is underway, with a goal of completion by 2019.

ONM is working to develop a resources and attendant materials on the theology of the body ("Wonderfully Made: Seeing Our Bodies as God Sees Them") with special emphasis on sexual embodiment.

Quote: "Questions and confusion about marriage, sexuality, 'gender identity,' human embodiment, etc., abound in our culture, and even in the Church. The CTCR expects that an updated report on *Human Sexuality* will provide clear, helpful, practical, biblical and confessional guidance on these issues." — Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To read more about this issue, visit lcms.org/social-issues/marriage.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 242–243.

Resolution Number: 14-04

To Affirm the Right of Clergy to Continue Conducting Weddings in Accordance with Confession

Resolution Summary: Prepare a biblical and practical study on the right of LCMS clergy to continue conducting weddings in accordance with LCMS beliefs and confessions.

Progress Report: Since the Supreme Court's decision that every state must now license the marriage of same-sex couples, questions and concerns have been raised about the impact on pastors and congregations. Through this resolution, the Synod in convention asks the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to prepare materials that will assist congregations and church workers in studying and preparing to address these issues faithfully, biblically and confessionally. Discussion of this assignment is underway on the CTCR and possible approaches have been suggested. More work needs to be done to formulate a specific plan and to identify potential drafters or contributors.

Quote: "It is appropriate that the LCMS '... seek to preserve the right of pastors to decline to officiate weddings that are contrary to their conscience and the teachings of our Synod, as well as protections that preserve the right of congregations to determine based on conscience and the Word of God whom they will allow to use their facilities' (2016 Resolution 14-04). The CTCR seeks to be of assistance to the Synod by preparing materials to help congregations and pastors address questions and challenges that exist and may yet arise regarding these issues." — Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: To read more about this issue, visit lcms.org/social-issues/marriage.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 243.



Resolution Number: 14-06A

To Encourage Outreach to Muslim Neighbors

Resolution Summary: Convention delegates condemned violence committed out of fear and/or religious conviction and with the adoption of the resolution directs districts and encourages congregations to develop plans for Gospel outreach to Muslims, commends the ongoing outreach efforts in Europe and the U.S., and directs the Chief Mission Officer and the LCMS Offices of National and International Mission to prioritize development and identification of resources to reach out to Muslims with the saving Gospel.

Progress Report: The Office of National Mission is developing a context learning module on “witnessing to Muslim friends” for inclusion in the Synod’s new evangelism program, Every One His Witness. The Office of International Mission Eurasia Region leadership is currently working with Concordia Publishing House and the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK, our German partner church) to translate Growing in Christ catechetical materials in support of Muslim outreach and mercy efforts from within the SELK.

Quote: “There are a multitude of opportunities to do much more in support of outreach to Muslims from within the Offices of National and International Mission; we ought to

intentionally take up additional plans and actions in the remainder of this triennium and beyond. Here, I am especially mindful of one of our seven mission priorities adopted in Convention: Collaborate with the Synod’s members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.” — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 244.

Resolution Number: 15-02A

To Encourage Use of Two-Hour Luther Documentary

Resolution Summary: Acknowledging the “rare moment in history” as the Church marks the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, the Synod in convention encourages congregations to share the Reformation story by showing the new Luther feature film while publicizing it to their local communities.

Progress Report: Earlier this year, in Houston, Milwaukee, St. Louis and Fort Wayne, more than 1,500 moviegoers sold out theaters for premiere showings of “*Martin Luther: An Idea That Changed the World*.” The movie was produced by Boetcher+Trinklein, Inc. with input and oversight of historical details by the Rev. Dr. Eric Herrmann, director of the Center for Reformation Research. On Sept. 12, 2017, the movie will be shown on PBS on 360 stations. The producer also is negotiating to make the movie available in six languages on Netflix for two years beginning in 2018. Congregations are able to make arrangements to show the movie in their local theaters prior to the movie being shown on PBS and released on DVD later this year. To

learn more about hosting the movie, refer to newluther-movie.com/lcms.

Quote: “The film now ranks as the most popular theatrical documentary of 2017. Over and over again, we are hearing about how the film connects people to this story in a whole new way. It’s not uncommon for people to leave the theater with a tear in their eye, as they come to understand that Luther’s story of redemption and grace is their story.” — Mike Trinklein, producer for Boetcher+Trinklein, Inc.

Additional Information: To learn more about the film, “*Martin Luther: An Idea That Changed the World*,” and its showings, visit lcms.org/2017/luther-film-air-pbs-sept-12.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 250.



Resolution Number: 15-03

To Commend Use of Resources Provided for Reformation 2017 500th Anniversary

Resolution Summary: In order to provide education and resources for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the LCMS has established a website that can serve as an entry point for locating resources. With the adoption of this resolution, the Synod in convention encourages church workers, and congregations to promote lutheranreformation.org webpage and encourage use of the many resources found within.

Progress Report: With grateful partnership with Concordia Publishing House (CPH), a dynamic webpage has been made available to highlight resources, report on events, provide historical information and much more! Coming soon will be an expanded and engaging Reformation timeline outlining the important events leading up to, including and after the Lutheran Reformation of 1517. Website resources include a history of the *Book of Concord*, maps of the Reformation area, regular blogs on Reformation topics, many downloadable images of the Reformation, a narrated tour of historical Reformation sites, the Reformation

Celebration Congregation Kit, video and audio recordings, a calendar of reformation events happening throughout the Synod, the *Faces of the Reformation* bulletin insert series, Reformation logo downloads, Bible studies, worship resources, hymns and music resources, Spanish resources, children's resources and much, much more! You also can view the movie trailer for the new feature film, "*Martin Luther: An Idea That Changed the World*."

Quote: "As I explore the depth and richness of these resources now available for congregations and individuals to rejoice and celebrate an historical milestone, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the blessings that God has rained down upon the Church through the ages — in His Word and through the faithful saints who have gone before us." — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 250–251.

Resolution Number: 15-04A

To Honor 500th Anniversary of Reformation by Growing in the Word and Showing Christ to the World

Resolution Summary: This resolution notes that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther's Gospel discovery, which spurred the Lutheran Reformation, was because of his personal immersion in the Word and calls for members of the LCMS to read through the entire Scriptures in 2017.

Progress Report: Resources are available to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation by reading through the entire Scriptures in 2017. The Michigan District has shared their "Crafted Daily Student Reformation Reading Plan" for high school and college students to read through the Bible in one year. This downloadable resource is available at lutheranreformation.org under the Events tab. Concordia Publishing House (CPH) offers a free downloadable resource, "Peak Performance Bible Reading Plan," which is a two-year reading plan that can be modified for a one-year reading plan. Also available through CPH are *Lutheran Service Book*, *The Lutheran Study Bible* and *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, which provide

daily lectionary resources that readers can use to read through much of the Bible over the course of each year.

Quote: "In the commendable pattern of the ancient Christians at Berea (Acts 17:10–11), we receive the Word with all eagerness and examine the Scriptures daily to see if what is being taught and proclaimed to us is true. The foundation of the Lutheran Reformation is a continual return to — not a further deviation from or reinvention of — God's holy, precious Word. Go back to the source; open the doors to God's treasure house. Your Lord and Savior is there to lead and love you forevermore." — Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 251.



Resolution Number: 15-06

To Encourage Study of The Augsburg Confession in Commemoration of 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Resolution Summary: The LCMS in convention recognized the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation by encouraging the study of *The Augsburg Confession* individually and corporately, formally and informally, among clergy and laity alike.

Progress Report: *Lutheranreformation.org* provides resources of *The Lutheran Confessions*, *The Book of Concord*, *The Augsburg Confession* and more. Several webpage blog articles pertain to The Augsburg Confession and encourage further reading and study of this document of our Confessions. Readers are encouraged to visit the website and search for “Augsburg Confession” to retrieve the many resources. You can download *The Augsburg Confession* and *The Defense of the Augsburg Confession* at *lcms.org/lutheranconfessions*. Concordia Publishing House (*cph.org*) offers many resources to read and study *The Augsburg Confession*.

Quote: “*The Augsburg Confession*, or *Augustana*, has pride of place among the 16th century Lutheran confessions. In a succinct, peaceful manner it places us, with the confessors, among all orthodox Christians, confessing one consistent

set of beliefs since the New Testament. Yet, just as beautifully, it sets forth the Reformation’s clarion call of justification by grace through faith. What a blessing!” — Rev. Larry Vogel, associate executive director of the CTCR

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 251–252.

Resolution Number: 16-02A

To Make Strengthening Lutheran Families a Mission Priority

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention called for the strengthening and support of the family and various family vocations and noted that the Office of National Mission has already begun a *Lutheran Family Initiative*. This importance of family is so great, this resolution amends the Synod’s mission priorities to include: “Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God’s design.”

Progress Report: The Board for National Mission has written policies that direct the Office of National Mission to stay up-to-date on contemporary family issues in world/culture (sexuality, marriage, children, etc.), alert districts and congregations to developing trends and provide oversight for the provision of resources and events that foster a strong Lutheran identity for family ministry. The Office of International Mission (OIM) emphasizes Lutheran families in missionary orientation, supports them during missionary retreats and provides resources for helping missionaries/families in the midst of challenging times through professional services. Around the globe,

OIM provides care and support for its workers through a regional pastor/chaplain and/or care committee.

Quote: “Family is at the core of everything we are and everything we do in the one holy Church. The origin of marriage and children in Genesis 1 launches a profound elaboration on family throughout Holy Scripture. Luther, in writing the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties, also knew this priority of family. The scriptural/confessional witness is the basis for our mission priority to serve the family at a time when the family is confronted by cultural compromise.” — Rev. Dr. Alfonzo Espinosa, member of the LCMS Board for National Mission

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 253–254.





A Guide to Raising Christian Children

By Jason Braaten

Nebraska senator Ben Sasse has been making waves in the media lately with his prescription for raising children. This prescription appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* article on May 5, 2017, “How to Raise an American Adult.” And in anticipation of his new book *The Vanishing American Adult* (St. Martin’s Press), NPR interviewed him in “No More Neverland: A Senator’s Guide to Raising American Adults.”

Sasse has some good advice on how to raise children into adults. He encourages teaching children to resist consumption, embrace the pain of work, connect across generations, travel meaningfully and become truly literate.

But there is one thing lacking in these interviews and opinion pieces: Why? Or rather, to what end? What is the purpose of doing this? What is the goal?

Here the Bible is the only place to give us the answer: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (GEN. 2:24). In other words, the goal of every parent in teaching their children, in instilling in them character and virtue, is to be ordered toward the creation of their own household, becoming one flesh as husband and wife in the procreation of children.

Every parent wants their children to be successful, to work hard, to learn and to grow in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6). And that way is ordered to a particular end. Success as it is defined biblically is not how many zeros before the decimal one’s salary is. Success is not how big of a house one has or how nice the car is. Success in work and in life in the Bible is ordered to making not money, or a house, but rather to building a home, a family and passing that desire on to one’s offspring.

This is why we work diligently — to provide for a family, for those we love. This is why we read and learn — to pass knowledge on to a family, to those we love. This is why we resist consumption — to give to a family, to those we love. The goal is not just to raise adults, but to raise up husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. And in so doing, hear their joyful exclamation, as Adam once exclaimed, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (GEN. 2:23), for “It is not good that the man should be alone” (GEN. 2:18).

Originally published June 1, 2017, LUTHERAN WITNESS, WEB-EXCLUSIVE STORIES

Resolution Number: 16-04

Increase Engagement of Lutheran Young Adults in Ministry and Service Work of LCMS

Resolution Summary: The Office of National Mission and LCMS Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry are called to provide LCMS young adults, campus ministries and congregations with resources to serve young adults, provide increased number of service opportunities for LCMS young adults and fund Lutheran Young Adult Corps.

Progress Report: In 2017, Lutheran Young Adult Corps marks its inaugural service year. Participants are serving in Boston, Mass., St. Louis, Mo., and New Orleans/Baton Rouge, La. Starting in June 2017, five young people served on-site in a 10-week summer program. In August 2017, 13 young people will serve in a 10-month program. Before starting the 10-month program, participants will be trained in St. Louis. Participants will then serve from August through May 2018. The application process for the 2018-2019 service year will open in October 2017, with early acceptance beginning in January 2018. In July 2017, 21 LCMS young adults served in the Austin, Texas, area at the “Orange Nation — LCMS Young Adult Ministry” servant event. This event largely brings together young people

who served at LCMS Youth Gatherings as “Young Adult Volunteers.” Participants join in Bible Study and service in the Austin community.

Quote: “Lutheran Young Adult Corps is a unique opportunity to bless young people, LCMS congregations, LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and communities all at the same time. Our young adults are excited to engage communities with the Gospel, and there are many congregations that can use their gifts to expand ministry.” — Julianna Shults, program manager of the Lutheran Young Adult Corps

Additional Information: To learn more visit lcms.org/young-adult-corps.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 254–255.

Resolution Number: 16-05

To Increase Our Efforts to Retain College-Age Youth

Resolution Summary: The Synod in convention calls for the LCMS U and Campus Ministry to develop a strategic plan to help better prepare high school graduates for transition to college life, resources to understand the challenges and worldview frameworks that they will face, connect them much earlier to our LCMS U chapters and increase training opportunities and resources to aid them in boldly witnessing to their faith in the academic square.

Progress Report: A think tank was held in fall 2017, comprised of campus ministry workers, LCMS Youth Ministry and LCMS U staff persons, college students and interested stakeholders, to chart an initial plan to reach these goals. A comprehensive network is in development to better connect high school students to our campus ministries. Site selection and curriculum development are underway for the first round of COLLEGE BOUND gatherings (June 2018) for those who have just graduated from high school and are preparing for college.

Quote: “Heading off to college is like going to the moon—it’s an entirely new universe and atmosphere. The single most important thing that we can do to prepare our youth for such a transition is to give them the kind of real life, straight talk, worldview boot camp type preparation that will help them be ready to enter that new world they will face, so they can meet the challenges ahead of them from day one.” — Rev. Marcus Zill, director of Campus Ministry and LCMS U.

Additional Information: To learn more about this ministry, visit, lcms.org/campus-ministry.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 255.



Keeping College Students in the Faith

A grant helps to provide for campus ministry in Pittsburgh

Story and photography by Erik M. Lunsford

At the end of a University of Pittsburgh Panthers football game in mid-November, blanket-clad students alighted from school buses and retreated back to the student center for warmth.

The Rev. Eric Andræ sat at a table in the university's soaring Cathedral of Learning, waiting for those students to pass by. Prominently displayed on the table was a sign that read: "Free prayer." Often, students notice the sign and stop for prayer or to ask questions.

"All these schools, all this area, this is my parish," said Andræ, campus pastor and international student chaplain out of First Trinity Lutheran Church. In this role, Andræ works at a cluster of colleges near the church: the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Chatham University, Duquesne University, Point Park University and others.

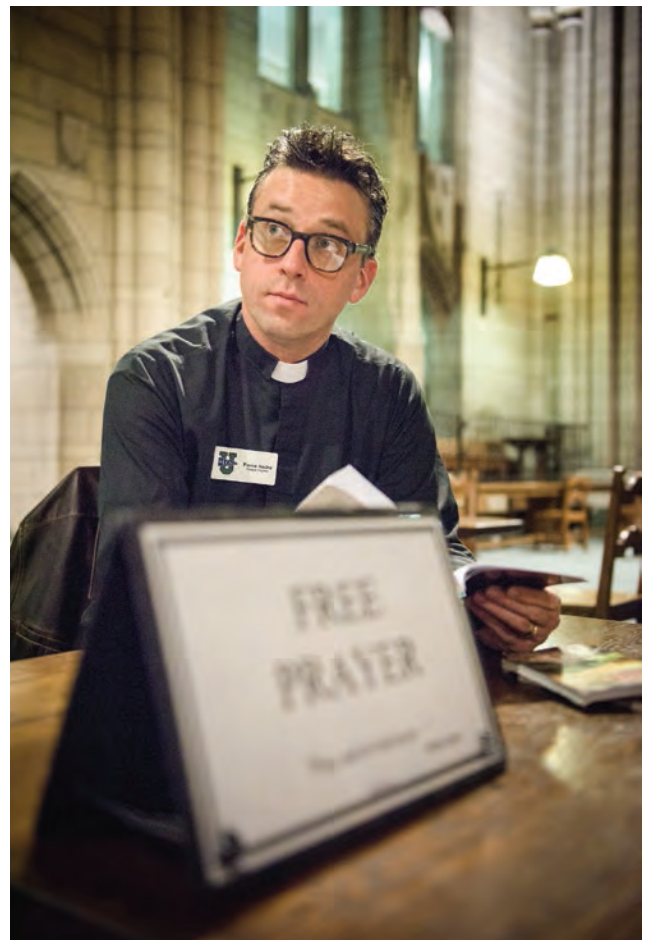
"If you're a student, and if you're on these campuses," he said, "it's just a matter of resources and time for us to seek you out and to try to connect you with our life together."

To assist Andræ in this work, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod recently gave First Trinity a \$25,000 grant through the "Stand With Your Community" grant program. The program is part of the Synod's efforts leading up to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and it focuses on inspiring and empowering laity for local witness and mercy outreach opportunities as a reflection of Martin Luther's passion to share the Gospel.

On a Sunday after worship in November, CMU senior Brandon Price and Pitt senior Kristi Nowak made sandwiches for the homeless — one of First Trinity's many missions. The two — joined by other student and community volunteers — later walked around to witness and give free lunches to the homeless.

Price said First Trinity has been a home to him for the last three years. "It's a place where myself, and all of the other students, can feel comfortable asking all sorts of questions, knowing that we all have something to learn," he said. Price was catechized and baptized two and a half years ago after being invited to church by Nowak.

"Our mercy work and evangelism is all really geared toward bringing people to the font, the altar, and then back out to the community and campus again," Andræ said.



Andræ begins Sunday mornings at First Trinity with Bible study with students. Knowing that 70 percent of young people abandon their faith once they leave for college (according to a fall 2016 study from Young America's Foundation), Andræ is keen on outreach and retention, as well as helping students navigate the challenges of secular education and young adulthood away from home.

"They realize they are not alone. When there are the inevitable struggles and even failure, here they have a home where there is forgiveness, renewal and strength," he said.

Andræ has a strong opinion on campus ministry: "It's our most important domestic mission, as we retain our young adults and reach out to people who increasingly have no religious affiliation, as well as to those who come from countries indifferent or even hostile to Christianity.

"All the issues at the forefront of our Synod's discussion converge on campus, many of them even originating from academia: sexual ethics and identity, evolution, race relations, proper ecumenical and interfaith relations, the Christian voice in the public square, marriage and family, and much more," he continued.

"Our LCMS U chapter addresses these issues directly by engaging the lost and equipping the saints — all from the uniquely powerful Lutheran perspective."

Resolution Number: 16-06

Encourage CTCR and Scouting Task Force to Move Quickly in Providing Guidance Concerning Scouting

Resolution Summary: An LCMS Scouting Task Force appointed and asked for by the Synod president is to provide guidance regarding involvement with boys and girls in scout-like youth organizations. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has been asked to evaluate the content of the statements of faith required by some scouting organizations. This resolution calls the CTCR and Scouting Task force to move quickly to make available their guidance within 12 to 18 months after the July 2016 Synod convention.

Progress Report: The Scouting Task Force has been gathered by the Synod president and assigned the work of providing additional guidance to congregations, especially concerning alternative scouting organizations. The Task Force met in May 2017 after receiving theological guidance requested from the CTCR. The task force is obtaining updated data from Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to determine the effects of recent BSA membership changes on LCMS scouting troops. The Task Force also desires to connect

with LCMS congregations who continue with scouting, either BSA or alternative organizations, to see what additional guidance will be most useful in their decision making. The Task Force continues to move their work forward and expects to keep the 18-month timeline (January 2018) prescribed in the resolution.

Quote: “The question of alternative scouting organizations, many of which are religiously based, unlike BSA which is a nonsectarian organization, have theological concerns that need to be outlined and addressed. The Task Force is aware of these concerns and the desire to offer helpful guidance to congregations who continue to navigate these waters with theological integrity while engaging their neighbor in the world.” — Rev. Bart Day, former executive director of the LCMS Office of National Mission

Additional Information: To read more about the CTCR, visit lcms.org/about/leadership/commissionon-theology-and-church-relations. Read about recently revised BSA membership standards at scouting.org/About/Membership-Standards.aspx.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 255–256.

Resolution Number: 17-01

To Enhance Clergy Continuing Education

Resolution Summary: Continuing education for pastors has been a frequent topic of conversation at Synod conventions (1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010). Following excellent seminary training, the Church continues to affirm its desire for well-educated clergy. This resolution supports several continuing education venues: Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS), Doxology, Grace Place, symposia, continuing education courses and advanced degrees. To this end, this resolution encourages the Church to foster an intentional, well-planned continuing education portfolio for every pastor in the LCMS.

Progress Report: The Office of Pastoral Education is currently meeting with the seminaries and is requesting time with the Council of Presidents to advance this resolution. The executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education has been meeting with seminary representatives to discuss the tracking methodology for Continuing Education Units (CEUs), classes and experiences, etc. A next step is for the Office of Pastoral Education to provide coordination between the seminaries and the Council of Presidents, in

order to implement an optimal plan for documenting the continuing education of our clergy.

Quote: “Pastoral formation is a life-long process for every pastor. The LCMS cherishes her well-educated clergy. To this end, it is good, right and salutary for pastors, congregations and the Synod to plan and monitor the progress of continuing education for all of our pastors.” — Rev. Dr. James Baneck, executive director of LCMS Pastoral Education.

Additional Information: To learn more about continuing education opportunities for pastors, visit lcms.org/seminary-education/post-seminary-topics.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 257–258.



Resolution Number: 17-03

To Endorse 'Preach the Word Project' as Celebration of 500th Anniversary of Reformation

Resolution Summary: In celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, this resolution encourages pastors and congregations to participate in the Preach the Word project (PTW). This project is a vigorous endeavor to help pastors work together to improve their preaching through video modules with accompanying resources and by interacting with seminary professors and fellow preachers.

Progress Report: The first module, "The Use of Story" by the Rev. Dr. David Schmitt is available at lcms.org. The next two modules are scheduled to be available online this fall: (1) "Textual/Expository Preaching" by the Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy and (2) "Preaching Delivery" by the Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher. Future module authors will include the Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen, the Rev. Dr. Doug Rutt, the Rev. Matt Peeples, the Rev. Dr. Greg Seltz, the Rev. David Peterson, the Rev. Peter Bender and the Rev. Dr. Steven Mueller. The goal is to develop twelve modules — all free and online. The Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher is the PTW project chairman.

Quote: "Preach the Word is an opportunity for us to work on our preaching together. We all know how tough it is, but we also know how eternally important it is, because it's the proclamation of Christ crucified that God uses to bring souls to heaven." — Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher II, professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and chairman of *Preach the Word* steering committee

Additional Information: To read more about the PTW project, visit lcms.org/preachtheword, and read the *Reporter Online* article "Preach the Word' Module 1 targets using stories effectively" at lcms.org/2017/preach-the-wordmodule-1.

See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 258.

Resolution Number: 18-02A & 18-04

To Task Board for National Mission to Develop Policies for Assessing Worker Wellness and Making Recommendations for Worker Care (18-02A)

To Encourage Congregations, Ministries, and Church Workers to Develop an Intentional Wellness Care Plan (18-04)

Resolution Summary: These two resolutions are related with a common concern for church worker's well-being and give encouragement to congregations and ministry leaders to develop intentional plans for church worker care for emotional, physical, relational and spiritual wellness. Resolution 18-02A calls for the Board for National Mission to prepare policies for the Office of National Mission to address several important issues to support worker wellness and care.

Progress Report: A nine-member Wellness Working Group has been formed representing the Office of National Mission, Council of Presidents (COP), Concordia Plan Services (CPS), Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Lutheran Federal Credit Union, the Office of Pastoral Education, and the Concordia University System and requested agencies (Grace Place, Shepherds Canyon, DOXOLOGY) most closely involved with worker and family wellness to share

with us relevant data and information. In addition, we have surveyed the COP and participated in a three-district survey with Concordia Center for the Family.

Currently, we are preparing to send out an electronic survey and then hold focus groups to be hosted around the country. This survey and the focus groups will talk with ordained and commissioned ministers and separately with their spouses. We believe this data-gathering is critical to identify gaps in worker wellness for determining how best to deliver services, help and support to workers.

From that survey, we are planning a collaborative action plan with goals and critical targets for each group involved. We then expect to take this comprehensive plan to the COP for implementation. The Board for National Mission will take up the development of Worker Wellness policies in the future.

Quote: "By working together with all stakeholders, we have a much better chance of the wellness needs of more workers and families being addressed." — Rev. Bart Day, former executive director of LCMS Office of National Mission

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 262–263.



Resolution Number: 18-03A

Addressing Indebtedness of Church Work Professionals

Resolution Summary: Student indebtedness can be a deterrent for some potential professional church workers to entering university or seminary training and can lead to discouragement and difficulty in sustaining a household and family. This resolution requests congregations to continue to raise up professional church workers but calls for the leadership of the Concordia seminaries and universities/colleges to explore alternate funding sources apart from federal loans.

Progress Report: The Concordia University System (CUS) Board of Directors has engaged in initial conversations with Lutheran Church Extension Fund and the Lutheran Federal Credit Union to explore what, if any, options might be available to assist in the process of assisting church professional program students with loans. No action has been taken at this time. Additional work is being done in consultation with others within the LCMS to address this concern; CUS President Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe has been involved in these discussions. Solutions are not yet available.

Quote: “The indebtedness of our professional church workers is significant concern; we are committed to finding appropriate means to begin to address this concern.” — Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, president of the Concordia University System

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 262–263.

Resolution Number: 18-05

To Encourage District Presidents, Circuit Visitors and Congregations to Utilize Resources Already Established for Ministerial Wellness

Resolution Summary: This resolution recognizes the demanding role and many challenges of church workers but notes the significant improvements and difference made by those who participate in a wellness program. Many resources exist throughout the LCMS to support church workers and their families. These ministries are to be promoted as valuable resources for ministerial and family care.

Progress Report: In addition to collected data, the creation of a Synod Wellness Working Group and a Synodwide survey with follow-up focus groups are planned for early 2018 (see Resolution 18-04 Report for details), the Office of National Mission gives hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to Grace Place Wellness, DOXOLOGY and Shepherds Canyon, as well as to Veterans of the Cross and Shepherds of the Cross to support the well-being of workers and their spouses. In addition, a deaconess — who is also a licensed independent social worker and psychotherapist — writes Bible studies that are made available online

particularly for wives of pastors and female commissioned ministers.

Quote: “Worker wellness is not a new need, but we now understand the greater need for wellness resources for the worker family as well. We are addressing the multifaceted wellness needs of worker families through written, audio and video resources and creative planning for both electronic and in-person methods of delivery.” — Deaconess Heidi Goehmann

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Pages 263–264.



Bylaw and Constitutional Changes

Resolution Numbers (as follow)

Res 11-03A: “To Change Bylaws re District Convention Attendance as Prerequisite for Voting for Synod President” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 196)

Res 11-04B: “To Change Bylaws re Certification and Verification of District Convention Delegates” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 196)

Res 11-05: “To Revise and Enhance Nomination and Election Process for Regional Board Members” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 197)

Res 11-08A: “District Administration and Electoral Circuit Requirements” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 200)

Res 11-09: “To Allow Voting Privilege for Assistant Pastors” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 202)

Res 11-11: “To Clarify Convention Matters” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 203)

Res 11-12: “To Clarify Synod Administration Matters” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 204)

Res 11-13: “To Update Bylaw 2.12.1.4 to Include Mention of Office of National Mission” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 207)

Res 11-15A: “To Amend Bylaw re Responsibilities of Commission on Constitutional Matters” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 208)

Res 11-17: “To Establish Representation at Synod Conventions for the Boards for National and International Mission” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 209)

Res 11-18: “To Clarify and Confirm the Distinction Between Synod and Corporate Synod and to Provide Consistency for the Meaning of ‘Property of the Synod’ Regarding Article IV Powers” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 210)

Res 11-19: “To Clarify and Confirm the Distinction between Synod and Corporate Synod and to Provide Consistency for the Meaning of ‘Property of the Synod’ Regarding Article XI” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 211)

Res 11-20: “To Clarify and Confirm the Distinction Between Synod and Corporate Synod and to Provide Consistency for the Meaning of ‘Property of the Synod’ Regarding Definition of Property of the Synod” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 212)

Res 12-04A: “To Expedite the Dispute Resolution and Suspension/Expulsion Processes” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 223)

Res 12-05A: “To Expand Composition of Hearing Panels (2.14, 2.15, 2.17)” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 225)

Res 12-07A: “To Clarify Definition of Dissent” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 227)

Res 12-08: “To Provide Assistance to Lay Reconcilers Serving on Dispute Resolution, Hearing, and Final Hearing Panel” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 228)

Res 12-09: “To Update and Amend Dispute Resolution Process” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 228)

Res 12-11: “To Establish a Procedure Based on Article XI A 2 for Removal from Office of Officers of the Synod or a District (Other than the Synod or a District President)” (*Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 232)

All the above simply resulted in bylaw or (in a few cases) constitutional changes. The interested reader is referred to the Foreword (pp. 9–10) of the 2016 *Handbook*, which summarizes the changes made by these resolutions, among others. A red-lined, “update” edition of the *Handbook*, also available at lcms.org/handbook, will indicate the exact changes made by the 2016 Convention, relative to the 2013 *Handbook*.

New Resolution

To Preserve the Authority and Clarity of the New Testament Scriptures

Resolution Summary: A delegate brought forward this new resolution, and a motion was introduced and adopted to refer this resolution to the Synod president. This matter is on the Praesidium’s agenda for consideration and discussion.

Additional Information: See *Convention Proceedings 2016*, Page 265.



Omnibus Resolution A

Omnibus Resolution A includes overtures that request action that is the responsibility of various boards, commissions, or individuals to study and to implement. The following overtures were referred to the designated board, commission or individual.

COMMISSION OF THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS (CTCR)

- Ov. 4-17** To Again Publish in Luther's Small Catechism the Fourth Commandment's Divine Promise — *Convention Workbook*, Page 334.
- Ov. 4-25** To Investigate Organization Named Five Two in Light of Synod Constitution Article II — *Convention Workbook*, Page 338.
Referred to the OTP for additional study.
- Ov. 5-06** To Ask CTCR and Seminaries to Evaluate Fellowship with AALC — *Convention Workbook*, Page 345.
- Ov. 5-07** To Warn Against Occult Pseudoscience Practices — *Convention Workbook*, Page 345.
- Ov. 5-08** To Instruct CTCR to Provide Suggested Guidelines/Policies for Implementing SocialMedia — *Convention Workbook*, Page 345.
The CTCR decided that the concerns raised warranted study by the CTCR and added to its agenda an assignment "to prepare a report (or study document) that considers proper and improper uses of social media and its impact on the church."
- Ov. 5-21** To Encourage Synod to Complete Work on Transforming Churches Network, Joint Prayer with Those Who Deny Christ, and Role of Women in the Church — *Convention Workbook*, Page 351.
- Ov. 5-22** To Direct CTCR and Seminaries to Evaluate Transforming Churches Network — *Convention Workbook*, Page 351.
- Ov. 5-23** To Suspend Application of "Reduction in Force" to Pastoral Office Pending CTCR Decision — *Convention Workbook*, Page 351.
Referred to the Office of National Mission for additional study.
- Ov. 5-24** To Change Intentional Interim Ministry Program to Reflect Historic LCMS Theology and Practice of the Call — *Convention Workbook*, Page 352.
- Ov. 5-25** To Review Role of Women in Congregation and Synod Offices — *Convention Workbook*, Page 352.
- Ov. 11-49** To amend Bylaws to Affirm that Conscience Is Bound by the Word of God — *Convention Workbook*, Page 404.
Referred to the Commission on Constitutional Matters for additional study.

The Commission approved a series of letters responding to the congregations or districts that submitted such overtures. The list of overtures to which the CTCR has responded is above. In the case of several overtures, the CTCR responded by letter to the entity that submitted the overture but also (due to the nature of the specific overtures, and acting on the basis of Bylaw 3.9.5.2.1 [b]) referred them to a different synodical department for additional study as listed above.

Additional follow-up concerns raised in specific overtures will take place as necessary and appropriate.



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM (CUS) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ov. 7-19** To Encourage Concordia University System Institutions to Request Religious Exemptions
- The CUS National Office Staff, CUS Board of Directors, and CUS institutions are all carefully monitoring the ongoing issues of religious liberty. As part of that process, careful consideration is being given to the topic of religious exemptions. Legal counsel has been engaged in these discussions. This remains an arena in which action must be taken with great care; and, at this point, no final decision has been made on whether it is advisable to proceed. In part, it is necessary to see what changes the new administration makes that may have an effect on decision to proceed.
- Ov. 7-22** To Instruct CUS Institutions to Teach Synod's Position on Church Ministry
- The CUS Board of Directors through its national office staff regularly visits each institution. A component of these visits is an assessment of what is being taught on the individual campuses to ensure compliance with the doctrine and practice of the Synod. Similarly, the compliance reporting related to the Lutheran Identity Statement adopted in convention resolution 7-01A assists in this process of monitoring. In instances where a challenge would be identified, the matter would be addressed through the CUS President's Office in individual conversation with the appropriate campus President.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT & PRAESIDIUM

- Ov. 4-25** To Investigate Organization Named Five Two in Light of Synod Constitution Article II — *Convention Workbook*, Page 338.
- Ov. 5-23** To Suspend Application of "Reduction in Force" to Pastoral Office Pending CTCR Decision.
- Ov.11-01** To Review LCMS President's Authority — *Convention Workbook*, Page 383.
- Ov. 11-02** To Review Powers of Synod President, Secretary, CCM, and District Presidents — *Convention Workbook*, Page 383.
- Ov. 11-06** To Appoint Committee to Study District Restructure — *Convention Workbook*, Page 385.
- Ov. 11-36** To Have Equal Lay and Ordained Representation on Convention Floor Committees — *Convention Workbook*, Page 400.
- The Praesidium has the above overtures on their agenda for discussion and consideration.

LCMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ov. 7-18** To Divest Concordia College Alabama from Concordia University System — *Convention Workbook*, Page 372.
- Ov. 9-03** To Urge Synod to Increase Seminary Financial Assistance — *Convention Workbook*, Page 379.
- Ov. 11-25** To Establish Board for International Mission Representation at Synod Conventions — *Convention Workbook*, Page 394.
- Ov. 11-28** To Establish Board for National Mission Representation at Synod Conventions — *Convention Workbook*, Page 396.
- Ov. 11-36** To Have Equal Lay and Ordained Representation on Convention Floor Committees — *Convention Workbook*, Page 400.
- Ov. 14-01** Legal Defense Fund — *Convention Workbook*, Page 465.

The LCMS Board of Directors noted these topics in its post-convention review (Nov. 11–17, 2016) and referred them to its retreat committee, for potential further discussion during the board's August 2017 retreat.



OFFICE OF NATIONAL MISSION

Ov. 3-09 To Add a Synod Prison and Jail Ministry Coordinator

Progress Report: A 40 hour per month contract for a Prison and Jail Ministry Coordinator was continued from its starting date in 2016. Among other actions, the coordinator has:

- Responded to inquiries and requests for resources from families and inmates – often referring them to District Prison Ministry Coordinators (DPMC) and local ministries where possible
- Developed and collected presentations, video and/or audio recordings, and training materials for DPMCs to use for equipping and empowering local ministers and congregations for startup prison ministries
- With the Southern IL District, created a Personnel Database and Resources Database for prison ministry
- Took responsibility for writing and getting a grant from LWML for a 2018 prison and jail ministry conference.

Quote: “It is a great joy serving as Synod’s first Prison Ministry Contract Coordinator! I am humbled that the Lord has used me to establish a foundation for our Synod wide efforts to expand, coordinate, and enrich the quality and quantity of our ministry to those who are incarcerated in jails and prisons.” — Rev. Chaplain James Rivett

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL MISSION

Ov. 2-13 To Require cause for Withdrawal or Release of Career Missionaries — *Convention Workbook*, Page 323.

The Office of International Mission follows Synod’s Human Resources policies regarding the withdrawal or release of career missionaries.

Ov. 2-15 To Change Funding Model of Our Missionaries

Overture 2-15 directs the President of the Synod to (1) establish a task force to examine and report on alternative methods of funding missionaries that would remove or lessen fund-raising burdens on the Synod’s missionaries, and (2) bring a corresponding plan to the 2019 Convention to accomplish the same. Anyone desiring to lessen or eliminate any fund-raising burden on the Synod’s missionaries should be aware that such alternative methods already exist and are well-documented and readily available to potential donors through a multitude of well-publicized and easily-accessible means. If such “other” donations alone (e.g. through direct and planned giving) were adequate to address our missionaries’ sustenance and work, there would be no need for them individually to carry any burden connected with the raising of funds. For further reference, please refer to the updated Network Support Missionary model “White Paper” available at lcms.org/missionarysupport#.

Ov. 4-20 To Translate and Publish Book of Concord of 1580 — *Convention Workbook*, Page 335.

The Book of Concord has already been translated into French and is used by our partner churches in Canada, France, and Francophone Africa. It is being printed again in 2017 in observation of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (canadianlutheran.ca). The Book of Concord in French is available through the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (lhfmilessions.org). of the Lutheran Reformation (canadianlutheran.ca). The Book of Concord in French is available through the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (lhfmilessions.org).

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Ov. 11-31 To Complete Study of Constitution Article VII — *Convention Workbook*, Page 398.

Ov. 11-33 To Affirm Article II as Only Required Confession — *Convention Workbook*, Page 399.

Ov. 11-34 To Honor and Reaffirm Advisory Nature of Synod — *Convention Workbook*, Page 399.

Ov. 11-35 To Affirm Advisory Nature of Synod — *Convention Workbook*, Page 399.

The above overtures deal with Article II and VII of Synod’s Constitution. The Office of the President is currently studying and preparing written documents regarding these Articles.



- Ov. 11-12** To Eliminate Distinctions between Visitation and Electoral Circuits — *Convention Workbook*, Page 389.
- Ov. 11-24** To Change Formation of Electoral Circuits — *Convention Workbook*, Page 393.
- Ov. 11-38** To Make Uniform the Process for Restructuring Circuits for Synod Convention Delegate Representation — *Convention Workbook*, Page 400.
- Ov. 11-39** To Make Uniform the Process for Restructuring Circuits for Synod Convention Delegate Determination — *Convention Workbook*, Page 400.

The Council of Presidents and Synod President have taken the above matters under advisement.

SECRETARY

- Ov. 12-05** To Specify Inactive Members in Official Rosters & Statistics Publications — *Convention Workbook*, Page 417.

The overture requested that candidate, non-candidate, and emeritus members be distinguished in the *Lutheran Annual* and the online worker locator. Non-candidate status was eliminated by the 2016 Convention, with all non-candidates granted candidate status. The *Annual* already distinguishes emeriti from those having no current assignment (now all *candidate* status). The online worker locator is in the process of redevelopment, along with the remainder of the LCMS roster management system. The suggestion that emeriti be distinguished from candidates in the new system is under consideration by the LCMS Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services.



