

The 24th Convention of the Minnesota North District—LCMS



May 9-11, 2022

Madden's on Gull Lake | Brainerd, MN

CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS

"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world." ~ John 16:33

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Convention Minutes	1
Convention Resolutions	19
Convention Bible Study—Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN	50
Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN	59
Convention Essay—Chaplain Craig Muehler, Ministry to the Armed Forces, LCMS	82
Convention Address—Rev. Brady Finnern, President, Minnesota North District	92

The PROCEEDINGS of the 24th Convention

*Minnesota North District –
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

“Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go...Making Disciples for Life”

“I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation.

But take heart; I have overcome the world.” ~ John 16:33

May 9-11, 2022

Madden’s on Gull Lake

Brainerd, Minnesota

Convention Chairman

*Rev. Dr. Donald J. Fondow, President
Minnesota North District – LCMS*

Convention Essayists

*Rev. Shauen Trump, Regional Director, Africa -
LCMS International Mission
Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, President,
Concordia University, St. Paul, MN
Chaplain Craig G. Muehler CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret),
Director-LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces*

Host Congregation

*Zion Lutheran Church, Brainerd, MN
Rev. Steven Benson, Pastor*

Synodical Representatives

*Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President
Rev. Nabil Nour, 4th Vice President
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

Convention Devotional Leader

*Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse,
Director of Certification and Placement
Director of Continuing Education
The Dr. Dean O Wenthe Professor of Old
Testament Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne*

Convention Secretary

Rev. Martin W. Mably, District Secretary

Convention Parliamentarian

Rev. Robert C. Franck, Duluth, MN

THE MINUTES

Of the 24th Convention of the Minnesota North District

May 9-11, 2022

SESSION 1: Monday Afternoon, May 9

1. **Opening Devotion –Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse, *Director of Certification and Placement, Director of Continuing Education, The Dr. Dean O. Wenthe Professor of Old Testament Theology - Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne***

President Don Fondow began by welcoming the delegates and praying for God's blessing upon the gathering. He thanked Judy Rehwaldt for filling in as accompanist for Rev. Keith Weise. President Fondow introduced Rev. Dr. Pulse, the Convention Devotional Leader.

The assembly began by singing "Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go" (LSB 920). Rev. Dr. Pulse delivered a devotion on the topic of peace, focusing on the Convention's theme verse, John 16:33, specifically "In the world you will have tribulation." He spoke to how Christ gives us a way through tribulation, going with us. Rev. Dr. Pulse led the assembly in confessing their faith, with the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. The assembly sang "Have No Fear, Little Flock" (LSB 735).

2. **Official Convention Opening, Rev. Donald Fondow, MN North District President**
Greetings from Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd
Report of Committee on Registration, Credentials, and Attendance – Rev. Ron Carnicom
Accepting of Agenda and Standing Rules

President Donald Fondow thanked Rev. Dr. Pulse for the devotion.

Abbey Pieper, representative of Madden's on Gull Lake, welcomed the convention guests and thanked the District for choosing Madden's on Gull Lake.

Rev. Ron Carnicom reported the registered attendance:

Pastoral Delegates	99
Lay Delegates	<u>105</u>
Total Voting Delegates	204

Board of Directors	3
Advisory Delegates – Ordained and Commissioned	8
Emeriti – Ordained and Commissioned	16
Vicars	1
Guest Speakers	4
Office Staff	5
Other Guests	27
<u>Exhibitors</u>	<u>17</u>
Total Attending	285

Possible Pastoral Delegates	143
Possible Lay Delegates	<u>158</u>
Total Possible Delegates	301

Rev. Carnicom then stated that a quorum had been reached. President Fondow declared the 24th Convention of the Minnesota North District in session in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, asking for God's presence and blessing.

Acceptance of Agenda and Standing Rules

President Fondow gave directions on seating and called the assembly's attention to the Convention Agenda, pages 9-17 in the Convention Workbook. He then asked for a motion to accept the Standing Rules and Agenda as printed.

MOVED & SECONDED: To accept the agenda and Standing Rules as printed.

ACTION: CARRIED.

President Fondow then introduced Rev. Robert Franck, Convention Parliamentarian, and Mr. Rob Rydberg, Convention Time Keeper.

President Fondow introduced Rev. Gregg Coop, Convention Chaplain, who will receive prayer requests from the entire assembly. He also introduced Rev. Paul Cloeter who will be available for personal pastoral care. Rev. Monte Meyer was introduced as one posting messages from attendees on the screen to the right of the main stage.

3. Report of the Committee on Congregational Constitutions and District Membership – Rev. Ron Carnicom, Chairman

Rev. Carnicom, Chairman of the Committee on Congregational Constitutions and District Membership reported that 2 new congregations joined the District during the last quadrennium, 17 congregations received approval of their new Constitution and Bylaws and 5 have approval of amendments to their Constitution and Bylaws (see Workbook, page 51).

Rev. Fondow also noted that recently, Zion Lutheran Church, Claire City, SD, a dual parish with Zion Lutheran Church, Brown's Valley, MN, transferred from the LCMS North Dakota District to the LCMS Minnesota North District.

4. Elections Committee – Rev. Tim Renstrom, Chairman

Rev. Renstrom explained the process of electronic voting to the assembly and conducted a couple of practice voting sequences.

Rev. Renstrom noted that 10 pastors have been nominated for the office of President. 6 have allowed their names to stand for election: Rev. Brady Finner, Messiah Lutheran Church, Sartell; Rev. Stephen Klemp, Love of Christ, St. Cloud; Rev. Jeffrey Lee, MN North District Mission and Ministry Facilitator and LCEF District Vice President; Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt, St. John's Lutheran Church, Sauk Rapids, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Foley; Rev. Blake Rickbeil, St. Paul's Lutheran, Bertha; and Rev. Dr. Karl Weber, St. John Lutheran Church, Ottertail and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Richville.

Election for President First Ballot for President – Results

Rev. Brady Finnern, Sartell	80
Rev. Stephen Klemp, Sartell	4
Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Staples	24
Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt, Sauk Rapids	20
Rev. Blake Rickbeil, Bertha	13
Rev. Dr. Karl Weber, Ottertail	<u>73</u>
	214 Total votes cast (108 needed for election)

Second Ballot for President – Results (* denotes election)

Rev. Brady Finnern, Sartell *	110
Rev. Dr. Karl Weber, Ottertail	<u>99</u>
	209 Total votes cast (105 needed for election)

Election for Vice President – Park Region – Results (* denotes election)

Rev. James Neubauer, Park Rapids	33
Rev. Guy Roberts, Detroit Lakes	44
Rev. Dr. Karl A. Weber, Ottertail*	<u>135</u>
	212 Total votes cast (107 needed for election)

Election of Vice President – Lake-Land Region– Results (* denotes election)

Rev. Kent Borglum, Montevideo	40
Rev. Kirk Lee, Parkers Prairie*	<u>167</u>
	207 Total votes cast (104 needed for election)

Election for Vice President – Arrowhead Region – Results

Rev. Jacob Gillard, Zimmerman	24
Rev. David Hinz, Sauk Rapids	46
Rev. Stephen Klemp, Sartell	10
Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt, Sauk Rapids	52
Rev. Bruce Timm, St. Cloud	<u>74</u>
	206 Total votes cast (104 needed for election)

Second Ballot for Vice President – Arrowhead Region – Results

Rev. David Hinz, Sauk Rapids	49
Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt, Sauk Rapids	60
Rev. Bruce Timm, St. Cloud	<u>101</u>
	210 Total votes cast (106 needed for election)

Third Ballot for Vice President – Arrowhead Region – Results (* denotes election)

Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt, Sauk Rapids	84
Rev. Bruce Timm, St. Cloud *	<u>125</u>
	209 Total votes cast (105 needed for election)

Ranking of the 1st Vice President – Results (* denotes election)

Rev. Karl A. Weber, Ottertail	108 *
Rev. Kirk Lee	59
Rev. Bruce Timm	<u>48</u>
	215 Total votes cast (108 needed for election)

Ranking of the 2nd and 3rd Vice Presidents – Results

Rev. Kirk Lee, Parkers Prairie	116	Second Vice President
Rev. Bruce Timm, St. Cloud	<u>97</u>	Third Vice President
	213 Total votes cast	(107 needed for election)

Rev. Renstrom asked for nominations for District Secretary, District Treasurer and the 2025 District Convention Nominations Committee.

5. District Finance and Budget – Mr. Michael Uran, Treasurer

Mr. Uran called the assembly's attention to the financial statements printed on pages 59-63 of the workbook. He noted the sale of a couple of pieces property owned by the District in the last quadrennium, from which funds were used to pay off the mortgage on the Two Harbors property.

The cash position remains strong for the District. Income is \$1.4 million dollars. Expenses generally are \$1.5 million. He also explained that the 2020 deficit of almost \$400,000 was a 'paper' loss due to a change in valuing property owned by the District.

Mr. Uran also stated that the District has an annual audit of its financials and there have been no negative comments from the auditor. The statements, according to the auditor, accurately reflect the financial position of the District. Due to retirement, a new auditor has been secured.

Mr. Uran expressed appreciation to the entire District Staff, especially Angie Ringstrom who will be retiring this summer.

6. Convention Essayist – Convention Essayist: Rev. Shauen Trump, Regional Director, Africa - LCMS International Mission

Rev. Shauen Trump, referring to the Synod's Mission Priorities, spoke to how God is working in Africa. He thanked the attendees for their support of the work being done in Africa.

7. Floor Committee #1 (Missions/Evangelism/Stewardship) Rev. Matthew Kohl, Chairman

RESOLUTION 1-1

Subject: To Study Shared Ministry among Congregations

Reference: Overtures 1-01 and 1-02, Workbook, pp. 87-88, 109-111

Two friendly amendments were offered and received to correct minor mistakes; in line 5, removing "in" and in line 44, adding an apostrophe to "Synods" to read "Synod's."

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED (187-14).

RESOLUTION 1-2

Subject: To Encourage Congregations to be Intentional in Outreach

Reference: Overture 1-03, Workbook, pp. 88-89, 112-113

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (194-9).

RESOLUTION 1-3

Subject: To Encourage Support for Christ Care Kenya

Reference: Overture 1-06, Workbook, pp. 91, 114-115

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (196-4).

RESOLUTION 1-4

Subject: To Continue Support for Project 24

Reference: Overture 1-05, Workbook, pp. 91, 116-117

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (191-11).

RESOLUTION 1-5

Subject: To Encourage Planting New Churches and Ministries

Reference: Overture 1-04, Workbook, pp. 89-90, 118-119

A friendly amendment was given and received to remove “both” in line 18.

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED (187-8).

8. **Elections Committee – Rev. Tim Renstrom, Chairman**

Election for District Secretary

Rev. Marty Mably, Elk River

The Convention voted by acclamation to elect the candidate.

Election of Treasurer

Michael Uran, Sartell

The Convention voted by acclamation to elect the candidate.

Ratification of Circuit Visitors

Rev. Renstrom brought forth the list of pastors selected by their respective Circuit Forums (See Convention Workbook, p. 20) to serve as Circuit Visitors during this triennium.

Park Region Conference

Crookston Circuit	Rev. Douglas Thompson
Bemidji Circuit	Rev. James Sorensen
Park Rapids Circuit	Rev. Matthew Vrudny
Detroit Lakes Circuit	Rev. Ed Borchardt
Wadena Circuit	Rev. Blake Rickbeil
Brainerd Circuit	Rev. David L. Becker

Arrowhead Conference

Iron Range Circuit	Rev. Jim Anthony
Lake Superior Circuit	Rev. Matthew Kohl
Kettle River Circuit	Rev. Glen Kleppe
Little Falls Circuit	Rev. Dr. Tim Rehwaldt
Rum River Circuit	Rev. Tim J. Renstrom
St. Cloud Circuit	Due to the Election of Rev. Bruce Timm as District Vice President, a caucus will be held to elect a new Circuit Visitor.

Lake-Land Conference

Alexandria Circuit	Rev. Jeff Ross
Fergus Falls Circuit	Rev. Ross Fritz
Long Prairie Circuit	Rev. David Mommens
Wheaton Circuit	Rev. William Aufdenkamp
Appleton Circuit	Rev. Donald Klatt
Montevideo Circuit	Rev. Kent Borglum

MOVED & SECONDED: To ratify the list of Circuit Visitors which have been selected by their respective Circuits.

ACTION ON THE MOTION: CARRIED (205-2).

Election of Lay Members of the District Board of Directors – Park Region Conference

Lee Kessler, Detroit Lakes

Marvin Kading, St. Hilaire

The Convention voted by acclamation to elect both candidates.

Election of Lay Members of Board – Lake-Land Conference (* denotes election)

Gary Euren, Moorhead * 153

Paul Groneberg, Hoffman 92

Ray Moldenhauer, Long Prairie * 160

405 Total votes cast

Election of Lay Members of Board – Arrowhead Conference (* denotes election)

William Hanson, Sartell * 157

Jerry Pettit, South Haven 87

Rob Rydberg, Elk River * 160

404 Total votes cast

9. Welcome of New Members of the Synod – Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the Synod

President Fondow invited all of the new members of the Synod to the front. The Convention welcomed Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, who welcomed these Commissioned and Ordained members in the Minnesota North District who have joined Synod since the last District Convention.

10. Set Apart to Serve, Rev. Dr. James Baneck, LCMS Director of Pastoral Education

Rev. Dr. Baneck began his presentation with a video. He spoke about the Synod's efforts to recruit individuals to enter into professional church work careers. Rev. Dr. Baneck also addressed the current challenges for this effort. He challenged attendees to find and utilize opportunities to encourage people to go into professional church work careers.

11. Announcements, Prayer, Supper

After a few brief announcements, Chaplain Coop offered a prayer in closing of the session and for the meal.

CONVENTION WORSHIP SERVICE

Officiant: Rev. Steve Benson

Zion Lutheran Church, Brainerd

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Attendance at the Worship Service was 290 people; the offering totaled \$2620.00.

SESSION 2: Tuesday, May 10

12. Breakfast

13. Opening Devotion – Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse

President Fondow welcomed the attendees, made a few announcements and welcomed Rev. Dr. Pulse. Rev. Dr. Pulse reminded the attendees of the theme verse and invited everyone to join in singing “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go” (LSB 920). Rev. Dr. Pulse focused on the phrase, “But take heart” and prayed with the assembly a collect for patience. The assembly sang “Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying” (LSB 516). Rev. Dr. Pulse read from Matthew 24. He spoke about the importance of patience, how we learn patience and how God grants and teaches us patience. We have patience because we have Christ who is faithful. He concluded with leading the assembly in confessing their faith, using the Apostles’ Creed and praying the Lord’s Prayer. The assembly sang “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing” (LSB 475).

14. Minutes – Rev. Marty Mably, Secretary

A summary of the Minutes for Monday, May 9, 2022, Session 1, was given by Rev. Mably. There were no corrections. The summary dealt mainly with the actions taken by the Convention.

15. Second Report of the Committee on Registration, Credentials, and Attendance

Rev. Ron Carnicom, Chairman

Rev. Carnicom gave his second report on attendance as of 8:00 a.m. Tuesday.

Pastoral Delegates	117
Lay Delegates	<u>119</u>
Total Voting Delegates	236

Board of Directors	3
Advisory Delegates – Ordained and Commissioned	12
Emeriti – Ordained and Commissioned	20
Vicars	1
Guest Speakers	5
Office Staff	5
Other Guests	31
<u>Exhibitors</u>	<u>20</u>
Total Attending	333

Possible Pastoral Delegates	143
Possible Lay Delegates	<u>158</u>
Total Possible Delegates	301

16. Elections Committee – Rev. Tim Renstrom, Chair

Ballot - 2025 Nominating Committee – Park Region – Results (* denotes election)

Ordained Minister	Rev. David Walsh, Menahga *	138
	Rev. Blake Rickbeil, Bertha	<u>68</u>
		206 Total votes cast (104 needed)
Lay Member	No Nominee	

Election - Lutheran Island Camp Board of Directors – Results (* denotes election)

Ballot – Park Region

Rev. Daniel Larsen, Henning	73
Rev. Andrew Ratcliffe, Perham *	<u>130</u>
203 Total votes cast (102 needed)	

Ballot – Lake-Land

Rev. Scott Brown, Alexandria *	139
Rev. Keith Brustuen, Montevideo	<u>68</u>
207 Total votes cast (104 needed)	

Ballot – Arrowhead

Rev. David Hinz, Sauk Rapids *	113
Rev. Stafford Thompson, Cloquet	<u>92</u>
205 Total votes cast (103 needed)	

Ballot – At Large

Rev. Brett Hartwig, Sabin	32
Rev. David Mommens, Melrose	29
Rev. Mark Schwarz, Carlos	50
Rev. Noah Wehrspann, Long Prairie	<u>94</u>
205 Total votes cast (103 needed)	

Second Ballot – At Large

Rev. Brett Hartwig	29
Rev. Mark Schwarz	56
Rev. Noah Wehrspann*	<u>125</u>
210 Total votes cast (106 needed)	

**17. Synodical President's Report and Video, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison
Q & A with the President of Synod**

The assembly watched a prepared video. Rev. Harrison highlighted a number of efforts and challenges regarding the Synod. He then answered questions and responded to comments from the assembly.

18. President Don Fondow honored and presented with a gift for his years of service.

President-elect Finnern, along with Vice-Presidents Lee and Weber, honored President Fondow, his wife, Connie, and their family for his years in the ministry and years serving as District President. Along with many accolades, President Fondow was presented with an all-expense paid trip to the Holy Land thanks to gifts from District congregations, individuals and organizations.

19. Floor Committee #2 (Education/Youth/Human Care) Rev. Bill Aufdenkamp, Chairman

RESOLUTION 2-1

Subject: To Continue the CROSS (Congregations Reaching Out to Support Schools) Appeal

Reference: Overture 2-02, Workbook, pp. 92-93, 120-121

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (198-3)

A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the 'whereases' for the resolutions. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

RESOLUTION 2-2

Subject: Include LCMS Secondary Schools in the CROSS Appeals Funds

Reference: Overture 2-05 and Convention Workbook, pp. 94, 122

The committee made one change to line 12, replacing “accredited” with “rostered.”

A friendly amendment was given and received to add “Minnesota North District” to line 12, before “Lutheran.”

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (199-4)

RESOLUTION 2-3

Subject: Encourage Our Congregations to Pray for the Unchurched

Reference: Overture 2-04, Workbook pp. 93-94, 123-124

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (164-40)

RESOLUTION 2-4

Subject: Developing Local, On Campus Ministry Presence at our Colleges and Universities

Reference: Overture 2-03, Workbook, pp. 93, 125-126

A friendly amendment was made and received to strike in line 19 “for at least 2-3 hours a week.”

After discussion the friendly amendment was withdrawn and “for at least 2-3 hours a week” was returned to the resolution.

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED: CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (193-11)

RESOLUTION 2-5

Subject: To decline overture 2-01

Reference: Overture 2-01, Workbook, pp. 91-92, 127

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED (138-45)

20. Floor Committee #3 (Board of Directors/Administration) – Rev. David Becker, Chairman

RESOLUTION 3-1

Subject: To Give Thanks for and Encourage Support of Lutheran Island Camp

Reference: Overture 3-01, Workbook, pp. 94-95, 128-129

The committee presented the resolution with the following changes: line 15, replacing “expansion” with “evaluation” and in line 19, replacing “expansion” with “refinement.”

A friendly amendment was given and received to add “and” to line 22 after “Ranch.”

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (197-9)

21. Greetings from the International Lutheran Council, Rev. Roger James

President Fondow invited Rev. Roger James from the International Lutheran Council who shared greetings and encouragement with the attendees. Rev. James invited the attendees to visit their website: ilcouncil.org.

22. Announcements and Prayer

Rev. Coop offered prayer for President Fondow, his family, for the International Lutheran Council and for the luncheon.

23. Lunch

SESSION 3: Tuesday Afternoon, May 10

24. Elections Committee – Rev. Tim Renstrom, Chair

Ballot – 2025 Nominating Committee – Lake-Land Region– Results (* denotes election)

Ordained Minister Rev. Jason Wolter, Benson *

The Convention elected the candidate by acclamation.

Lay Member Scott Fassett, Parkers Prairie * 116

Ray Moldenhauer, Long Prairie 59

175 Total votes cast (88 needed)

Ballot – 2025 Nominating Committee – Arrowhead Region – Results

Ordained Minister Rev. Benjamin Hollingsead, Eden Valley 37

Rev. Tim Rehwaldt, Sauk Rapids * 107

Rev. Keith Weise, Saint Cloud 36

180 Total votes cast

(91 needed)

Lay Member Charles Leonard, Kimball*

The Convention elected the candidate by acclamation

Ballot – 2025 Nominating Committee – At Large – Results

Commissioned Minister DCE Gary Bach, New York Mills *

The Convention elected the candidate by acclamation.

25. Floor Committee #1 (Missions/Evangelism/Stewardship)

Rev. Matthew Kohl, Chairman

RESOLUTION 1-6a

Subject: To Designate Convention Worship Service Offerings

An amendment was made by the committee to add “therefore be it” to the end of line 20.

ACTION ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (137-2)

26. Installation of District President – Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and Rev. Nabil Nour, 3rd Vice President.

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison with the assistance of 3rd Vice President Nour, installed Rev. Brady Finnern as President of the Minnesota North District.

27. Performance by Christus Chorus – Concordia, University, St. Paul

28. Convention Essayist – Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, President, Concordia University, St. Paul

Rev. Dr. Friedrich spoke, making the case for the following thesis: Christian Education is powerful because it is by God’s grace, the way for us baptized children of God, to live out our God-given vocations faithfully within the two kingdoms that God rules within.

29. Greetings from The Minnesota South District – Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, President

President Woodford, from the Minnesota South District, spoke of his ordination 19 years ago, by then, newly elected President Fondow. He brought words of encouragement for the assembly and the District based on the Convention's theme.

30. Report from Public Policy Advocate – Rev. Fredric Hinz

Rev. Hinz thanked the Minnesota North and South Districts and the former Minnesota South District President Nadasdy and President Fondow for their vision of creating the position that he has served in for eight years. He spoke regarding the ongoing and rapid changes in culture and the need for the Church's response. Regarding the topic of life, he spoke regarding the upcoming SCOTUS ruling regarding *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Rev. Hinz spoke regarding the topic of physician assisted suicide and a recent ruling in Oregon; 'conversion therapy'; education; religious liberty issues; and race issues. Positively, Rev. Hinz is hopeful for the future regarding parental choice in education. He closed expressing his hopefulness for the future and the church's work.

31. Greetings from The Lutheran Women's Missionary League – Mrs. Kathy Brandt, President

Mrs. Brandt wished President Fondow well and noted that the LWML is looking forward to working with President Finnern. She highlighted the mission emphasis of the LWML. Mrs. Brandt talked of the formation of the LWML in 1942 and its current 80th anniversary celebration. She concluded, highlighting the twelve mission grants for over \$140,000 by the Minnesota North LWML and over \$38,000 has been sent to national LWML.

32. Lutheran Laymen's League – Mr. Delano Meyer, President

Mr. Meyer presented a small gift from the LLL to President Fondow. He brought greetings from the LLL and shared information regarding the resources and opportunities of the organization, emphasizing its global reach.

33. Floor Committee #4 (Doctrine and Practice) – Rev. Blake Rickbeil, Chairman

Rev. Coop offered a prayer for the committee and the convention as it took up these matters.

RESOLUTION 4-1

Subject: To confess the doctrine of Closed Communion and encourage its practice.

Reference: Overture 4-01, Workbook, pp. 99, 140-141

An amendment was made and seconded to add to line 26, after "Closed Communion" and before the semicolon, "as adopted in resolution 3-09 in the 2007 LCMS Synod Convention."

ACTION ON THE AMMENDMENT: CARRIED. (171-28)

A Friendly amendment was made and accepted to add to line 2 "reaffirm and" between "To" and Confess."

"LC-MS" was changed to "LCMS" in lines 17 and 21.

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION AS AMMENDEED: CARRIED. (181-21)

Rev. Coop offered a prayer before discussion began on the adoption of Resolution 4-2.

RESOLUTION 4-2

Subject: To affirm the Biblical doctrines of Creation, Original Sin and Redemptions and to reject Critical Theory

Reference: Overture 4-02, Unpublished, Workbook, p. 142-144.

An amendment was made and seconded to replace in line 6 “has created all people” with “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place” (Acts 17:26).

ACTION ON THE AMMENDMENT: CARRIED. (190-9)

An amendment was made to add a resolve in line 65 “Resolved, that the Minnesota North District join the Mid-South District in rejecting racism and work toward advancing the Gospel. Therefore, it be it further...”

ACTION ON THE AMMENDMENT: CARRIED. (193-7)

An amendment was made to, in lines 66-67, add “Minnesota North” before “District” and “resolution” replaced “overture, with amendments or another similar but alternatively appropriate overture.” There was no second.

An amendment was made to strike lines 62-64. There was no second.

A motion was made and seconded to refer the resolution back to the committee.

ACTION ON THE MOTION: CARRIED (141-63)

Rev. Coop offered a prayer at the end of the session and for supper.

34. Supper

SESSION 4. Tuesday Evening, April 10

35. Hymn Sing and Prayer

The Evening Session began with President Fondow leading the assembly in a hymn sing. Rev. Coop led the assembly in prayer.

36. Floor Committee #4 (Doctrine and Practice) – Rev. Blake Rickbeil, Chairman

RESOLUTION 4-2A

Subject: To affirm the Biblical doctrines of Creation, Original Sin and Redemptions and to reject Critical Theory

Reference: Overture 4-2, Unpublished, Workbook, p. 142-144.

An amendment was made to strike lines 64-66.

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED: CARRIED (157-31)

ACTION ON THE AMMENDMENT: CARRIED (111-81)

An amendment was made and seconded to add at line 63 “Resolved that we look for opportunities to dialogue with groups who hold this philosophy in order to listen, confess, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and be it further resolved.”

ACTION ON THE AMMENDMENT: CARRIED (154-27)

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED: CARRIED (156-27)

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION AS AMMENDED: CARRIED. (147-44)

37. Lutheran Island Camp & Retreat Center Report

Revs. Andrew Ratcliffe and Scott Brown gave an update regarding Lutheran Island Camp on behalf of Mrs. Stacy Lung, Executive Director.

38. Greetings

LCMS Foundation, Ralph Simon thanked President Fondow and Angie Ringstrom for their work and stated that the Foundation looks forward to working with President Finnern. Mr. Simon spoke about the work of the Foundation.

The Seminaries, Rev. Paul Hopkins (CTSFW) brought greetings from President Rast. Wayne Oliver (CSL) greeted the assembly on behalf of President Egger and all staff and students. He thanked everyone for their support of the seminaries and spoke to the need for more students and for prayers.

Concordia Publishing House, newly elected President & CEO, Jonathan Schultz, greeted everyone and emphasized the importance of the work of CPH. He spoke about the blessings of the partnership with the District in the “Bring It Home” series. President Schultz also spoke regarding new offerings coming out soon.

Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Rev. Bernie Lutz and Rev. Moss spoke to the work of the Foundation. They drew two names for a giveaway of a selection of their publications.

39. In Memorium

President Fondow named the workers that were called to glory since our last Convention and their pictures were shown on the screen. He offered thanksgiving for these servants and their ministry and asked that God keep all of us faithful until the end.

40. Closing Devotion - Rev. Dennis O’Neill, Trinity, Ortonville, MN

Rev. Dennis O’Neill, Trinity, Ortonville, MN, led the closing devotion, using the printed devotion included in the packet delegates received. In his sermon, Rev. O’Neill, shared how Jesus warned us of disasters, suffering and false teaching. Jesus also told us there is more, life and forgiveness for us. God is fair and He is merciful!

41. Dessert Social Provided by Lutheran Church Extension Fund

The delegates enjoyed desserts, provided by Lutheran Church Extension Fund and jazz music performed by local high school musicians.

SESSION 6: Wednesday Morning, April 11

42. Breakfast

43. Opening Devotion – Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse

President Fondow welcomed everybody and Convention Devotion leader, Rev. Dr. Pulse. Rev. Dr. Pulse reminded the attendees of the theme verse and invited everyone to join in singing “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go” (LSB 920). Rev. Dr. Pulse led the assembly in prayer. He read from Zechariah 3. Rev. Pulse talked about how clothing and much more are used by us to cover our sin. The new skins given by God are used, in a new way, to cover our sins. He went through Scripture to see how garments are used in Scripture to represent deception (sin) but also to represent atonement

(forgiveness) and righteousness. In the end, Jesus is stripped of His clothing, our sin is exposed, so that we can be clothed with His righteousness. He concluded with leading the assembly in confessing their faith, using the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. The assembly sang "O God, Forsake Me Not" (LSB 731).

44. Minutes – Rev. Marty, Secretary

A summary of the Minutes for Tuesday's sessions was given by Rev. Mably. There were no corrections. The summary dealt mainly with the actions taken by the Convention.

45. Floor Committee #7 (Conference Minutes) – Rev. Bruce Timm

The committee reviewed the minutes of the conferences held by ordained and commissioned ministers during the 2018-2022 quadrennium. They found them to be in order and recommends that the minutes be approved.

MOVED & SECONDED: To accept the report of the Conference Minutes Committee and thank them for their work.

ACTION: CARRIED (The motion was carried by acclamation)

46. Convention Essayist – Chaplain Craig G. Muehler CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret), Director-LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

After presenting a video regarding LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, Chaplain Muehler gave a history, beginning with Martin Luther, on the understanding of the Christian in war and the importance of military chaplains. He then shared with the assembly the important roles and work that chaplains provide to all of those in the military. He also spoke regarding today's hard work to guard religious liberty in the armed forces. In conclusion, Chaplain Muehler encouraged the assembly to 'gird their loins' and enter the battle with the armor of God and with Christ and His peace and victory to share the peace of Christ.

Chaplain Muehler also gave a summary of the Operation Barnabas program that serves as an outreach to veterans.

47. Greetings from Luther Classical College, Samuel Preus

After viewing a video from Luther Classical College, Preus spoke regarding the importance and teaching of this new educational endeavor. The four emphases for Luther Classical College will be Biblical Lutheran faith, a conservative view of the world, affordability, and receiving no federal aid. There will be a cap of 300 students and the school will open in 2025.

48. President Brady Finnern

President Finnern's message centered on the theme of the Kyrie: Lord, have mercy. He led the delegates through several refrains of the Litany, and each response of "Lord, have mercy." "Lord, have mercy," Finnern declared, "reminds us of who we are in Christ." President Finnern gave thanks for his wife, Amy, their children, and his parents. He addressed the other candidates who were on the election ballot with him, speaking of the "respect and love" he has for them. Telling the assembly that he's "bringing everyone in the District to the feet of Christ in prayer," President Finnern asked the District to "pray for God's people at Messiah [Sartell]," where he has

served as pastor for the past twelve years. Saying that he is “humbled to be called into this office,” he admitted to being “terrified.” Yet, he also proclaimed “excitement” and “hope,” stating, “Because we know that Christ has risen from the dead and so we are able to say, ‘Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.’” And He does.

49. Elections Committee – Rev. Tim Renstrom

The Chaplain led the assembly in prayer, asking for wisdom from the Lord for these elections.

Ratification of the Election by Caucus for Circuit Visitor for the St. Cloud Circuit

Rev. Renstrom brought forth Rev. David Buchs, elected in caucus by the St. Cloud Circuit to serve as Circuit Visitor for the upcoming triennium.

MOVED & SECONDED: To ratify the Rev. David Buchs to serve as St. Cloud Circuit Visitor for the next triennium.

ACTION ON THE MOTION: CARRIED (180-3).

Ballot – 2025 Nominating Committee – Park Region – Results (* denotes election)

Lay Member	David Gilster, Perham
	The Convention elected the candidate by acclamation.

50. Floor Committee #3 (Board of Directors/Administration) – Rev. David Becker

A motion was made and accepted to consider 3-9 and 3-10 together with no reading.

RESOLUTION 3-9 and 3-10

Subject: To Clarify, Update and Amend paragraphs of the Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED.

RESOLUTION 3-2

Subject: To Encourage Congregations and the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership to Do Things Decently and in Order

Reference: Overtures 3-02 & 3-03, Workbook pp. 95-96, 130-131

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (169-3)

RESOLUTION 3-3

Subject: To Decline Overture 3-04

Reference: Overture 3-04, Workbook pp. 95-96, 132-133

The committee submits the resolution with the change in Line 14, adding “do so” after “time.”

The Behnken rule was made and seconded

ACTION ON THE BEHNKEN RULE RESOLUTION (TO CONSIDER RESOLUTION 3-04 INSTEAD OF 3-3): FAILED. (72-95)

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED (157-31)

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION: CARRIED. (129-37)

RESOLUTION 3-5

Subject: To Express Appreciation for Angie Ringstrom's Faithful Service

Reference: Board of Directors Minutes, 05/08/2022, Workbook, p. 135-136

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED.

RESOLUTION 3-8

Subject: Thanksgiving and Bestowal of Title "Emeritus" upon the Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow, President of the Minnesota North District

Reference: Overture 3-06, Workbook, p. 138-139

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED.

RESOLUTION 3-7

Subject: To Express Appreciation for Faithful Service

Reference: Board of Directors

The committee submits the resolution with the change in line 32, adding "and others"

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED.

RESOLUTION 3-6

Subject: To Express Appreciation for George Miller's Faithful Service

Reference: Board of Directors Minutes, 05/08/2022, Workbook, p. 137

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED.

RESOLUTION 3-4

Subject: To Decline Overture 3-05

Reference: Overture 3-05, Workbook, pp. 97-98, 134

The Behnken rule was made and seconded to substitute 3-05, pg. 97-98

ACTION ON THE BEHNKEN RESOLUTION (TO CONSIDER OVERTURE 3-05

INSTEAD OF 3-4): FAILED. (85-86)

THE QUESTION WAS CALLED BY ACCLAMATION: CARRIED (157-31)

ACTION ON RESOLUTION 3-4: TABLED– (97-76)

51. Rev. Nabil Nour, 4th Vice President, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Rev. Nour gave thanks for President Emeritus Fondow, for his work and wisdom. He stated that it was an honor to serve with him. Rev. Nour offered a prayer and the assembly stood and sang the Doxology.

52. Recognition of Anniversaries of Called Workers

The names of those Ordained and Commissioned Ministers within our District who observed anniversaries during the past triennium (2015-2018) were displayed on the screen. President Emeritus Fondow gave thanks for these men and women and their service to the Lord.

53. Final Report of the Registration Committee

Rev. Ron Carnicom shared with the assembly the following final Registration report:

Pastoral Delegates	118
Lay Delegates	<u>119</u>
Total Voting Delegates	237

Board of Directors	3
Advisory Delegates – Ordained and Commissioned	12
Emeriti – Ordained and Commissioned	22
Vicars	1
Guest Speakers	5
Office Staff	5
Other Guests	31
<u>Exhibitors</u>	<u>20</u>
Total Attending	336

Possible Pastoral Delegates	143
Possible Lay Delegates	<u>158</u>
Total Possible Delegates	301

54. Installation of Officers

President Finnern then Installed those elected to the office of Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Lay Members of the Board of Directors, and Circuit Visitors at this Convention into their respective offices.

55. Final thanks and closing of convention

President Emeritus Fondow asked the assembly to turn in the Evaluation Form and then asked God's blessings on the Convention's work. He encouraged us to go forth in the peace of Christ, making disciples for life.

56. MOVED & SECONDED TO ADJOURN.

ACTION: CARRIED.

President Emeritus Fondow declared the Convention adjourned in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

57. Lunch

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Martin W. Mably, M.A., M.Div., Secretary
Minnesota North District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Resolution # 1-1

Subject: To Study Shared Ministry among Congregations

REFERENCE: Overture # 1-01 & 1-02, Workbook pg. 87

WHEREAS, shifts in demographics and living patterns in both rural and urban areas threaten the existence of many congregations; and

WHEREAS, distance, declining populations, and other factors heighten difficulties in conducting ministry in rural and small town situations; and

WHEREAS, these changes in demographics and economics are causing congregations to explore partnership arrangements to meet Word and Sacrament needs into the future; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has over 500 dual and multi-congregation parish arrangements and the Minnesota North District has 34 dual and 2 triple parish arrangements served by a sole pastor (which constitutes over 15% of synodical congregations and 18% of Minnesota congregations; and

WHEREAS, more than 60% of reporting congregations in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod have an average worship attendance of fewer than 100; and

WHEREAS, declining seminary enrollments have made it difficult for smaller congregations to receive pastors through Synod's placement process; and

WHEREAS, dual and multi-congregation parish arrangements permit many smaller congregations to benefit from having a trained and ordained pastor; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for resources to assist congregations and districts in developing shared ministry partnerships; and

WHEREAS, congregational collaboration in ministry and service provides support for the pastoral office (Augsburg Confession V, XIV and Romans 10); and

WHEREAS, there is a growing shortage of available clergy to serve the congregations of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, this shortage has come about because of these facts:

- Half of the current 6,000 pastors in Synod are over the age of 55
- Each year approximately 160 pastors retire
- During the past 5 years the candidates from both seminaries combined have ranged between 70-100; and

WHEREAS, the above stated facts will result in the Synod's clergy roster being reduced in 12 years to about 3,000; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the MN North District staff & Board if Directors create a task force to study possibilities by which congregations can be served without closing sites; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this study be completed, and the results shared at the next Minnesota North District Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the District in convention give thanks to God for the congregations currently engaged in shared ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations and circuits of our District be encouraged to explore greater opportunities for collaboration for the care of members and the mission to proclaim the Gospel to those who have not yet been brought to faith in our communities; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that congregations seek the best stewardship of resources so that the ministry is continued efficiently and effectively in our communities to the Glory of God and the edification of God's people.

Resolution # 1-2

Subject: To Encourage Congregations to be Intentional in Outreach

REFERENCE: Overture # 1-03, Workbook pg. 88

WHEREAS, Jesus said that “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:7); and

WHEREAS, our understanding of that directive is for us to be active in mission and outreach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, Synod has produced “EveryOne His Witness” material to help us share our faith with our family, neighbors and friends; and

WHEREAS, How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” (Romans 10:14-15); and

WHEREAS, God has gathered us together to help, encourage, admonish and support each other in living and witnessing the faith; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that each congregation of the Minnesota North District be encouraged to make use of the “EveryOne His Witness” program to train members to be witnesses of God’s redeeming love in Christ Jesus; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that each congregation of the Minnesota North District be encouraged to develop and implement an intentional mission plan for outreach and witness in their community, including ways of inviting people to their church to hear the Word as well as ways to bring God’s Word out into the community. (For Example: service of Bible studies in jails, prisons, nursing homes, group homes, assisted living centers, and other venues as may be available in the local community.)

Resolution # 1-3

Subject: To Encourage Support for Christ Care Kenya

REFERENCE: Overture # 1-06, Workbook pg. 91

WHEREAS, our heavenly Father clearly and repeatedly expresses His love and concern for children who are orphans (Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 10:14; 68:5; 146:9; Jeremiah 49:11, Hosea 14:3); and

WHEREAS, in His Word we are told that “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans ... in their distress” (James 1:27); and

WHEREAS, Project 24 seeks to build rescue centers for children living in Kenya who have been orphaned or live in families at risk, thus giving them a place to live; and

WHEREAS, the cost to sponsor a child through Christ Care Kenya is \$90 per month or \$1080 a year to provide for each child’s day to day living needs; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that our congregations and Sunday schools, our Christian day schools, our various church organizations, be encouraged to adopt one or more orphans as their person project of mercy and witness; and

RESOLVED, that we solicit prayers from the members of our congregations for the residents and families of the children who are staying at the rescue centers and for the workers who minister to their physical and spiritual needs and for all who labor in expanding this much needed project in Kenya; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that each congregation of the Minnesota North District make every effort to make their members aware of Christ Care Kenya,
<https://www.lcms.org/make-a-gift/christs-care-for-children-kenya>, so that families and individuals may also participate in adopting and supporting the work of Christ Care Kenya.

Resolution # 1-4

Subject: To Continue Support for Project 24

REFERENCE: Overture # 1-05, Workbook pg. 90

WHEREAS, Project 24 is a project of mercy of the LCMS partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya to minister to the many needs of orphaned and at risk children living in Kenya; and

WHEREAS, the District Presidents of North Dakota and Minnesota North visited the project sites that have been completed and witnessed the effective catechesis among the children; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota North District in Convention, April 16-18, 2012 resolved to build three rescue centers in partnership with the North Dakota District; and

WHEREAS, one rescue center has been built and dedicated in Kenya at Lenkishon; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we encourage the congregations of Minnesota North District to continue or adopt a Project 24 Sunday(s) each year in order to raise funds for the purpose of building another rescue center in Kenya; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we solicit prayers from the members of our congregations for the residents and families of the children who are staying at the rescue centers and for the workers who minister to their physical and spiritual needs and for all who labor in expanding this much needed project in Kenya; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District rise to sing the Doxology in thanksgiving to God for the work carried out through Project 24.

Subject: To Encourage Planting New Churches and Ministries

REFERENCE: Overture # 1-04, Workbook pg. 89

WHEREAS, Jesus commanded His disciples “to go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) and;

WHEREAS, a 2021 Pew Research Center study indicated that the percentage of United States Citizens claiming to be Christian has declined by 15% since 2007 and those who claim no religious affiliation has increased to 29% of the United States Population; and

WHEREAS, congregations, by virtue of being vested with the ministry of Word and Sacrament, are to take the lead in both reaching out with the Good News as well as providing the place to nurture God’s people in the faith; and

WHEREAS, a congregation that takes seriously these two responsibilities (serving God’s people already in the congregation and sharing the Good News with others) will strive to have these priorities reflected in their congregational budget to support Missions; and

WHEREAS, we thank the Lord of the harvest for those congregations who have grown in their Mission support to District and Synod, increased their support and exceeded their commitments; and

WHEREAS, Barna conducted a specialized 2016 study of churches that have launched new congregations that found that planting churches is one of the most effective ways to reach people who are living without the Gospel promise; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we encourage congregations to evaluate and review their mission offerings with the goal to increase that offering through first fruits giving by setting aside a percentage of the gifts they receive to the District in support of our Mission work together; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage all congregations, pastors, and circuits to seek out and identify possible locations where a new ministry or church, may be established; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we encourage the District staff, officers, divisions, committees, and Board of Directors to do all that is possible to assist congregations and circuits in accomplishing the goal of starting new mission opportunities.

Resolution# 1-6a

Subject: To Designate Convention Worship Service Offerings

WHEREAS, The 2022 Minnesota North District Convention collected \$2,620 of offering during the Convention worship service; and

WHEREAS, the theme for this year's convention is "Forth in the peace of Christ we go.... Making Disciples for Life"; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 convention's essayists have reflected a priority on missions, education, and Ministry to the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 convention has pledged its support for "Christ's Care for Children: Kenya"; and

WHEREAS, Good Shepherd Lutheran High School, in Elk River is the Minnesota North District's first, and only secondary educational institution; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces supports all LCMS chaplains who serve on active duty, in the reserves, the National Guard, Civil Air Patrol, and Coast Guard Auxiliary; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we encourage the 2022 MN North District convention to allocate \$1,080 to "Christ's Care for Children: Kenya", as this will fully sponsor two children for entire year; and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that we split the remainder of the offerings evenly, between Good Shepherd Lutheran High School in Elk River, and the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces.

Resolution # 2-1

Subject: To Continue the CROSS (Congregations Reaching Out to Support Schools) Appeal

REFERENCE: Overture # 2-02, Workbook pg. 92

WHEREAS, since 2012, when the Minnesota North District, through Convention resolution, affirmed their support for our Lutheran Schools through the CROSS Appeal (Congregations Reaching Out to Support Schools); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran elementary schools currently operating in the Minnesota North District has shared over \$144,000 in ongoing financial support from the CROSS appeal and has used the funds for a variety of purposes to support and improve their mission of education and Gospel outreach to their students; and

WHEREAS, the prayer and financial support provided by many of our congregations, organizations and individuals across the Minnesota North District have proven to be a wonderful blessing to our Lutheran elementary/middle schools as well as to those who have given the gifts; and

WHEREAS, the public's interest in private education has continued to rise in the past 2 years, leading to new and proposed school starts within the Minnesota North District; and

WHEREAS, the mission opportunities of our Lutheran Schools continues to increase, as over 50% of our current students enrolled are not affiliated with the school's congregation and many of them not connected to any church whatsoever; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Minnesota North District gathered in convention would continue to financially support the ongoing efforts of the CROSS appeal to assist our schools above and beyond their normal operating budgets for the next triennium; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each congregation would prayerfully consider how they might support the CROSS appeal in a variety of ways (such as making the CROSS appeal an item in their annual budget or designating a portion of each weekly offering for the CROSS appeal) as well as providing the information and the opportunity, to individual members to provide gifts (such as door offerings or reminders at certain times during the year regarding CROSS appeal); and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we graciously thank everyone in the Minnesota North District who have supported this effort.

Resolution # 2-2

Subject: To Include LCMS Secondary Schools in the C.R.O.S.S. Appeal Funds

REFERENCE: Overture # 2-05, Workbook pg. 94

WHEREAS, the C.R.O.S.S. (Congregations Reaching Out to Support Schools) appeal was established to encourage MNN District Congregations to financially support our Lutheran Elementary Schools / Middle Schools; and

WHEREAS, the MNN district now has a Lutheran High School located at Lord of Glory in Elk River; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that future CROSS appeal funds include all accredited Lutheran K-12 Schools.

Resolution # 2-3

Subject: Encourage Our Congregations to Pray for the Unchurched

REFERENCE: Overture # 2-04, Workbook pg. 93

WHEREAS, In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."; and

WHEREAS, In John 10:16 Jesus said," And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, they will be one flock, one shepherd."; and

WHEREAS, In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."; and

WHEREAS, we all know people who either don't know Jesus as their Savior or who have fallen away from the practice of the Christian faith; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that every Sunday, all the congregations in the Minnesota North District in their weekly service are encouraged to pray for opportunities to share the Gospel to our neighbors, family and friends who don't know Jesus as Savior or who have disconnected themselves from the Christian faith.

Resolution # 2-4

Subject: Developing Local, On campus ministry presence at our Colleges and Universities

REFERENCE: Overture # 2-03, Workbook pg. 93

WHEREAS, local colleges and universities remain an untapped mission opportunity in the Minnesota North District; and

WHEREAS, the local congregation is best suited to establish an on-going, on-campus personal ministry presence at these colleges/universities; and

WHEREAS, budgeted funds are available from the Minnesota North District to assist in the establishment and maintaining of campus ministries; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we encourage congregations adjacent to college/universities to pray and look for opportunities to bring the Gospel to the campus community; and be it further

RESOLVED, to encourage congregations adjacent to college/universities create a regular on-campus presence for at least 2-3 hours a week in the student union or other public venues on campus to greet students and build relationships; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District establish yearly, on-going training and monetary grants to help congregations establish a frequent on-campus presence to bring the message of the Gospel to the local college/university settings.

Resolution # 2-5

Subject: To decline overture 2-01

Reference: Overture # 2-01, Workbook 91

Whereas, resolution 6-05 of the 2016 Synodical Convention has dealt with this issue;
therefore be it

Resolved, that the Minnesota North District Convention respectfully decline overture 2-01.

Resolution # 3-1

Subject: To Give Thanks for and Encourage Support of Lutheran Island Camp

REFERENCE: Overture # 3-01, Workbook pg. 95

- WHEREAS,** Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch exist to support and advance the ministry of congregations of the Minnesota North District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and
- WHEREAS,** for 70 years camp staff and volunteers have faithfully provided Christ-centered programs that seek to nourish the whole person for Christian life and service; and
- WHEREAS,** Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch continue to be faithful in providing quality camp and retreat programs for children, adults, and families; and
- WHEREAS,** the Board of Directors of Lutheran Island Camp is implementing a Strategic Plan that calls for the evaluation of programs and facilities in response to the stated needs of congregations, families, and individuals; and
- WHEREAS,** the Building New Bridges campaign is raising funds for the upkeep and refinement of camp facilities; and
- WHEREAS,** this dynamic ministry depends on the ongoing, faithful support of donors who support the mission of Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch and the affordable, accessible, quality camp and conference experiences it provides; and
- WHEREAS,** Lutheran Island Camp is blessed by the leadership and vision of new staff members including Stacy Lung as the Camp Director, Julia Johnson as the Program Director, following many years of faithful and dedicated service by several individuals including Camp Director Ken Erlandson and Director of Maintenance Marv Swyter, and those whom the Lord called to glory, Director of Development Wayne Hilchen and Board Chair Rev. Dr. Jeff Walther; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that congregations, pastors, organizations, families and individuals of the Minnesota North District be encouraged to give praise and thanks to God for His manifold blessings on this ministry including all those who have served camp in the past and those who are currently serving; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that congregations be encouraged to view Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch as an extension of their respective ministries and encourage families, groups, and campers to utilize the programs and services of Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** that the Minnesota North District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, meeting in convention, and the congregations represented within this fellowship, be encouraged to commit to supporting this vital ministry with individual and corporate prayer, promotion of its programs and services, and encourage individual and congregational financial and volunteer support to ensure this ministry continues to thrive and advance the Great Commission.

Resolution 3-2

Subject: **To Encourage Congregations and the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership to Do Things Decently and in Order**

REFERENCE: Overture # 3-02 & 3-03, Workbook pg. 95-96

WHEREAS, God has ordained that all things should be done decently and in good order (1 Corinthians 14:40); and

WHEREAS, to help congregations to do things decently and in good order as far as their congregational governance is concerned, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the Minnesota North District provide excellent models and guidance for congregations desiring to make changes to their constitutions; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership serve the Minnesota North District on a volunteer basis, while also serving their Lord in their other vocations; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership must spend a great deal of time studying the constitutions of the congregations of the district to which they wish to make changes, especially if those constitutions were written before A.D. 2000; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that congregations needing to make changes to their constitution be strongly encouraged to make use of the models and guidance provided by the synod and the district; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the members of the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership, be encouraged to do their work in a thorough and timely fashion; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the congregations and members of the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership be patient with one another as together we seek to “Forth in Peace of Christ We Go ... Making Disciples for Life.”

Resolution 3-3**Subject: To Decline Overture 3-04****REFERENCE:** Overture # 3-04 Workbook pg. 96-97

WHEREAS, St. Paul appeals to all of us “by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1); and

WHEREAS, besides Circuit Visitors & Regional Vice Presidents, there are many servants of the Lord who serve the needs of our district, its congregations and church workers; and

WHEREAS, all who serve the district in a variety of ways (which at times involves considerable time) do so in addition to the other responsibilities that are theirs as a result of their vocations; and

WHEREAS, none of these servants receive compensation for their labors; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District respectfully decline overture 3-04; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District, meeting in Convention, stand to sing the first and third verses of “Now, Thank we all our God” in thanks and praise to the Lord of the Church for His gift of Circuit Visitors, Regional Vice Presidents, and many others for their service to the Minnesota North District.

1 Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

3 All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heav'n adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Resolution # 3-4

Subject: To Decline Overture 3-05

REFERENCE: Overture # 3-05 Workbook pg. 97-98

WHEREAS, neither the Handbook of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or the Circuit Visitors' Manual stipulates how congregational visitation should be carried out; and

WHEREAS, there are ways for a circuit visitor to carry out visitation which involves minimal expense; and

WHEREAS, the Handbook of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod already authorizes circuit visitors “to draw on the district treasury for his expenses” (5.2.3m); therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District respectfully decline overture 3-05; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District, meeting in Convention, encourage circuit visitors to carry out visitations of the congregations in their circuit.

Resolution 3-5

Subject: To Express Appreciation for Angie Ringstrom's Faithful Service

REFERENCE: Board of Directors Minutes, 05/08/2022

WHEREAS, Angie Ringstrom, by the grace of God, has faithfully served our Lord and the Minnesota North District as Bookkeeper for over 16 years; and

WHEREAS, Angie, with the help of others in the District Office, graciously and willingly coordinated and cooked many meals for meetings at the District Office; and

WHEREAS, she will be retiring as of July 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, throughout Angie's time of service to the District, her husband, Dave, has been a vital source of encouragement, partnership, and support; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that our District President express to Angie and Dave the gratitude of the entire District; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we thank and praise God for blessing the service of Angie Ringstrom; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District, meeting in Convention, stand to sing the common doxology in thanks and praise to the Lord of the Church for His gift of Angie Ringstrom.

Resolution 3-6

Subject: To Express Appreciation for George Miller's Faithful Service

REFERENCE: Board of Directors Minutes, 05/08/2022

WHEREAS, George Miller, by the grace of God, has faithfully served our Lord and the Minnesota North District in various roles including LCEF Vice-President and Office Manager for over 21 years; and

WHEREAS, he retired in the spring of 2020; and

WHEREAS, throughout George's time of service to the District, his wife, Colette, served the District as "super volunteer;" therefore be it

RESOLVED, that our District President express to George and Colette the gratitude of the entire District; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we thank and praise God for blessing the service of George and Colette; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District, meeting in Convention, stand to sing the common doxology in thanks and praise to the Lord of the Church for His gift of George and Colette Miller.

Resolution 3-7

Subject: To Express Appreciation for Faithful Service

REFERENCE: Board of Directors Minutes, 05/08/2022

WHEREAS, the theme of the 2022 Minnesota North District Convention is “Forth in Peace of Christ We Go ... Making Disciples for Life;” and

WHEREAS, the congregations and church workers of our Minnesota North District seek to make disciples for life as they go forth in the peace of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to be selfless in their service to Him and to His people (Matthew 20:26-28); and

WHEREAS, many such workers have rendered such service to the Minnesota North District including:
The Rev. Dr. Larry Harvala, serving 6 years as Congregational Care Counselor;
Mr. Timothy Browning, serving 10 years as member of the Board;
Mr. Delano Meyer, serving 6 years as member of the Board;
Mr. Rick Gilbertson, serving 3 years as member of the Board;
The Rev. Ron Carnicom, serving 16 years as Chairman of the Committee on Constitutions and District Membership;
Mr. Ken Erlandson, serving 20 years as Director, Lutheran Island Camp;
Mr. Marv Swyter, serving 24 years as Director of Maintenance, Lutheran Island Camp;
Mr. Wayne Hilchen, whom the Lord called to His eternal home in October 10, 2020, after serving 6 years as Director of Development of Lutheran Island Camp;
The Rev. Dr. Jeff Walther, whom, the Lord called to His eternal home October 25, 2020 after serving 11 years as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lutheran Island Camp; and therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we express our appreciation to the Lord for the faithful and selfless service of these faithful servants and others; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Minnesota North District meeting in convention, stand and sing the common doxology, thanking God for all of His workers who “Go Forth in the Peace of Christ ... Making Disciples for Life.”

Resolution 3-8

Subject: **Thanksgiving and Bestowal of Title “Emeritus” Upon the Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow, President of the Minnesota North District**

REFERENCE: Overture # 3-06 Workbook pg. 98

WHEREAS, God has ordained that all things should be done decently and in good order (1 Corinthians 14:40); and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota North District has been blessed by the service and dedication of the Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow as the President of the District for 19 years; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Minnesota North District Convention is his last convention to chair as the District President before his official retirement; and

WHEREAS, the title Emeritus is to be conferred upon an individual, enabling them to retain the honor of their previous title; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we bestow upon the Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow the title Emeritus with all its rights and privileges; and be it further

RESOLVED, that with thanksgiving we stand and applaud his service and dedication to the Minnesota North District for his years of service as President and as Mission and Ministry Facilitator; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we sing the common doxology in thanksgiving to God for providing such servants and leaders among us that “Forth in the Peace in Christ We Go ... Making Disciples for Life.”

Resolution 3-9

Subject: To Clarify, Update and Amend paragraphs of the Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District

REFERENCE: Overture #3-07

RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District be amended as follows:

CCM #	Current Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 4-5	Proposed Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 4-5
3	<p>ARTICLE II, SECTION 3 – MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>a. The said corporation shall be composed of qualified congregations, <u>ministers of religion-ordained and ministers of religion-commissioned</u>, within the area above described, <u>who confess and accept the confessional basis of Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.</u></p>	<p>ARTICLE II, SECTION 3 - MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>a. <u>The said corporation shall be composed of all those members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (congregations, ordained and commissioned ministers) who have been received into the district at the time of joining the Synod, who have been transferred from another district, or who have been assigned to the district by the Synod. (LCMS Bylaw 4.1.2)</u></p>
CCM #	Current Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 5	Proposed Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 5
3	<p>ARTICLE III, SECTION 1 – NUMBER AND TITLE OF OFFICERS</p> <p>a. The number and official titles of the officers of this corporation by and through whom this corporation shall act shall be: a President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and they, together with representatives of members of this corporation as provided in the Bylaws of this corporation, shall constitute the Board of Directors of this corporation. They shall be elected by the accredited delegates at a regular meeting of this corporation. They shall hold office as prescribed in the Bylaws and shall serve until their successors are duly elected and have qualified.</p>	<p>ARTICLE III, SECTION 1 – NUMBER AND TITLE OF OFFICERS</p> <p>a. The number and official titles of the officers of this corporation by and through whom this corporation shall act shall be: a President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and they, together with representatives of members of this corporation as provided in the Bylaws of this corporation, shall constitute the Board of Directors of this corporation. They shall be elected by the accredited delegates at a regular meeting of this corporation. They shall hold office as prescribed in the Bylaws and shall serve until their successors are duly elected. and have qualified.</p>

CCM #	Current Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 8	Proposed Reading: The Articles of Incorporation of the Minnesota North District, p. 8
3	<p>ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS</p> <p>These Articles of Incorporation may be amended as provided by the law under which this body is incorporated (see Preamble above), provided that the proposed amendment(s) has been acted upon favorably in two regular successive meetings of the corporation by a two-thirds majority of the delegates voting on said amendment(s), certified by the presiding officer, verified by the secretary of the corporation, and recorded with the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota.</p>	<p>ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS</p> <p>Section 1 - All provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the resolutions of the Synod in convention.</p> <p>Section 2 - These Articles of Incorporation may be amended as provided by the law under which this body is incorporated (see Preamble above), provided that such amendments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> are not inconsistent with the Constitution or Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or the Constitution and laws of the United States or the State of Minnesota; and have been submitted to the Commission on Constitutional Matters of the Synod for review and approval before presentation to and adoption by the district convention; and are acted upon favorably in two successive regular or special meetings of this corporation by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting or by a simple majority of all delegates, whichever is less, certified by the presiding officer, verified by the secretary of the corporation; and shall thereafter be recorded with the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota.

Resolution 3-10**Subject: To Clarify, Update and Amend the Bylaws of the Minnesota North District****RESOLVED:** that the Bylaws of the Minnesota North District be amended as follows:

CCM #	Current Reading: Introduction	Proposed Reading: Introduction
?		<p>The district is the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod. Resolutions of the Synod are binding upon the district.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Synod is also the constitution of each district. The Bylaws of the Synod shall be primarily the bylaws of the district.</p> <p>(Reference LCMS Bylaws 4.1.1 – 4.1.1.2.)</p>

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.18 Reports	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.18 Reports
?	<p>a. All District Divisions, Committees, and <u>Special Officers</u> shall in due time submit a Convention report to the Board of Directors together with proposals and recommendations.</p> <p>b. The Board of Directors shall review, amend, and approve such reports for presentation to the Convention.</p>	<p>a. All District Divisions, Committees, and <u>other Designees</u> shall in due time submit a Convention report to the Board of Directors together with proposals and recommendations.</p> <p>b. <u>The District President, in consultation with the Board of Directors</u>, shall review, amend, and approve such reports for presentation to the Convention.</p>

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.34 Accrediting of Voting Delegates [Synod Constitution Article V A; Synod Bylaw 4/2/2]	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.34 Accrediting of Voting Delegates [Synod Constitution Article V A; Synod Bylaw 4/2/2]
?	<p>c. If a pastor serves two or more congregations, these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote.</p> <p>d. <u>A parish temporarily vacant shall be entitled to one lay vote, but no pastoral vote.</u></p> <p>e. The names of congregational lay delegates shall be submitted to the District President no later than 60 days before the Convention.</p>	<p>c. If a pastor serves two or more congregations, these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote. Congregations other than the one to whom the voting lay delegate belongs may send an advisory <u>lay</u> delegate to the district convention.</p> <p>d. <u>A pastor called to a congregation in an assisting capacity only, as defined in the Bylaws of the Synod, is not eligible to serve as a voting delegate of that congregation.</u></p> <p>e. A parish temporarily vacant shall be entitled to one lay vote, but no pastoral vote.</p> <p>f. The names of congregational lay delegates shall be submitted to the District President no later than 60 days before the Convention <u>to allow for floor committee assignments and service. This does not preclude acceptance of valid credentials at the time of the convention in those instances where</u></p>

		<u>necessitated.</u>
--	--	----------------------

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.36 Privileges of Advisory	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.36 Privileges of Advisory
?	<p>a. <u>Advisory delegates are pastors whose congregations do not hold membership in Synod, non-voting pastors, ministers not in charge of a congregation, professors at the Synod's education institutions, teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, parish assistants, certified lay ministers, and candidates for the office of the ministry or for that of a teacher of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, director of Christian education, director of Christian outreach, director of family life ministry, director of parish music, deaconess, certified lay ministry, or parish assistant.</u></p> <p>d. <u>Advisory pastors who are temporarily serving congregations are not entitled to vote.</u></p>	<p>a. <u>Advisory delegates are all commissioned ministers, and those ordained ministers not presently serving as voting representatives of congregations, who are members of the Synod within the district. In addition, a congregation that is part of a multi-congregation parish, other than the congregation supplying the voting lay delegate, may elect and depute an advisory lay delegate. [See Synod Constitution, Article XII, 10.b.-]</u></p> <p>d. <u>Only a pastor called by and installed in a congregation or parish in other than an 'assisting capacity only,' as defined in the Bylaws of the Synod, may serve as that congregation or parish's voting pastoral delegate."</u></p>

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.42 Quorum	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.42 Quorum
?	For the legal holding of the sessions of the Districts a constitutional convocation of such sessions and the presence of at least 1/3 of the voting <u>members represented by at least one of their respective representatives</u> (pastor or lay delegate) are required.	For the legal holding of the sessions of the District a constitutional convocation of such sessions and the presence of at least 1/3 of the voting <u>member congregations or parishes</u> represented by at least one of their respective representatives (pastor or lay delegate) are required.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.58 Advance Nominating Ballot [Synod Bylaw 4.3.1 and 4.7.1]	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.58 Advance Nominating Ballot [Synod Bylaw 4.3.1 and 4.7.1]
?	b. Vice-President (from the clergy roster of the District and <u>residing in</u> the local Conference that he represents). [District Bylaw 3.20.b]	b. Vice-President (from the clergy roster of the District and <u>holding membership in a congregation in</u> the local Conference that he represents). [District Bylaw 3.20.b]

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.66 Election Procedure	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.66 Election Procedure
?	f. Representative Lay Directors: <u>After eliminating those previously elected from the list of nominees of Lay Directors from the three Conferences,</u> the Elections Committee shall prepare and submit to the Convention an alphabetical list of the four laymen from each Conference who received the highest number of nominations. When necessary, Conferences may be called to make additional nominations for the Board of Directors. Each voting delegate shall vote for two laymen from each Conference, putting four names for each position on the ballot and voting for one, until one wins by majority, and then voting for the other, until that one wins by majority.	f. Representative Lay Directors: The Elections Committee shall prepare and submit to the Convention an alphabetical list of the four laymen from each Conference who received the highest number of nominations. When necessary, Conferences may be called to make additional nominations for the Board of Directors. Each voting delegate shall vote for two laymen from each Conference, putting four names for each position on the ballot and voting for one, until one wins by majority, and then voting for the other, until that one wins by majority.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 2.70 Expense of Delegates to the Synodical Convention:	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 2.70 Expense of Delegates to the Synodical Convention:
?	<u>Expenses of delegates from the Circuits shall be paid by the Circuit. The expenses of the advisory delegates shall be paid out of the District Treasury [Synod Constitution, Article V].</u>	<u>The District shall assess the convention expenses of the delegates to the congregations of the District on a per-circuit basis. [Synod Constitution, Article V].</u>

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.08 a. Conferences	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 3.08 a. Conferences
?	3. Arrowhead: The Iron Range, Lake Superior, St. Cloud, Kettle River, <u>Pine City</u> , and Little Falls Circuits.	3. Arrowhead: The Iron Range, Lake Superior, St. Cloud, Kettle River, <u>Rum River</u> , and Little Falls Circuits.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.10 b. Circuits	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 3.10 b Circuits
?	3. It is desirable that delegates to the District Convention represent the congregations at the Circuit Forum until their successors are elected. The delegate to the Convention of Synod is an advisory member of the Circuit Forum. [Synod Bylaw 5.3.3]	3. It is desirable that delegates to the District Convention represent the congregations at the Circuit Forum until their successors are elected. The <u>lay</u> delegate to the Convention of Synod is an advisory member of the Circuit Forum. [LCMS Bylaw 3.1.2 [d].

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.20 Qualifications of Officers	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 3.20 Qualifications of Officers
?	b. A Vice-President shall be on the clergy roster of the District and <u>have residence</u> within the conference from which he is elected.	b. A Vice-President shall be on the clergy roster of the District and <u>hold membership in a congregation</u> within the conference from which he is elected.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.26 Duties of Officers	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 3.26 Duties of Officers
?	<p>a. General - "All officers of the districts have the same rights and duties as those outlined in this Constitution for the officers of Synod but only insofar as these apply to the district and only within the boundaries of their districts" [Synod Constitution, XII, 6]. Accordingly all officers shall acquaint themselves with and be governed by the directives in the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod. The following officers shall especially note the listed references:</p> <p>b. Specific –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The President shall be a full-time executive. The District President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative. He shall not be in charge of a congregation or hold a chair at any educational institution but may be called <u>as an assistant pastor</u> provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as President 	<p>a. General - "All officers of the districts have the same rights and duties as those outlined in this Constitution for the officers of Synod but only insofar as these apply to the district and only within the boundaries of their districts" [Synod Constitution, XII, 6]. Accordingly all officers shall acquaint themselves with and be governed by the directives in the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod, <u>in addition to duties otherwise noted in the District Constitution and Bylaws</u>. The following officers shall especially note the listed references:</p> <p>b. Specific –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The President shall be a full-time executive. The District President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative. He shall not be in charge of a congregation or hold a chair at any educational institution but may be <u>called to a congregation in an assisting capacity</u>, provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as President.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.34 Qualifications [see District Bylaw 2.58; 3.20]	Proposed Reading: Bylaw 3.34 Qualifications [see District Bylaw 2.58; 3.20]
?	Representative laymen shall <u>reside</u> within the conference they are to represent.	Representative laymen shall <u>hold membership in a congregation</u> within the conference they are to represent.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.46 Quorum	Current Reading: Bylaw 3.46 Quorum
?	The majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting, provided that all members have been duly notified. <u>No resolution may be passed by less than six affirmative votes.</u>	The majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting, provided that all members have been duly notified.

CCM #	Current Reading: 4.06 Staff	Current Reading: 4.06 Staff
?	All persons who assist in the planning, developing, promoting, and supervising of the District Work Program and all its equipment and materials are Program Staff personnel.	All persons <u>employed by corporate District</u> who assist in the planning, developing, promoting, and supervising of the District Work Program and all its equipment and materials are Program Staff personnel.

CCM #	Current Reading: Bylaw 7.00 b. AMENDING THE BYLAWS	Current Reading: Bylaw 7.00 b. AMENDING THE BYLAWS
?		b. <u>When necessitated by amendments to the Synod Constitution or Bylaws or otherwise expressly directed by a resolution of the Synod in convention, amendments may be made by a two-thirds majority of the district board of directors. Such amendments shall be drafted by the district secretary in consultation with the District Bylaw and Constitution Commission and shall be reviewed in advance by the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters.</u>

Resolution # 4-1

Subject: To reaffirm and confess the doctrine of Closed Communion and encourage its practice.

REFERENCE: Overture # 4-01, Workbook pg. 99

WHEREAS, oneness at the altar presupposes oneness in faith and doctrine (Acts 2:42); and

WHEREAS, in the Holy Supper of our Lord, Jesus gives the communicant His own precious body and blood, which were given and shed for the forgiveness of sin, but those who fail to discern the body and blood bring judgement on themselves (1 Cor. 11:27-29); and

WHEREAS, the doctrine and practice of Closed Communion flow out of the concern for unity of faith, a desire to be faithful to Scripture, and a desire to faithfully care for souls; and

WHEREAS, Closed Communion, properly practiced, requires that the pastors and congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [LCMS] commune only those individuals who belong to congregations which are now in altar and pulpit fellowship with us; and

WHEREAS, all members of the LCMS subscribe and accept without reservation the authority of Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this convention recognize the Scriptural necessity of adhering publicly to both the professed doctrine and practice of Closed Communion as adopted in resolution 3-09 in the 2007 LCMS Synod Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all pastors, who are bound to follow this Scriptural practice, teach their congregational members to follow them in this faithful practice.

Resolution # 4-2A

Subject: To affirm the Biblical doctrines of Creation, Original Sin, and Redemption and to reject Critical Theory

REFERENCE: Overture # 4-02, Unpublished

WHEREAS, God "... made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" (Acts 17:26 ESV), and they are blood related going back to our mutual fathers, Adam and Noah, and all are subject to the stain of original sin, but now also have been equally redeemed by the blood of Christ in order to be reconciled to God and to each other; and

WHEREAS, God's Word says, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." (James 2:8-9); and

WHEREAS, the academic discipline of Critical Theory¹ and its progeny, such as Critical Race Theory [CRT], "Wokeism", Social Justice, Equity, et al., undermine a Biblical understanding of Creation and Original Sin by denying such divine institutions as family and government, maliciously dividing rather than uniting Christians on the basis of genealogical heritage, sexuality, socio-economic status, interpretation of history, and other criteria, and thus seeking to destroy the true unity Christ grants to the Church through His blood (Eph. 2:11-16) and subvert the unity of the communion of saints in the forgiveness of sins as expressed in the Third Article of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds; and

WHEREAS, Critical Theory is heretical, for example in the following: striving for and promising heaven on earth (utopia), frequently denying the sufficiency of Christ's death, presenting the teachings of Jesus as social gospel (i.e. merit-based salvation) and the divine remedy for strife in human society, and confusing the Doctrine of Two Kingdoms; and

WHEREAS, the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Convention adopted Resolution 03-04-21A, "To Reject Racism and Advance the Gospel"; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the District in Convention affirm the Biblical doctrines of Creation, Original Sin, and Redemption, especially concerning the universal need for and availability of God's redemption by grace through faith on account of Christ Jesus that we may not make "shipwreck of the faith" delivered to us (1 Tim. 1:19; 1:3); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the District in Convention encourage and assist the members of our District congregations, pastors, and teachers to faithfully learn, witness, and teach the Christian faith, especially the doctrines of Creation, Original Sin, and Redemption, in truth and purity, in the language of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions for the sake of the advance of the Gospel as revealed in Scripture and nowhere else (Jude 3); and be it further

¹ Cf. Paul Dare, "Christians in a Woke World," (2021)

"Critical Theory is social critique which aims at undermining the status quo, that is, the shared institutions of society, with the hope of overthrowing it" (29).

- RESOLVED,** that we commend the schools, universities, and seminaries of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod for their faithful witness to God's design and intent for human life and encourage each to strive to confess the Christian faith in a hostile world and to promote excellence in place of Critical Theory's definition of diversity, inclusivity, and equity outcomes, for they have no place in Christian education or administrative policies, as they are diametrically opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that we reject Critical Theory since it denies Scripture and sidelines the authority and usefulness of the Lutheran Confessions, denouncing the sufficiency of Christ's blessed suffering and death for the forgiveness of all our sins; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that we look for opportunities to dialog with groups who hold this philosophy in order to listen, confess and bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the Minnesota North District join the Mid-South District in rejecting racism and work toward advancing the Gospel; therefore, be it finally
- RESOLVED,** that the Minnesota North District in Convention send this resolution to serve the Synod in Convention in 2023, according to Synod Bylaw 1.6.2(b)(4).

Devotion/Bible Study #1

"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

Convention Hymn: #920 Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go

PEACE

Invocation:

Collect for Peace: O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

"...in the world you will have tribulation."

Text: I Kings 19:9-18 "A Way Through"

--Elijah wants a way out...

...God provides a way through.

--Our world has its share of tribulation, suffering, struggles...where is peace?

--Our first inclination when we encounter troubles is to pray for a way out;

American/Human tradition.

Avoid all suffering because we believe deep down that pain and suffering are evil. Good things happen to good people; bad things happen to bad people.

(Retribution Theology)

--In Christ Jesus there is peace...not a removal of suffering or the tribulations of this world. He who went to the cross as the sacrifice for our sin, He who atoned for us, gives us peace...His peace.

--Philippians 4:4-9...Peace

One of my favorite Old Testament characters is the great Prophet, Elijah. What a man of God! Look at ^{the} ~~the~~ miraculous things God accomplished through this faithful servant. He told King Ahab that it would not rain on the land because of Ahab and Queen Jezebel's wickedness--and it didn't--not for three years! Elijah is the one who provided the never ending flow of flour and oil for the widow woman. He is the one who prayed to God for this widow woman and life was returned to her son. He is the one who single handedly--not counting the hand of God--took on the prophets of Baal and Ashterah on Mount Carmel and won. 450 to 1--of course it was the Lord who tipped the scale in Elijah's favor! What a man of God! Fearless, as he stood before evil kings and queens. Firm, as he preached against idolatry. Intense, as he called upon the people to turn back to the One true God.

from their following false gods

Yet, it is this same 'fearless' man of God we find hiding out in a cave in our text for this evening. It is the same tough prophet we hear whining about the risks, the cost, the pain of being God's servant. Listen to what he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord my God. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too!" These are his very words and they come, not before God has used him in those great and mighty ways we previous talked, these words come after God has done all this through him. AFTER!

*↓
ABOUT,*

Elijah was fed up. He was scared. He wanted out! He had had a tough year and he wanted God to give him a way out! And how did the Lord God respond to this request? He told him to stop whining, gird up his loins, get outside of the cave and pay attention, He had more to say! Then came the powerful wind, then the earthquake, then the fire but God was not speaking through these things this day. No, God spoke to Elijah in a soft and gentle whisper, but what He said was perfectly clear. "I have work for you to do. This is your new job assignment. Retirement? I'll let you know when I am ready to retire you--I promise, you will be the first to know!" He told Elijah to go out and anoint new kings for Aram and Israel and take on an apprentice, a prophet of God in training to take his place when God was done with him!

Please pay careful attention here: Elijah wanted a way out, God gave him a way through! Get that? God did not give Elijah a way out, He gave him a way through!

Ever wanted a way out? Ever pray for a way out? Ever searched for a way out, or a way around? You have good company--Elijah, Moses, Peter, the list goes on and on--it is a big list with a lot of big names, but they all have two things in common. One, they are the children of God. Two, God does not give any of them a way out, He gives them a way through!

Have you had a tough year? Are you in the midst of turmoil and sorrow and suffering in your life? Does the future look a little cloudy at best, a full scale storm at worst? Does your soul long for, yearn for, pray for a way out of the trouble and uncertainty? Forget it! Stop worrying. Prepare yourself for action. Step outside the dark cave of your retreat and listen carefully--God is talking and He promises a way through. Not out--through! Not around--through! Not alone--He will go through it with you!

God did not send His only begotten Son to walk through our world so that we could walk through our troubles and hardships alone. He did ^{not} give up Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins so we might tread water in our sufferings until we become so weak that we sink beneath the surface. God did not rescue and redeem us from sin and death by the rough wood of the cross and the broken body of His Son so we would helplessly fall prey to the evil one. God did not send His Son--Emmanuel--so we would be alone! Emmanuel--God with us!

God with us, as we struggle through the persecutions of our world. God with us, as we battle in the trenches with the evil one. God with us, as we run the race and push forward to obtain the prize that awaits us. God with us. And, understand that God does not run from battle, He runs at it, right into it, right through it!

None of us knows what the ^{this year} New Year will bring. Employment or unemployment; Health or sickness; Promotion or demotion; Riches or rags; Worldly success or worldly defeat. None of us knows, but God promises that we do not face ^{the} ~~this new~~ year alone. He promises to be with us, by our side as we struggle through whatever challenge or difficulty ~~that~~ lies ahead. And, while it is often hard to discern the soft whisper in the midst of the turbulence, and, while it is hard to see what lies on the other side of this present darkness, God explains it very simply--one word--VICTORY!

Not a way out--a way through. A way through with a precious promise from St. Paul: We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength! In His Name. Amen.

All things!
A way through -- to VICTORY!

Apostles' Creed

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: #735 "Have No Fear Little Flock"

Benediction

Devotion/Bible Study #2

"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

Convention Hymn: #920 "Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go"

Patience...in the midst of suffering

Invocation:

Collect for Patience: O God, by the patience endurance of Your only-begotten Son You beat down the pride of the old enemy. Help us to treasure rightly in our hearts what our Lord has borne for our sakes that, after His example, we may bear with patience those things that are adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

"...but take heart;"

Text: Matthew 24: 42-44 "Waiting in Line"

--Haggai 2:1-9...waiting for the glory (the presence of the LORD)

--II Corinthians 12:7-10...Paul's thorn in the flesh

--patience in the midst of suffering...because...Christ is with us

--preparation

Some time ago, I was waiting in line at my bank. One thing about waiting in line--you are never alone! Unfortunately, you seldom have the choice as to who you are waiting with! As I stood in line waiting, the woman ahead of me was beside herself. She had waited too long--according to her schedule! She fidgeted, cranking her head from one side to the other searching for more tellers to get the show on the road. She almost demanded the loan officer become a teller. In fact, any warm body connected to the bank would do! I shudder to think what would have happened if the janitor had wandered by! The woman was all over the place and I was given the responsibility of holding her place in line--I didn't mind, it got her away from me! Finally, her turn came. She grumbled and complained all the way ~~up~~ to the counter--and, lo and behold, she was not ready! She had neglected to fill out her deposit slip. She had not endorsed her check. She did not even know how she wanted her funds directed! The teller would have made Saint Teresa proud--my thoughts would have made her blush! All that time and she was not ready!

There are many things we have to wait for. Wait in line at the bank--wait in the restaurant to be served--wait for payday--wait for the mail--wait in the doctor's office--wait for the garden to grow--wait for the rain to stop--wait for the pastor to get to the point. Waiting is not easy.

But...after waiting for a long time one would at least expect us to be ready when the time comes! Think about the people in the Old Testament as they waited and waited for God to fulfill His promise and send His Son into our world to fix the mess man had made out of creation. They waited and waited. They knew how much they needed this Messiah, this Promised One. They waited for thousands of years, and then...

Happy
2:11-9
No Glory
Glowd

It is hard to stay ready, and that is why Jesus encourages and warns His followers to stay ready. He knows how hard it will be. And the solution He gives is to stay busy. Just don't stand there waiting, make preparations. Spread the truth. Build the Kingdom. Be about the work of the Lord. Walk His path. As you do these things you will keep your edge! You will be ready when He comes. He will not find you unprepared!

Because...He is coming...ready or not! Those who were not ready for His first coming did not keep it from happening. Those who are not ready for the second coming will not slow it down either. So be ready! Be about the work of the Kingdom. Keep your hearts and minds focused on Jesus! Live in, walk in His mercy, love and grace. Because His words to us are...⁴²"Ready or not; Here I come!" In His name. Amen.

--come Lord Jesus quickly

--

Apostles' Creed

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: #516 "Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying"

Benediction

Devotion/Bible Study #3

"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

Convention Hymn: #920 "Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go"

Paradise

Invocation:

Collect in Times of Affliction and Distress: Almighty and most merciful God, in this earthly life we endure sufferings and death before we enter into eternal glory. Grant us grace at all times to subject ourselves to Your holy will and to continue steadfast in the true faith to the end of our lives that we may know the peace and joy of the blessed hope of the resurrection of the dead and of the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Collect of Hope of Eternal Life in Christ: Almighty, everlasting God, Your Son has assured forgiveness of sins and deliverance from eternal death. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that our faith in Christ may increase daily and that we may hold

fast to the hope that on the Last Day we shall be raised in glory to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: #731 "O God, Forsake me Not"

"...I have overcome the world."

Text: Zechariah 3:1-10; Revelation 7:9-15 "Clothes"

--Sackcloth and Ashes to White Robes of Righteousness...

--Garment Motif

Apostles' Creed

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

We do love our clothes do we not? It is no accident that there is one clothing store after another in the malls and shop after shop that offers one style of garment or the other scattered throughout the town. Can you imagine if there was only one clothing store selling only one style of clothing intended for all people? Such a thing would cause a rebellion. How would we express our individuality? How would we strut our stuff? How would we survive without our glad rags and pretty coverings? *Shoes & Jackets Polyester Suits*

Fig leaves
parable wedding garment
Isaiah
Filthy Rags
Pretty coverings...but what are we covering up? The coverings may be beautiful but what lurks beneath? The easy answer is that we are covering our nakedness because we are modest and proper, but is there more to it than this. In the Scriptures, coverings, garments and clothing that cover nakedness are in reality covering our shame. Adam and Eve partake of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden and they realize their nakedness. Suddenly, they know their sin and they are ashamed and they sew together fig leaves lest the LORD God see their shame, lest He discovers their sin when he walks through the Garden. It did not work. It was the wrong kind of garment.

We wear our beautiful clothes to hide our nakedness. We believe we can deceive God and He will not take note of our shame. We want to be responsible for and cover up our sin. It does not work. Our man-made garments are but filthy rags. And what they attempt to cover is even worse.

Joel
2:12-13
Our hearts are filled with sin and shame. If the desires of our hearts were laid bare for all to see we would indeed be ashamed. Evil thoughts, sexual desires, selfish wants, impure motives, jealousy, anger, envy drunkenness, strife, idolatry...need I go on? This is the condition of our hearts, of our inner being that we seek to hide, to cover with our man-made clothing. Yet, man is not able, not capable of hiding the truth from God. We may fool those around us and we may be fooled by those around us, but the LORD God sees the condition of all hearts.

- FIG LEAVES VS - ANIMAL SKINS
- ESAU + JACOB (garment to deceive / blood of goat)
- Joseph (Gen 37) (garment blood)
- ~~Benjamin~~ Judah + Tamar (Gen 38)
- Joseph (Gen 39)
- YOM KIPPUR (Day of Atonement)
 - Two goats (blood)
 - White Linen Garment

~~Zachariah~~

- ISAIAH (Filly Rags / Fig leaves / works Righteousness / PARABLE)
- garments of salvation + robes of Righteousness

Jesus: Swaddling clothes
Buried clothes

- Palm Sunday (crowds / garments)
- Great Reversal on CROSS: He is stripped so we might be clothed

- Revelation: White robes
- BAPTISM / FUNERAL RITE

www.lcef.org

**“The Power of Lutheran, Christ-centered (Higher) Education”
Minnesota North District Convention
May 10, 2022**

Introduction

Hi, I’m Brian Friedrich, and I have the privilege of serving as the 10th president of my alma mater, Concordia University, St. Paul. In fact, I’m a third generation alumnus of CSP. I come from a long line of pastors and church teachers—Christian education is in my blood. **SLIDE 2**

God has blessed me with callings to be a husband, father, and grandfather. He’s also called me to be a parish pastor, theology teacher, fundraising executive, and now university president for the past 18 years, 16 at Concordia Nebraska and the past two at CSP.

Part 1: Christian Education that empowers vocational living in two kingdoms

Today, I want to share with you the power of Christian education and what it means for all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ.

Thesis **SLIDE 3**

Christian education is powerful because, through it, the Holy Spirit equips us, the baptized, to live out our God-given vocations faithfully within God’s two kingdoms. And so, I will unpack what this means as we look

- at what education is,
- what Christian education is,
- what our vocations are, and
- how we live them out with a two kingdoms mindset
- And what Christian education looks like in the LCMS and at CSP

I hope by the end of our time together, you will be refreshed in the faith that’s been handed down to you in your own Christian education experiences, and see broadly how God uses Christian education to accomplish His purposes in our schools, congregations, and beyond.

What does the word “education” mean? **SLIDE 4**

Education is rooted in two similar sounding, but different-meaning Latin words. First is ***educare***, which means “to train or mold.” Second is ***educere***, which means “to draw out”.

I posit that education is described accurately by both root words. Christian education, at its core, is a training in righteousness and drawing out the gifts God has given, rooted in God’s Word.

Christian Education Flows from God’s Word **SLIDE 5**

Our Lutheran confessions lay out the power of God’s word. Luther writes:

“God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments.”

That is to say, God speaks through His Word and the sacraments. We don’t have to search elsewhere or have special knowledge or revelation to know who God is and what he has done for us in Christ.

In 2nd Timothy 3:16, Paul writes the following about God’s Word: **SLIDE 6**

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

SLIDE 7

As the source of Christian education, God’s word has power. In fact, our Lutheran confessions remind us that not only are the scriptures the source of this wisdom and knowledge, but that we can continually go back to them to ensure that what we are learning is in fact in accord with that truth. Again, Luther writes:

“The Holy Scriptures alone remain the judge, rule, and norm. According to them — as the only touchstone — all teachings shall

and must be discerned and judged to see whether they are good or evil, right or wrong.”

God’s Word is authoritative and has power in our lives, and we, the baptized, are lifelong learners who receive Christian education.

Education about the things of God is something that God’s people have been concerned about throughout history.

Religious Education in the Old Testament

Even before God’s people in the Old Testament had the written Torah, God spoke his word orally through Moses. We read this in Deuteronomy, beginning in chapter 5, where Moses hands down God’s law to the people of Israel. In chapter 6, we have the Great Shema: **SLIDE 8**

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

This telling and re-telling about God’s law to His chosen people is essential. As we read further in the Old Testament, we see that sinful people chose time and time again to not follow His law. However, God preserved a remnant that continued to heed the law and brought forth a savior, Jesus, to rescue from sin and make a right relationship with God and humanity. And what a wonderful gift that is to have Jesus—to teach Jesus to people!

Christian Education Comes from Christ **SLIDE 9**

Jesus was a teacher. Through his public teaching and in parables, he declared the arrival of God's kingdom through His life, death, and resurrection.

In Jesus, Paul writes, **“all things hold together.”** (Colossians 1:17)

Christian Education Flows from Baptism SLIDE 10

It is in Jesus' great commission that we see that Christian education flows from baptism. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** (didaskontes) them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

We baptize, and then we teach. And we teach people of all ages, of every tribe and nation. Christian education is for everyone!

Christian Education—Not Just for Children

Much of the time, when we consider Christian education, we think of children. Proverbs 22 says

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

We think of babies baptized, children attending Sunday school and Christian day schools, families teaching the catechism, having devotions and praying together. However, we know sadly that not all children who are brought up in the faith continue in it. At the same time, we rejoice in the fact that there are many of us whose faith in Jesus has only grown throughout our lives because of Christian education.

And, no matter our age or stage of life, we keep learning and we keep growing. Paul says it this way in Colossians 2: **SLIDE 11**

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

Christian education ought not stop because we have reached confirmation, or stopped our formal schooling; no, we continue learning and growing as baptized children of God until we are brought to our heavenly rest, where we await the resurrection.

In our baptismal liturgy, we confess the words of the Apostles’ Creed. Christian education, flowing from baptism, is creedal. We learn and grow in our understanding of the work of each person of the Trinity—the Father who creates and sustains life, the Son who redeems us and saves from sin, and the Spirit who creates saving faith and sanctifies us.

Christian Education is Confessional and Missional SLIDE 12

A Christian education that is creedal is one that is confessional; that is, it is concerned with what we believe, teach and confess. What we teach matters because we know this world teaches all sorts of messages contrary to God’s Word. God’s Word is clear and direct, and we confess this through our educational endeavors.

Christian education is also a missional endeavor. The Great Commission, we see Jesus’ heart for the mission to make disciples of all nations. Catechizing people in God’s Word has power because that’s the means by which the Spirit works to create saving faith. Paul writes this in Romans 10:

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

Therefore, Christian education must also be directed to those who do not yet know Christ as well as those who do know Christ.

Where does Christian education happen? It starts in the home. SLIDE 13

Now that we've talked about the foundation and the importance of Christian education, let's talk about the how and where it happens. Just as in Deuteronomy 6, which we read earlier, Christian education begins at home with parents and children, siblings and even grandparents.

How important it is for each of us to have our own personal time to read and study Scripture, and spend time meditating on it each day. As the Psalmist says: **"but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:2).** It is essential for our families to do the same through scripture reading and family devotions. God's word is readily available to us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," as Anglican priest Thomas Cranmer wrote in the Book of Common Prayer.

Martin Luther intended his Small Catechism as a home teaching tool about the chief parts of Christian doctrine. The Catechism is a wonderful gift to the church to have the basics of the Christian faith spelled out in such a way that families can together learn life-giving doctrine.

STORY: HYMN SINGING WITH MOM AND MEMORY WORK WITH DAD

Christian Education in the Church SLIDE 14

Christian education also happens in the congregation. Here, we have the divine service, where we receive forgiveness, learn from God's word as it is read and preached, and partake in the sacrament of the altar.

Many churches hold Sunday School classes to help our children learn about Jesus. We have confirmation for our middle schoolers to continue their growth as they prepare to make a public profession of their faith and affirm their baptismal promises. We hold Bible studies throughout the week

in the church and in homes for adults to continue their growth as followers of Jesus. And finally, within the church, we have what Martin Luther calls the “mutual conversation and consolation of brethren.” That is to say, each one of us who belongs to Jesus has the opportunity and ability to speak the Gospel and teach fellow believers as we have opportunity within conversations.

Christian Education in Christian Schools SLIDE 15

We are also blessed within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to have a tremendous Christian educational system, second in size only to the Roman Catholic Church, that spans from birth to graduate school. In our early childhood centers and preschool classrooms, young children learn about Jesus as they learn skills that prepare them for grade school. In our grade and high school classrooms, children and young adults learn about Jesus alongside reading, writing, and arithmetic.

At our Concordia universities, students are prepared for fulltime ministry within the church as well as those called to use their gifts in various other vocations.

And finally, we have our two seminaries in Ft. Wayne and St. Louis, which prepare men for the pastoral ministry and women for ministry as deaconesses, as well as others pursuing advanced theological degrees.

What a gift it is to be surrounded by opportunities for Christian education in our lives and within our church body!

Christian Education Empowers Christian Vocation

As I explained earlier in my presentation, education is rooted in two similar sounding, but different-meaning Latin words. *Educare*, which means “to train or mold,” and *educere*, which means “to draw out”.

Much of what I’ve described to this point about Christian education would seem to align well with that first definition, “to train or mold.” In Christian

education, we are trained and molded as disciples of Jesus. But, I believe the second root word *educere* is equally as relevant.

You see, Christian education draws out our vocations as baptized Christians as we are trained and molded in the Christian faith. As you well know, Luther wrote and taught that each baptized Christian has a vocation. Lutheran scholar and author Gene Veith lays out practically where and how we live out our vocations. **SLIDE 16**

He says, “all Christians are called by God to live faithfully in three arenas, the household, the Church, and the state, in which all Christians are to live out their priesthood as believers by offering up their lives as living sacrifices to God.”

We Serve in Our Vocations **SLIDE 17**

Each one of us has God-given roles and responsibilities in the home, the church, and as citizens. When we live out our vocations, we do so out of the freedom we have in the Gospel. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Galatia, wrote the following:

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.””

Martin Luther echoed Paul’s sentiments in his work *On the Freedom of a Christian*, saying: **SLIDE 18**

"A Christian man is the most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."

As people who have received God’s free gift of grace in Jesus, we live out our vocations in service to others. Martin Luther wrote that

“God doesn’t need your good works but your neighbor does.”

Our Vocations Work Together

The beauty of serving others through Christian vocation is that God created our individual vocations to work together in harmony. Consider what Paul wrote in his first letter to the church in Corinth about how the body of Christ works together: **SLIDE 19**

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

We live out our vocations in the context of community with other believers, and our vocations exist for the sake of others. And it is Christian education that can help us discover, develop, and live out our vocations freely and fully.

How does Christian Education Empower our Vocations? Examples

SLIDE 20

Let’s look at a few examples of how Christian education can help us in our vocations:

A pastor may lead a class that prepares parents to teach the catechism to their children so that they may be more effective teachers of the faith in their own homes.

Through their experiences in a Christian day school or youth ministry, a student might decide to pursue a vocation as a pastor, teacher or Director of Christian Education.

After attending a Bible study that covered a variety of social issues, a couple decided that they would begin a pro-life ministry to expectant mothers in their community.

A person, who was in the midst of a career transition, decided to attend one of our Concordias to pursue a career in accounting, and also found their faith in Jesus strengthened as they attended chapel and theology classes, and saw more clearly how God could use their gifts to serve others as a CPA.

By engaging in Christian education, each of us is molded and shaped as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of who Jesus is, what He has done for us, and then our vocations are drawn out as we use our God-given gifts in service to others.

Living out Vocations in Two Kingdoms

As we live out our vocations, we do so in both the left-hand civil kingdom, and the right-hand spiritual kingdom. Dr. Samuel Deressa, assistant professor religion and theology at CSP, recently wrote an article in the Lutheran Theological Journal titled Luther's Two Kingdom Theology and Christian Education. In it, he lays out the importance of properly understanding and applying Luther's two kingdom theology in terms of Christian education.

Deressa summarizes two kingdom theology this way: **SLIDE 21**

“The spiritual realm is concerned with faith and God’s redemptive work 'to bring the world forward to the final perfection summed up in Christ', and the temporal realm is established for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing creative work of God 'to promote what is good for human life in all its personal, [economic, political], and social dimensions”

Confusing the Two Kingdoms

Deressa notes that when these realms are confused or imposed upon each other, harm is done to our understanding of the doctrine and how they are related and work together to foster God's rule. He writes,

“This problem has continued to shape our imagination not only in how we understand the relationship between church and state but also the role of Christian education in today's context.”

What can end up happening when these realms are confused or completely disjointed is that our understanding of Christian education can become warped. We can begin to view Christian education as simply for church workers or as an activity that only interacts with the spiritual realm. Therefore, any endeavor in quote-unquote “secular” education, like reading, writing, and arithmetic, would have no place in Christian education.

Christian Education is Vital in Both Kingdoms

However, we know this to be untrue! As my colleague Dr. Deressa notes,

“...the two kingdoms are complementary and interrelated realms of life...Christian education plays a vital role in preparing students for better service in both realms.”

Our understanding of the two kingdoms means that Christians can faithfully live out their callings as citizens of both kingdoms, and Christian education is the primary means of equipping Christians to live these callings out.

The Spiritual Realm SLIDE 22

In the spiritual realm, God calls men into the office of the holy ministry and men and women in service to the church as teachers, directors of Christian education and outreach, deaconesses, and other offices to teach and build up the body of Christ. He calls all of his people to gather with fellow believers and receive his gifts of word and sacrament as they continually grow in their faith. The Holy Spirit gifts each believer with spiritual gifts that they use to build up the body of Christ.

As Christians are equipped within the spiritual realm, they are also prepared to live as followers of Jesus within the civil realm.

The Civil Realm SLIDE 23

In Psalm 24, King David writes

“The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein...”

Because the Earth is the Lord's, we know that things we may label as “secular,” like reading, writing, and arithmetic, are actually part of God's creative order and his rule within the civil realm.

God establishes governments which can provide civic structures that enhance the welfare of people. God gives us verbal and written language as means of communication with one another. God gives us science that allows us to understand how gravity works, how cells divide, and how medicines can help our bodies. God gives us mathematics, which provides order and allows us to determine and prove abstract concepts.

In this civil realm, God calls people into vocations and gives them wisdom and understanding to use their skills in service to their neighbors. By having a holistic understanding of Christian vocation within two kingdoms, Christian education is a necessary endeavor at all places and times. It makes an eternal difference.

Conclusion to Part 1

Christian education is for each and every one of us. Because Jesus lived, died, and rose for each of us, we are molded and shaped to live out the vocations God calls us to live out within these two kingdoms. That is truly powerful!

Christian Education in the LCMS and at CSP

I'd like to now explore how Christian education plays out for us at Concordia University St. Paul, in the broader context of the history of education within the LCMS.

LCMS Founding/First Schooling SLIDE 24

The year is 1838. After years of persecution in Germany and failed attempts by the state to force the merging of Lutheran and Reformed churches, a group of Confessional Lutherans from Saxony began an emigration journey to America. A total of five ships carrying 700 men, women, and children departed from Bremen, Germany in September on their way to New Orleans.

It's recorded in the diary of teacher candidate Johann Friedrich Buenger that he educated about 110 school aged children during the journey to America. As an aside, teacher Buenger was the uncle of Concordia St. Paul's first professor and president, Theodore Buenger.

Sadly, along this journey to America, one ship called Amalia was lost at sea, and 70 men, women and children were called to heaven. The remaining 600-plus Saxons landed in New Orleans in January 1839. From there, they took steamboats north to St. Louis. After about six weeks, all but 120 of the Saxons moved south to Perry County. In both locations, the Saxons promptly opened up schools, including the predecessor of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Walther Advocates for Christian Education

CFW Walther, first president of the LCMS, was a strong advocate for Christian education. In 1859, he wrote the following:

“The Church as well as the State is in need of wise, skillful, and cultured people, well informed and experienced in all matters, who are at the same time Christians, to whom one can entrust an important position, and from whom good advice can be obtained; is it not, therefore, your parental duty to figure on leaving children behind who can be used by State and Church,

able to serve as officers of the congregation, secretaries, treasurers, justices, postmasters, and representative of the people in the Legislature and the Congress, etc.?”

Walther's understanding of Christian education and advocacy for it were undoubtedly key in driving the growth and influence of education within the LCMS. In 1873, he wrote this:

“Humanly speaking, everything depends on [parochial schools] for the future of our church in America.”

The Growth of Lutheran Schools SLIDE 25

Starting with the 1839 establishment of schools in Perry County and St. Louis, the educational system within the LCMS expanded greatly. In fact, by the time the LCMS was formally established in 1847, the 12 organizing congregations operated 14 schools. Between 1839 and 1893, the LCMS established formal secondary and post-secondary schools to train pastors and/or teachers in cities like St. Louis, Ft. Wayne, Milwaukee, Springfield and Addison.

The Founding of CSP SLIDE 26

As the LCMS expanded its work and congregations and schools sprung up in Minnesota and the Dakotas, a concerted effort began for a new school to train pastors and teachers in the Twin Cities. The efforts were spearheaded by Concordia Seminary President Francis Pieper, and Minnesota-Dakota District President Friedrich Pfotenhauer, both of whom would later serve as president of the LCMS.

Pieper and Pfotenhauer both saw the need for a new school of the church that would prepare future pastors and teachers, but also serve laymen that were not called into professional ministry.

The men brought this request to the 1893 synodical convention, which approved the pre-seminary programs, but declined to include a track for

laymen. So, a mere four months later, Concordia St. Paul held its first classes.

CSP's Early Years

Originally, Concordia served young men for the first three years of their high school education before they would matriculate to finish their education at one of the other teacher's colleges or seminaries. In 1902, the fourth year of high school was added, and in 1905 the first two years of college—known as the junior college—were added.

Thus, Concordia St. Paul was officially a six year institution modeled after the German gymnasium. After attending Concordia, graduates who desired to become a pastor would attend the seminary, and those who wished to become a teacher would attend a teacher's college. This model would remain in place until 1950 as Concordia grew along with the LCMS.

CSP Grows Beginning in the 1950s Starting with Women SLIDE 27

In 1950, a major change occurred as Concordia admitted women to the college for the first time. These pioneers would take classes in the Lutheran teacher program for two years before matriculating to one of the teacher's colleges. In 1964, the first women would receive their bachelor's degrees in a four-year teacher ed. program.

CSP Adds Liberal Arts and Spins High School Off

Additionally, Concordia began to expand its liberal arts offerings in the 1960s, allowing students who did not wish to pursue a professional vocation within the church to attend a Lutheran college while pursuing their unique callings. Meanwhile, the high school was spun to become Concordia Academy in Roseville.

MTEPS Expands Diversity of Student Body

Another shift in Concordia's offerings came in 1968 as Concordia established the Metropolitan Teacher Education Program (M-TEPS), which

recruited African American and Native American students to the college to receive their teaching degrees and begin careers in increasingly diverse schools in the Twin Cities.

In the late 60s, Concordia explored a move away from its campus in St. Paul, but decided to recommit to the city. What marvelous foresight our leaders had to remain a part of a vibrant neighborhood in St. Paul.

Upheaval in LCMS and Decline in Church Work

The 1970s marked a time of upheaval in the LCMS as the synodical controversy boiled over, and alongside of that, church work student enrollment began to decline at CSP and our sister schools after the Vietnam War ended. By the late 1970s, church work enrollment became less than half of CSP's overall enrollment. At the same time, synodical financial support for its Concordia colleges declined precipitously from its peak in the 1940s.

CSAL Begins Serving Students

Amidst turmoil and change, CSP continued steadfast in its commitment to providing quality Christian higher education to students. One of CSP's most significant moves came in 1985 with the launch of the Concordia School of Adult Learning, also known as CSAL (kuh-sal).

CSAL was a pioneering program for working professionals who did not possess a bachelor's degree yet desired to earn their degree without having to become a full-time traditional student. Thus, the model of cohort and distance learning programs became a part of CSP's DNA. Because of this new opportunity, enrollment at CSP topped 1,000 students for the first time in 1987.

This cohort distance learning model was further expanded in the 1990s as a master's degree program was added to CSAL.

Move to Division II

In 1999, CSP moved to NCAA Division II for athletics, which opened up new opportunities for Concordia to grow and serve more students through Christian education. These changes allowed CSP to faithfully continue its growth trajectory as the new millennium approached.

Challenges and Opportunities in the New Millennium

CSP continued its steady growth in the first decade of the 2000s, especially in the adult undergraduate and graduate student populations.

Early in the new millennium, financial support from the LCMS for the Concordias went to zero. At the same time, increasing costs of a college education raised necessary alarm bells for many students and their families. Rapid demographic shifts were underway, and projections showed even more changes on the near horizon. Overall, amidst much upheaval, it became clear that change was needed to continue CSP's Christ-centered Lutheran mission into the 21st century. Change not to the mission or confession of the university, but in how we do business.

SLIDE 28

2013 Tuition Reset

Because of strong stewardship of financial resources and generous support from donors and alumni, CSP announced in fall 2012 that beginning the fall of 2013, tuition for traditional undergraduate students would be slashed \$10,000 across the board, resulting in the majority of students paying less out of pocket than with the previous paradigm of high tuition and high discount rates.

Rapid Growth and First Doctoral Program

Along with the tuition reset, CSP expanded its graduate program offerings, including our first doctoral program, which was in physical therapy. These changes ushered in rapid growth in our student population. We reached 3,000, 4,000, and 5,000 student milestones between 2013 and 2018.

Portland Incorporation

In 2020, with the announced closure of our sister school in Portland, CSP moved to incorporate Portland's on-ground nursing program into our own, adding its students, faculty, and two academic spaces into our footprint.

CSP Today SLIDE 29

CSP today is now one of the most diverse, second largest, and most affordable of private universities in Minnesota. We have the second largest nursing program in the state of Oregon. CSP is the most affordable of the six Concordia University System schools. We are highly ranked as a university that ensures students are career-ready, especially those who are first-generation college students. With more than 100 degree programs that span from associates to doctoral degrees, Concordia St. Paul is committed to be a premier university for the Church and the World.

Christ-Centered Amidst Changes SLIDE 30

Amidst all of the growth and changes, CSP continues to be a Christ-centered Lutheran university. We are still committed to training and equipping our students who are called into professional church vocations.

Lutheran Identity: Reed Lessing & Center for Biblical Studies

To lift up our Lutheran identity even further, we've invested significant resources. First, we called the Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing, renowned Old Testament scholar, to our theology faculty. Along with his teaching load, Dr. Lessing leads our Center for Biblical Studies, which coordinates workshops and continuing education opportunities for church workers and lay people alike. I know there are many in this room who have attended one of Dr. Lessing's recent workshops.

Lutheran Identity: Church Work Guarantee

Second, in light of synod's *Set Apart to Serve* initiative, CSP has significantly reduced the cost for students who are called into church vocations. Beginning last fall, tuition for church work students has been capped at a maximum of \$6,000 per academic year for a students' length

of study. This amount decreases further with scholarships from a student's congregation and LCMS district.

Beginning this coming fall, tuition for pre-seminary and pre-deaconess students will be \$0. I praise God for the generosity of the donors who have made this possible for the sake of the church and the spread of the Gospel in our world that so desperately needs to hear the good news of Jesus.

Why are We Lutheran? SLIDE 31

And this good news of Jesus is what it is all about. We are Lutheran because Martin Luther points us to Jesus Christ as the only savior of the world. And Jesus Christ points us to the world to which we are called to serve in our various vocations.

In his essay, "Lutheran Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century," Mark Schwehn explains what it means to be a Lutheran university. He writes,

"One must always operate with one eye on the God who loves the world and the other on the world that God loves. The more firmly for the Lutheran that the eye of faith rests upon God, the more fervently the eye of reason can acknowledge, celebrate, and seek to advance the best of secular learning and the best of university life."

Therefore, rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, Christian higher education, like that at CSP, seeks to provide the best of learning for both God's spiritual realm and God's civil realm.

CSP Prepares for Two Kingdoms

Christian education at CSP seeks to prepare students to live and serve in both kingdoms, regardless of their callings. In the civil realm, CSP provides educational opportunities that enable students to become proficient in their chosen career fields, to grow a heart for service to God and humanity, and to care for God's creation.

Required Theology Classes

All our undergraduate students, regardless of major or program, are required to take theology classes as part of the general education curriculum. That means that those who know Jesus and those who don't both open the scriptures and learn about God's love for them in Christ.

Preparing Church Workers through Liberal Arts

In the spiritual realm, we seek to remain faithful to the scriptures and Lutheran confessions in our theology and practice. Because it takes a church to raise up a church worker, we work diligently to prepare those who will serve as pastors, deaconesses, DCEs, DCOs, DPMs, and Lutheran classroom teachers. Because of our strong liberal arts curriculum, these church workers have a well-rounded educational background that helps them connect across disciplines as they serve God's people in parishes, schools, and beyond.

The Christian education we do here at CSP is powerful because, rooted in Christ, it prepares our students to live out their vocations in God's two kingdoms.

Challenges and Opportunities

Doing this work of Christian education means that we will encounter challenges, yet have countless opportunities before us. With prayerful humility, we realize that we rely on God's grace and ultimately trust Him to lead and guide our university.

Challenge: LCMS Aging and Decline SLIDE 32

We know that the challenges that lie before us are many. I'd like to highlight a few. Political Science professor and baptist pastor Ryan Burge has done extensive research on the religious demographics. Recently, he published findings that revealed that the median age of people who identify as LCMS are the oldest of any religious or non-religious group in the US at 58.3 years old. Wow. The aging population of those who identify as LCMS, as well as the fewer number of people in our beloved denomination, challenge us greatly. We have less and less of a pool of people to draw from within

our church body, both those who could be our students, as well as those who could serve on our faculty and staff.

Challenge: Financial Considerations

Financial challenges abound for colleges and universities. First, that comes through operating. We know cost is the #1 determinant for where students decide to attend and if they are able to stay until graduation. Much has been written and said about the cost of attending a college or university and student debt levels, and CSP must remain sensitive to cost and continue to push for greater affordability for our students, including those who are called to serve the church.

Opportunity: Gospel-Centeredness SLIDE 33

But, despite these challenges and many more, opportunities abound and we have hope. As a Christ-centered Lutheran university, we have the privilege and countless opportunities to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in a polarized and fractured culture. I'm reminded of a student named Sterling, who through his experience with us, heard the gospel and the Holy Spirit created faith in his heart, culminating in his baptism by Dr. Mark Koschmann last winter.

Opportunity: The World Has Come to Us

We know that numerous opportunities abound to touch the world's people right here in St. Paul and Portland as well. This past semester, we had 284 international students studying with us in-person and online. What a gift it is that not only has the world come to our campuses, but that we are nestled in a diverse community that represents peoples and languages from around the world whom we get to share Jesus with.

Opportunity: Make an Impact for Generations to Come

Finally, what we do at CSP impacts generations. Serving students with Christian education means that faith is handed down and multiplied in the

lives of those who hear the Gospel. Students who come from underprivileged backgrounds are given new opportunities to build generational wealth and provide unimagined opportunities for their children and grandchildren. What we do at CSP impacts people into eternity itself. What a gift and privilege it is to serve at such a university!

The Power of a CSP Education: Preparing for Vocations in Two Kingdoms **SLIDE 34**

The power of Lutheran Christ-centered education, in our homes, congregations, schools, and universities, is that grounded in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we teach and mold people and draw out of them the vocations God has called them to live out in His two kingdoms.

This task of Christian education is not easy, but it is worth it.

Confession and Mission

As we teach and confess the faith that is in accord with God's Word of law and gospel and with our Lutheran confessions, we also reach out to this world that is so desperate for good news to bring the hope, healing, and peace that only Jesus brings.

Grounded in the Word and Prayer

Grounded in God's Word and prayer, we humble ourselves and rely on God to bear fruit through our teaching.

Faithful Stewardship

Through faithful stewardship of all of God's gifts, we seek to use our resources in ways that multiply these gifts and not bury them in the ground.

Serving as Jesus Served

Despite all of the changes and chaos in our culture that creates polarization and discord, we seek to live out our Christian freedom in love and service to others,

"...wise as serpents and innocent as doves..."

Conclusion

May God bless each one of us as we ourselves continue to be learners who are shaped and molded by the One who created us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us. May we live out our vocations with joy in the places God calls us, and in the kingdoms in which He rules, knowing that in Jesus, all things hold together.

I am humbled and honored to be here with the Saints of the Minnesota North District. It truly is an honor. You have provided us with so many stellar faithful Lutheran Pastors to serve in the military Chaplaincy. Thank you. I also bring greetings from all of our chaplains and their families serving all over the world. Thank you for your prayers and financial support. You are a blessing to this vital ministry.

Military chaplaincy is in the middle of an organization which is the “profession of arms” ...to win our nations wars...to seek and destroy the enemy with shock and awe. In sum, to break things and kill people. These are the Warriors and their families that we are called to serve...to bring the Gospel of peace to them where there seems to be no peace.

How do confessional Lutheran Pastors serve those who selflessly serve our Nation in uniform with the Peace of God? The answer is it is great to be “Lutheran.” Our Lutheran theology taken directly from the Scriptures consistently gives us guidance as we navigate this ministry working in both kingdoms. Thus, the number one helpful doctrine for our chaplains is the “Two-Kingdoms.” Our chaplains wear those kingdoms on their uniform. They wear the “cross” to show they represent their Religious Organization (RO) which is LCMS for us and then the other device they must wear on their uniform is their rank insignia (showing that they also are part of the military and subject to all rules and regulations). Thus, the two kingdoms. They are called and ordained servants of Christ (Pastor/Chaplain), but also subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) as military officers.

Chaplain Bell in his video you just saw, gave a great summary of what we do and how we navigate as LCMS Chaplains. We use the Navy’s explanation of the five Capabilities. They are provide, facilitate, care and advise.

First is to provide. LCMS Chaplains are Called by God via the Board for International Mission to serve as the “Called and Ordained Servant of Christ” to the military. Thus, they provide Word the word to all their personnel who are Christian, the Lord’s Supper to our LCMS personnel and their families (those who are catechized), and Baptism to all in need. Our Chaplains do lead “Protestant” worship services, when they are the only chaplain in the chancel and leading without the Lord’s Supper. They practice and uphold our Altar and Pulpit fellowship doctrine. (They “provide” the Lord’s Supper to the LCMS folks they encounter and round up). They provide prayers and bible studies. They provide pastoral counseling.

Secondly, they facilitate for others. This is where our understanding of the two kingdoms helps us understand and navigate this capability. Our chaplains must facilitate of the “free exercise of religion” for all their personnel (regardless of their faith or no faith). That is the role in as they serve in the kingdom of the left. They are military officers and are bound to protect the God-given and Constitutionally protected right to exercise their faith. The chaplain is not expected to compromise who he is or the tenants of his faith, or his ordination or confirmation vows. They are strictly charged to provide mercy and care to all their personnel and their families. That is what is expected of them by their leadership and our Nation. So, if a Roman Catholic Marine wants to see a Priest, it is the duty and responsibility for our LCMS Chaplain to facilitate that. Either bring a Priest to the young Marine and/or get transportation for the young Marine to see the Priest. Same goes for LDS, Muslim, Jewish...not expected to compromise, but we are to facilitate the opportunity for them to exercise their freedom of religion. The old adage is still supported in the military, “cooperate without compromise.”

Thirdly, they care for all. This means that they will have those in their charge who are not religious at all, may even be atheist or agnostic, but come to the Chaplain for counsel and support. The military has done a marvelous thing by ensuring the conversations between the chaplain and the service member are absolutely

confidential. Thus, they have one safe place to go and seek advice, confess, counsel or just figure out life without fear of reprisals. Our Chaplains willingly provide mercy and love to all their personnel, regardless of their faith or no faith. It is in that private conversation that they provide wise counsel, show mercy and if God opens the door, to provide witness and the Gospel of Peace.

Finally, they provide advisement to their leadership and the command. It is lonely at the top. The Chaplain is the special staff officer who has the privilege and opportunity to privately speak to the Commander/Leadership and provide advice as needed. The leadership appreciates that pastoral care and ethical support. We need to be at the table, or we will be on the menu.

Those four capabilities give the background for us to do a deep dive into the theme of your convention and “forth in the peace of Christ, we GO!

I am to present a few thoughts on this topic of “peace” in a world where there seems to be “no peace.” People are clamoring for “World Peace”, Peace in our streets, peace in our homes, peace in our congregations, peace in our own private thoughts/minds....

We see the war in Ukraine and the threats of war all around us. We are still seeing the threats on Taiwan from China. We have North Korea lurking around. We still have terrorists who seek to kill. We see troops are equipped with tanks, armored personnel carriers, machine guns, and there will likely be fighting and violence and bloodshed. Why is this happening? Why the fighting and violence and bloodshed?

It may seem strange to connect battle and violence with peace; but I would suggest to you that the two are not opposed. It is the nature of sin and evil to spread unless they are purposely stopped. Criminals will continue to commit crimes until the authorities arrest and prosecute them. A rotten apple will bring decay to the rest of the barrel unless one removes it. Children will push the limits and disobey until parents put a stop to the behavior. Cancer will spread and kill unless it is excised.

Tyrants seek to strengthen and expand their domain until they are stopped. That is simply the nature of evil. Therefore, peace comes at a price - courts and prisons, apple barrel maintenance, time-out chairs, chemotherapy and sometimes military action. Peace doesn't naturally happen because sin and death are part of nature now. Peace comes at a cost.

We often hear today that peace is achieved through inaction and the laying down of arms, but there is no historical precedent that proves this to be true. Quite the opposite: One of the greatest eras of peace was the Pax Romana, literally the "Peace of Rome." This was the time of the New Testament, when the Roman Empire enjoyed its hay day.

We hear much of the brutality of the Romans, how they subjected many a troublemaker to scourging or crucifixion. The message to the people was clear: Don't cause trouble, or this will happen to you, too. Wrongdoers will pay a violent price for their wrongdoing.

Reminds me of when I took my parents to see the movie about the Apostle Paul...long time since they had been in a nice theater, so we got some popcorn, beer and got all settled and then the movie began with the opening scene where Christians and others were hung on poles and then lit on fire (like lamp posts) to provide light. Wow! We weren't ready for that and sort of gave us guilt as we sat there in our comfortable situation. Pure evil was displayed and helped to hit home with the graphic movies.

On the other hand, that same fearful code of justice made towns much more livable and crime-free. It enabled people to focus upon education, invention and discovery. It also made travel secure against bandits, which - among other things - would enable the apostles to travel safely and declare the Gospel.

The time was called the "Peace of Rome;" but the people who lived within were well aware that peace came at a cost, sometimes a violent cost. The historical record is filled with tyrants, dictators, barbarians, even Church leaders who tried to keep Peace by brutally killing and imprisoning anyone who didn't see true "peace" as defined by them.

In John 20, the disciples are also aware that Roman law could be abused. Supposedly for the sake of peace, Pontius Pilate has ordered the innocent Jesus crucified in order to appease a mob that might have rioted; thus, Jesus was unjustly crucified. The actions of Pilate were reprehensible, and likewise shameful were the cries of the crowds. Of course, the ten disciples have nothing to boast about. When Jesus was arrested, they abandoned Him and ran away. They denied Him. They proved their faithlessness toward Him, leaving Him alone to suffer that unjust death. Now, they're hiding a room for fear of the Jews:

In following Jesus, it appears that they bet on the wrong horse. They've heard from the women that He's risen from the dead; and though they've given it some thought, they doubt the news from the angels. So there they are, locked in a room and terrified. If the mob thought it would be helpful to kill Jesus for the sake of peace, it's only logical to assume that killing His disciples will further the peace even more. Things do not look good for the disciples.

We as Christians understand the Two kingdoms, the Two Realms and each realm is striving for Peace (many define what "Peace" looks like in their own way. Some do confuse the two and think "Peace on earth will lead to Peace in heaven (Peace with your neighbor, will lead to Peace with God).

Now, it is true that Jesus told us the two greatest commandments were to Love God with all our Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength and to Love your neighbor as yourself... I argue that with that Agape (self-sacrificial love) the true Peace with God and with our neighbor is the result of such love.

The Two Kingdoms: That is the world I live in every day along with all our military chaplains. They are the ones who brings the gifts of God into this confused, dangerous, pluralistic environment that is striving for the "earthly peace" through strength...which will mean "kill people and break things." How do we as Christians serve our neighbors who selflessly serve our Nation and wear the uniform of our Nation (and their families) and bring them the Gospel where they can find true Peace on earth and with God?

The first step for any good Warrior is you really have to understand and know your enemy. You have to know your enemy and the battlefield. You need an assessment of what you are up against. Thus, being prepared is always on the minds of our men and women serving so faithfully in our armed forces. There is not a day that goes by that they are not ready or training to be more ready. They have to be ready at a moment's notice to answer the call.

Once the alarm sounds, they don't have time to "get ready" ...they need to "be ready." And to "be ready" they train, train, and train some more. They train as they would fight. Our military leaders continue to lead in ensuring our personnel are ready for combat. The institution gets them physically and mentally prepared to make a defense of our country.... for the hope of freedom and peace.

The Navy SEAL motto is “the only easy day was yesterday.” It is all about preparation and being ready to win our nation’s battles. Abraham Lincoln once said, “Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe. “Preparation and being ready are critical in any planning, but especially in planning a defense. It is important to be reminded that we truly are living in the Church Militant. We are present in a world where we are in a war with the devil, the world and our sinful nature.

So, I ask the question: “Are you ready to step in the gap and go forth with the peace of Christ..fight for Peace?” Are you ready for the battles and sufferings that you face every day? What is your plan to sustain you on the battlefield of suffering and chaos (no peace)? How will you endure? What is your hope and confidence as you go forth in this life where there seems to be no peace?

We can’t kid ourselves. We do live in a sin-sick world, surrounded by evil. In America we may not yet be hauled out of our churches, our homes, or our businesses by evil men, who put us on our knees with a gun or sword at our head and yell the words. “Renounce Jesus or die!”

Yet, we know that in other parts of the world, this is happening even today. Christians are being executed and martyred daily for their faith. Here in our country, people are losing their jobs or positions for giving a defense of the faith and speaking out against issues that go contrary to the Word of God. We are being told to keep our religion in the church and out of the public square. Oh yes, they tell you that you have freedom to worship in your church, but don’t bring it out into the public. Hang your personal faith at the door on the way out of your house or church and don’t bring into the public.

One of the biggest challenges we face in the military as well as in America is the Suicides. I don’t think we will know (Or maybe even be truly honest) with the number of suicides that occurred during this pandemic, through the isolations and the fact we cut off people from the true medicine of hope they need from their Pastors and family members. The opportunities to proclaim the “Peace of God” to them through the Gospel of Jesus Christ were lost.

I think the same is for our military personnel and veterans. The latest statistic is the 20 veterans a day, kill themselves... The Military claims to “Get after it” year after year with Suicide Awareness/Prevention programs, (And they indeed help mitigate it, I am sure). However, there are forces among us who won’t allow the Chaplain who conducts the training to present the true lifeline our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and Coastguardsmen need.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ. How can there be “peace” for someone who is suffering under the guilt and shame of the devil’s lies and theirs sins, without Christ and Him crucified being shared with them. How can they know of forgiveness, unless it is proclaimed to them? That no matter the guilt, shame, sin, sickness, trials that assail them. They have peace with God, because Jesus who knew no sin, became sin for us and died to save them from sin, death and hell. There is hope and peace in Christ and it can’t be found within ourselves.

How often have we “given in” and stood by quietly in a discussion in the public square about cultural issues and didn’t speak out. Did you remain silent because you simply didn’t want to be labeled a “bigot”, or judgmental, or narrow-minded, or the proponent of “hate speech.”

We don’t want to suffer for what we believe. We want to be “liked” and “accepted.” We want “Peace” without a cost to me personally. No, it is not easy to stand strong in the Lord and fight for true Peace.

Or you may be saying, “Come on Chaplain...I am in the middle of a war right now with an illness, disease, broken relationship, guilt, depression, addiction. I know what war looks like spiritually as well as physically” I have tried everything I can to fight...to win...to find Peace, yet the pain continues, and I am stricken, smitten and= afflicted and have no peace!

That is where Paul in Ephesians 6 drives this point home using military language to remind us that we are in the Church militant. There are forces who do not want Peace with God or with our neighbor. In that passage, Paul reminds us that can find our peace, our fortress, our help, our comfort, our armor in God alone... It is *not* within us. We can't stand and fight alone. There is no Peace apart from Christ.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

The Holy Spirit calls us, gathers us, enlightens us, keeps us in the faith. We don't stand a chance against our enemy, the devil without the gift of the Holy Spirit. The devil will find a chink in our armor and again bring us to despair and hopelessness. Even in physical war, we can give our troops the best equipment possible to protect them, yet day after day, we see our troops killed in combat despite the heavy armor they are wearing. I remember the very first night of my second deployment to Iraq when I arrived at Al Asad Air Base, we fell under a rocket attack.

We all had on all the body armor that money could buy, we had the best “up-armored” vehicles we could have and still after that attack we lost a couple of Marines. Despite wearing all their personal protective gear/armor, they were killed by shrapnel which found a weakness/chink in the armor. We lost Marines who were shot or blown up despite all their training, all their combat gear...their armor. The enemy found chinks in the armor. There was no complete peace in the earthly armor provided.

My friends the devil will do the same to us. He knows the chink in your armor and your weaknesses. He will attack and attack where you are most vulnerable. He knows the chink in your armor that will make you feel guilty, shamed, or succumb to temptation.

All which destroys true Peace with God and with your neighbor. The ultimate goal of our enemy the devil and his evil schemes is to get you to hell with him and never let you experience true Peace, the Peace of God which passes all understanding, not just human understanding. He wants you to doubt the Word of God. He wants you to doubt the promises of God. He wants you to lose all hope in Jesus and fall into hopelessness and despair. Look around and we see so many examples of his victories, suicides, murder, civil unrest, war, etc.

The ultimate goal through all that sin and chaos is to get us to be separated from our Lord Jesus forever. Thus, we turn to Ephesians 6 vs 10ff and find that God by the power of the Holy Spirit has prepared Armor for us to fight in this church militant to have true peace.

The armor is not yours, it is God's armor! We see the comfort and absolute power of this passage from the Word of God in Ephesians 6: 10 and following "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God (not parts of it), that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Why? So, when the devil tries to tell you that you aren't good enough to be a child of God, or you are too evil for God to love and die for, that Jesus couldn't have paid for your sins, your guilt, your evilness, How can you have peace when you are riddle with guilt and shame?

You may be able to stand your ground. To stand your ground, to stand firm...God gives you His Armor, His Holy Spirit to fight. It is so easy for us to think we are strong enough on our own to bring peace in our own personal life and then earn peace with God by how strong we are or how good we try to be.

I had the privilege of serving as Chaplain to Marines for almost 10 years with 3 combat deployments. I bring that up to share a point of comparison. I am not sure if any of you here are Marines or maybe you have a Marine in your family or maybe even a friend. Marines as you know take a lot of pride in being a Marine, earning that title of US Marine, earning the right to wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor. Their Ethos is strong and pride is strong...almost too strong when it comes to the peace with God.

I share this because I often would say prayer and a bible verse with my Marines before they went on patrol and one of my biggest challenges was to share with these young 18-25 year old Warriors that may not come back from their patrol, that they can have Peace with God...knowing who they are in Christ, that they redeemed.

You see, the temptation for them is that they will "earn their way" to heaven by being good Marines. (We all have our Works righteousness. Thinking we can earn or salvation or earn a few points with God).

Their temptation was that they would get to heaven because they were good Marines. Honorable and Faithful Warriors. In fact, it is in their hymn:

From the Halls of Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
of United States Marine.

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in ev'ry clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off Northern lands

And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job
The United States Marines.

Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines.

My role as the role of every Christian, but especially as their Chaplain was to remind them that yes, there is a chance they will be killed on this patrol and God has given the vocation of profession of arms, strong Warrior to do their duty with honor and their fellow Marines on their left and on their right do expect them to be there for them. That is all good; however, if they should be killed...they need to remember that they have Peace with God (they are saved by the Grace of God, for Christ's Sake, through faith).

Their real identity is in their Baptism, where Christ made them His own and they can now go into combat...where there is no "Peace", knowing that they do have Peace with God because that peace came at a cost of Jesus holy, innocent blood shed for them on the cross. Jesus has paid for their sins. They are declared righteous. They are wearing the breastplate of righteousness given to them by Jesus. Jesus who knew no sin, became sin for them. They have the armor of God.

Yes, we pay them homage for being good in their vocation, but their true peace and salvation is in Christ alone. That is why this section of God's Word in Ephesians can relate so well to the Warrior. They understand the importance of being at war and trying to establish Peace.\

Belt of Truth:

The first gift of the Holy Spirit is the Belt of Truth. Belt of truth buckled around your waist. A very appropriate peace of armor for today. We see daily how many claim there is no truth (following after the Devil to Adam and Eve and Pontius Pilate...what is truth?) Did God really say? Without truth there is no peace.

The truth is that God who cannot lie, has promised you eternal life provides the foundation for true Peace. When we live in a world where there seems to be no truth, we hold up our armor with the truth of God. God has promise you eternal life. God who cannot lie has promised that he has sent Jesus to live, to suffer, to die, and to rise again, for you! God who cannot lie promised whoever is baptized and believes will be saved.

Breastplate of righteousness

We who were dead in our sins and soiled by evil, God makes the great exchange and gives us the robe of righteousness (the breastplate of righteousness). In your baptism, God reach down into the muck and mire of your sinfulness and made you His child. He sealed you with the Holy Spirit, who created faith in your heart. He freely gives you His righteousness. He gives you forgiveness, life and salvation! No matter what accusations the devil throws your way about how bad you are or how good you may think you are, your

righteousness is still as filthy rags. Yet, our Lord gives us the breastplate of His righteousness.

Jesus lived that perfect life for you and for me. Jesus kept the law perfectly for us and now imputes, give that righteousness, and declares you “not guilty”. The Devil’s darts of accusations can’t penetrate the Lord’s breastplate of righteousness which you wear proudly.

Shield of faith

Then the Lord continues to give us more armor. The Holy Spirit created faith in our hearts that clings to the truth of His promises, which clings to His Word of forgiveness, hope, and healing. Faith that clings to the cross of Jesus Christ which puts out the flaming arrows the devil shoots at us. The Holy Spirit who was given to us in our Baptisms and the Word of God. The Holy Spirit called us by the Gospel. That shield of Faith resists the lies of the devil and clings to Jesus.

Helmet of salvation

By the grace of God, for Christ’s sake, through Faith, we are saved! That is our helmet that the Lord gives us. Knowing that our faith is not in vain, that we are saved from the Devil and Hell. We know that our salvation is given to us freely by the grace of God, for Christ’s sake, through faith.

Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God

Then our Lord give us the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. That Word of God is a two-edged sword that beats back the devil and his lies. Jesus Himself used the Word of God as a sword to defeat Satan when he was tempted in the wilderness. God continues to give us the Word of God to pierce the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. As Luther so boldly proclaims...” One little word can fell him (the devil)”.

God has given us a piece of armor that is both defensive and offensive in this spiritual warfare. There will be those who continue to doubt the Word of God, but not us. We know that the Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit. As that great Collect says: “We read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Word of God.” It is the power of God unto salvation. We meditate on it, we memorize it, we study it, we make it part of every part of our life, for in His Word our Lord brings peace.

Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace

Finally, we get to another piece of armor that many forget about or take for granted. The footwear.

As any foot Soldier or grunt Marine can tell you, it does matter what you have on your feet. Without the proper protection, it is easy to slow down and lose your ground and not stand firm. The Lord is reminding us that because of all that we have just heard and believe. How we know that we have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God), we are now ready to move out. To God forth with the Peace of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ Jesus has paid it for you. Peace with God comes at a cost-the judgment of evil and the perfect Sacrifice for your sin. Jesus has paid that price, sacrificing His own body and shedding His own blood in your place. That is the price of peace with God, and now it is paid in full.

This is what Jesus announces to the disciples with the words, "Peace be with you." He declares to them that He has set them free from their masters of sin, death and the devil; and He has done so by suffering God's judgment for their sin. He has then conquered sin, death and the devil by rising again from death. His enemies are defeated, and He has redeemed those disciples.

That is why He says in John 21, "Peace be with you." What does He do next? He says again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." Not only are they forgiven, but they are now His apostles, His ambassadors. What is their mission?

Jesus breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." The apostles are to preach the Word, to tell others of Christ's death and resurrection. To share and bring the Peace of God to those who have no peace. If people don't believe that their sins are taken away, then they are still stuck with their sin and at hostilities with God and have no peace. If people hear the Word and believe in Christ, then they are forgiven and have peace with God.

This is our calling. To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is what brings "true peace." Yet, that calling means we will have troubles, challenges, persecutions, difficulties. It means that we must do the hard things, go to the dangerous places and situations, it means we have to make sacrifices, deployments, separations... to bring the gifts of God to a sick and dying people, who have no peace as they do not know Jesus and His forgiveness.

That means we must "gird up our loins" and make the sacrifices to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ in those difficult situations. If we don't go...who will go? Those who have no true peace. Those who point them to false christs; false hopes; to princes; to their feelings; to their cults; to self-medication; to pleasure and power. All those things don't bring peace but make it much worse. We need to bring in Pastors and chaplains and missionaries to preach the Word of God in Its truth and purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. We need faithful pastors who will answer the Call...Here am I send me...send me.

Quite literally, the Lord brings His peace to you. He has paid the price for your sin and disobedience. Peace with God has come at a cost, but Christ has borne that cost for you. That same risen Jesus comes to you, to give you His risen body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Same Jesus, same body and blood.

That is why, just before the Lord's Supper, the pastor echoes the words of Jesus and declares to you, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." And that is why we gratefully respond, "O Christ, Thou Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen."

Jesus' death was not to make this world a better place-it was to deliver you out of this world to an eternity without sin. His peace for now is not the absence of trouble, but His presence within and despite those troubles. The strife of this world does not demonstrate weakness or faithlessness on the part of God; it simply reinforces the truth that sin brings hostility, enmity, strife, disease, tribulation and death.

Even when you must endure great trial or cruel antagonism by this world, the Lord faithfully brings His peace and grace to you. He gives you the courage, the strength, the armor to preach the Gospel. He does the work. He reminds you that the Word of the Lord will not return void.

He encourages you that your "labor in the Lord is *not* in vain." And as He said to His disciples, so He says to you: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27). Likewise, He declares, these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

Your Old Adam will seek to whisper such temptations, and it is true that in this world you will have tribulation. But take heart indeed, because Jesus has overcome the world. He has suffered the judgment and death for your sin so that it might be defeated. He has risen from the dead, thus conquering the grave.

Therefore, do not be troubled. As the risen Lord visited His disciples, so He visits you. As He spoke peace and forgiveness to them, so He speaks it to you. As He came to them with His risen body and blood, so He comes and gives you His body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins.

We have that peace of God that gives us the strength to continue in this vale of tears, in this church militant, the present warfare. Because we know the end of the line...we know that we are forgiven children of God and that God who loves us will never leave us nor forsake us.

The peace that comes from knowing that all things work out for the good and according to His purpose. The peace that comes that even though we will continue to feel pain, feel sadness, struggle with our pet sins, pain in relationships, pain in illness and disease, loneliness in the loss of loved ones...all chaos and seemingly no peace with God or our neighbor. Yet, in all that. We will stand firm, trusting our Lord Jesus. Trusting that even as we live in a sin-sick world and all that comes with that...heaven is our home.

Our Jesus has defeated our enemy and has given us the peace we need to endure until either our end comes, or Jesus returns again on that Last Day. We move out and share that peace with our neighbors.

So, are you ready to go forth in the peace of Christ and face the difficult days ahead in this church militant? Are you ready to face the temptations that the devil, the world and your sinful flesh will send to you all to destroy peace? Are you ready to face the pain that may come your way?

Yes! Yes! Yes, you are ready, because Jesus has made you ready by living, suffering, dying and rising...for you! Jesus made you ready by giving you His Peace...forgiveness and eternal life. By the grace of God, for Christ's sake, through faith you are ready for those attacks and sufferings you face. A faith which brings Peace, because it clings to the promises of God that you are a baptized, redeemed, child of God...

Now, may that Peace, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Forth in the Peace of Christ we GO!!! Move out!!

Convention Address
MN North District President, Rev. Brady Finnern

President Fondow, brother pastors, brothers and sisters serving our LORD in church work, and all of you, the baptized. Lord, have mercy!

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hear the Word of our Lord.

Mark 10:46-47 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

I love praying the Litany from our hymnal. One, because I'm not a creative person and I do not need to think much when I pray. Secondly, it keeps me away from going too quickly to my usual prayers which often miss the breadth of needs of other people. To pray the Litany brings me right to the feet of Christ---seeking His mercy.

L	O Lord,	C	have mercy.
L	O Christ,	C	have mercy.
L	O Lord,	C	have mercy.
L	O Christ,	C	have mercy.
L	God the Father in heaven,	C	have mercy.
L	God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	C	have mercy.
L	God the Holy Spirit,	C	have mercy.

One of our beloved members at Messiah recently passed away and the last time I visited with him we followed a part of the litany and when we finished with: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. He replied without a beat, "And he does!"

The Apostle John reminds us in his first epistle of the heartbeat of our work: Love. "In this is love, not that we have loved God, but he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:10). This is our merciful God, and this gives us our identity in a world that is vastly confused over theirs. We confidently and boldly proclaim that the Bible is true from Genesis to Revelation. Never apologizing (Romans 1:16) for the Truth, but proclaiming, that in Christ you are forgiven for His sake by His cleansing blood. We confess this truth with clarity from our Lutheran confessions. During COVID I was able to read through the Book of Concord and notice the word, "conscience." The conscience is that internal judge within us of one's relationship with others. Our confessions are obsessed with making sure that our orthodox theology is proclaimed, taught, and given so that people know that they are in a right relationship with the LORD in Christ. We are called to give a clear conscience to sinners by giving His gifts of forgiveness, life, salvation, and loving others in our communities and families. This is who we are, and this is what we do.

About 10 years ago the elders and I went through a book to try to find ways to reach out to those who were not receiving the gifts in worship. Those were tough times. The suggestions were beneficial, but they had been tried in the past with no success. The names on that list were not just any names, but they included sons & daughters of some of our elders. We

realized through this process that we ALL had many family members who were on another inactive list somewhere else. Some of those names were ones that are deeply affected by the ideologies we have spoken about throughout our Convention. Those names were people we loved, and more importantly, the LORD loves these people. He died for those names, He put His name on those people in baptism. When we finished the study, we had an awkward moment where one elder said, "So now what?" After more silence, another said, "Well, we need to pray." That study has led us to make a goal to continually pray for our "inactives" and after each name we say, "Lord, have mercy." The LORD has died for them and we ask for His mercy and He grants it! I wish I could tell you that there were tons of inactives who started coming back. I wish I could tell you it has been a gravy train with biscuit wheels ever since, but that's not true. Yet, the LORD changes our hearts by His Word and His mercy so that when one of them DOES come back...we are able to say---God is merciful!

I want to give thanks to God for my family. My beautiful bride Amy, my four children (Kajsa, Averil, Elias, and Xavia) for all your support, patience, and love. This transition will be difficult, but we seek the Lord's help to make sure that we are strong together in His name. To my parents, Pastor Finnern "The GREATER", and my mother, Lynette. Thank you for your love and nurturing in the truth of Christ throughout my life.

To the other faithful pastors, husbands, and fathers who were on the ballot. Pastor Weber, Pastor Klemp, Pastor Rickbeil, Pastor Lee, and Pastor Rehwaldt. We are thankful for your commitment to the truth of God's Word and I am excited to continue to work with you in the Gospel for years to come.

I ask that you pray for the church I have served for almost 12 years, Messiah Lutheran Church in Sartell. Their steadfastness for God's Word, love for my family, forgiveness in Christ, and patience is something I treasure. I will truly miss being their pastor. I realized a few months ago that over my time at Messiah, they have heard me preach over 800 times. Those poor people. I mentioned this in my sermon, and I apologized for probably telling the same story over and over. And one of our beloved members said after the service, "You're forgiven!" I will be bringing you to the feet of Christ in prayer and I ask that You bring the beloved saints at Messiah as well.

I've been part of this District since November 4th, 1979, when I was baptized into Christ at St. John Lutheran Church in Wadena. Only by God's grace do I stand before you today, only by God's grace in Christ. As Paul told the young pastor Timothy "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost (I Timothy 1:15)." His love is so great that we should be called Children of God...and so we are! (I John 3:1). We grieve the realities of a broken world, so we preach, pray, serve, and love because we know in Christ there is no darkness at all (John 1:5).

I'm humbled to be called into this office, terrified, but excited for what God has in store for all of us. Hopeful, because we are strong only in the LORD and only by the power of His might (Ephesians 6:1).

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. And He does!