

**The 49th Regular Convention The Oklahoma District The Lutheran Church—Missouri
Synod**
Minutes of Meeting April 20-21, 2018
Edmond Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center
(Minutes to be approved by the BOD at its May 5, 2018 meeting.)

The delegates of The Oklahoma District met at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Edmond, Oklahoma on April 20-21, 2018, for the 49th regular district convention under the theme: “You are Witnesses of These Things.” The convention began on Friday evening April 20th with the Divine Service, in which Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison was the proclaimer, using the convention’s theme verse as the basis for his message. District President, Rev. Barrie Henke, senior pastor Holy Trinity, Edmond was celebrant, Rev. Jonathan Meyer, assistant pastor Holy Trinity was liturgist with the three vice presidents – Rev. David Nehrenz, Rev. Kory Boster, and Rev. Greg Brown serving as lectors.

April 20, 2018

Call to Order – President, Rev. Barrie E. Henke called the 49th Regular Convention of The Oklahoma District The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to order around the theme “You are Witnesses of These Things” at 8:34 pm on Friday, April 20th.

Recognition – After welcoming all the delegates and guests, **President Henke made special introductions.** He introduced **The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of the Synod** and thanked him for being the proclaimer for the opening service. Henke also noted that Harrison would be making a presentation on Saturday – a state of the Synod address. Henke then introduced **Rev. Daniel Preus, the Central Region and 5th Vice President of the Synod** will assist in the installation of the new district president. Henke also stated that he had received notification from former district presidents – Rev. William Diekelman and Rev. Paul Hartman that they had other commitments and could not attend. Henke then introduced and thanked the members of the convention planning committee made up of himself, the vice presidents – Rev David Nehrenz 1st Vice President, Rev. Kory Boster 2nd Vice President, Rev. Gregory Brown 3rd Vice President, Rev. W. R. Rains district secretary, Mr. Brent England district treasurer, Ms. Janice Hedrick administrative assistant, and Ms. Linda Bradford executive secretary. Henke then introduced Ms. Bev England as the convention’s parliamentarian and Vicar Alex Lahue as the convention’s time-keeper.

Henke then thanked Rev. Don Hefta, Circuit Visitor for the Kingfisher Circuit and the pastors of the circuit – Rev. Joel Heckmann and Rev. Tim McCarty – for hosting the convention and providing the devotions, and to lay minister Orval Peters of the circuit for providing the music for the devotions. Henke also thanked Rev. Jonathan Meyer assistant pastor, Ms. Alishia Shimm director of parish music, and the members of Holy Trinity for hosting the worship service.

Nomination Process – Henke then directed the delegates to **page 13, Article IV, number 1 of the district handbook found behind tab seven in the convention workbook.** He noted that if

any nominations were going to be made from the convention floor that particular section provided an explanation of the procedure to follow to make such a nomination.

Voting Machine Demonstration and Election Process – Henke then introduced Mark Lenz with Interactive Church Resources who would be handling the electronic voting. After an explanation of the devices, several test ballots were cast to check the devices and familiarize the delegates with the voting procedure. He also recognized committee #3 Elections – **Chairman Rev. Carlton Riemer and his members – Rev. Greg Brown, Mr. Jimmy Petzold, Mr. Niles Gransberg, Mr. Kenny Stelzer, and Mr. Primus Moore.**

Registration and Credentials Report – Before he asked for a report, President Henke asked Rev. Christopher Hall, chairman of committee #2 Registration and Credentials to introduce his committee. Hall then introduced and thanked the committee – **Ms. Janice Hedrick, Ms. Linda Bradford, Rev. Lewis Walters, Rev. David Owens, Mr. Mark Hallinger, and Mr. Richard Hall** – for their help. Chairman Hall then reported that as of 8:29 pm there were a total of 116 voting delegates (54 pastor and 62 lay), 22 advisory (9 ordained and 13 commissioned) – voice but no vote, 4 special invited participants (no voice and no vote), 4 vicars and interns (3 vicars and 1 intern) – no voice and no vote, 6 convention staff – no voice and no vote, and 28 guests – no voice and no vote for a total of 180 registered for the convention. **The committee moved for adoption of the registration and credentials report. There were 111 votes cast – the report was accepted 110 to 1.**

Convention Rules – President Henke then asked Secretary Rains to read the convention rules. Rains directed the delegates to Section 1, page 5 of the Convention Workbook. Rains then asked if it was the will of the assembly to read the rules. By a consensus of the assembly, Henke determined that the rules did not have to be read. Rains then moved that the rules be adopted. **Before Henke asked for a vote on the Convention Rules, he noted that it would take a 2/3 vote for the rules to be adopted and that a standing vote was required. When asked for those in favor of adoption a clear 2/3 stood in agreement – the rules were adopted.**

Agenda – President Henke then asked Secretary Rains to present the Convention Agenda. Rains then directed the delegates to the front of the Convention Workbook. Rains again asked if it was the will of the assembly to hear the agenda read, and once again by consensus of the assembly Henke determined that the agenda did not have to be read. Rains moved the agenda be adopted. **Henke then placed the agenda before the delegates. There were 114 votes cast – the agenda was accepted 112 to 2.** He then noted that if there were no objections, the minutes of the convention would be approved by the district board of directors (BOD) at its May 5, 2018 meeting.

President's Opening Address – President Henke thanked the assembly for the past three years. He then spoke about the blessings and challenges that the Office brings and directed the assembly to his report found behind **Section 2 of the convention workbook on pages 19-24.** As he read his report he talked about the convention theme verse “**You are Witnesses of These Things.**”

Election #1 – President Henke then asked Secretary Rains to present the slate for president and first vice president. Before directing the assembly to **Section 2, page 28-29 of the convention workbook** where the candidates for president and first vice president were listed, Rains noted that nominations could not be made from the floor for these positions. Rains then stated that as district secretary, prior to the convention, he was to solicit the names of candidates from the congregations of the district, which he did in a letter in August of last year. Once the deadline for nominations passed, Rains contacted the top four nominees (per district handbook Bylaw IV. 2) to see if they were willing to have their names placed on the ballot for president or first vice president, depending on the position for which he was nominated. Rains then noted that the ballot for president consisted of three candidates – Rev. Kory Boster, Rev. Barrie E. Henke and Rev. David R. Nehrenz, and the ballot for first vice president consisted of three candidates – Rev. Kory B. Boster, Rev. Mark Muenchow, and Rev. David R. Nehrenz.

As the assembly prepared to vote for district president, Henke asked Third Vice President, Rev. Greg Brown to conduct the election since his, Henke's, name was on the ballot. Upon assuming the chair, Vice President Brown call for the assembly to cast their votes for district president. Once voting closed, **the results of the vote were 113 votes cast – Rev. Kory Boster received 6 votes, Rev. Barrie Henke received 92 votes, and Rev. David Nehrenz received 15 votes – Henke was elected to a fourth term as district president.**

Election #2 – President Henke then thanked Vice President Brown for conducting the election and then took a moment to thank the assembly for his re-election. Henke asked for the assembly to vote for first vice president. **The Results of the vote were 114 votes cast – Rev. Kory Boster received 20 votes, Rev. Mark Muenchow received 20, and Rev. David Nehrenz received 68 votes – Nehrenz was elected to a second term as first vice president.**

Orders of the Day – President Henke noted that the convention had completed the work on the agenda for the day and asked for a motion to adjourn for the evening. A motion was made and seconded and passed with voice vote. The convention adjourned at 9:43 pm with a devotion led by Rev. Joel Heckmann of St. John, Okarche.

The **President's reception hosted by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)** was held in the exhibit hall.

April 21, 2018

Call to Order – President, Rev. Barrie E. Henke called the meeting to order at 8:33 am on Saturday, April 21, and invited Rev. Tim McCarty of Emmanuel, Kingfisher to lead the opening devotion.

Registration and Credentials Report – Committee #2 reported that as of 8:14 am there were a total of 118 voting delegates (55 pastor and 63 lay), 22 advisory (9 ordained and 13 commissioned) – voice but no vote, 4 special invited participants (no voice and no vote), 4 vicars and interns (3 vicars and 1 intern) – no voice and no vote, 6 convention staff – no voice and no vote, and 29 guests – no voice and no vote for a total of 183 registered for the convention. **The**

committee moved for adoption of the registration and credentials report. There were 110 votes cast – the report was accepted 109 to 1.

Nominations – President Henke called on Committee #4 to address the assembly. Prior to asking the committee to make its report, Henke recognized its chairman and members – **Chairman Rev. Mark Burger, Rev. Christopher Griffith, Ms. Delia Collard, Mr. Doug Eisenhauer, and Ms. Carolyn Love.** The committee chairman then read the slate of candidates and indicated that most positions had only one name due to the lack of responses from the congregations when the request for nominations was sent in August of last year. Burger then noted that one of the nominees for Lutherhaven Retreat Center, Mr. Billy Scarborough, was no longer eligible since he was moving out of the district. Henke thanked the committee and then called for nominations from the floor. Upon receiving no further nominations, Henke declared that nominations were closed. **When Henke called for a standing vote to close nominations and accept the slate of candidates, it passed with an overwhelming majority.**

Regional Caucuses – President Henke called on Secretary Rains to explain the process for election of regional vice presidents. After receiving instruction, the Eastern Region and Western Region caucused as individual regions and elected vice presidents for their respective regions. The Eastern Region elected Rev. Kory Boster to a second term to serve as its regional vice president and Rev. Greg Brown was elected for a third term to serve as the Western Region vice president. Upon reconvening the assembly, Henke asked the voting body to rank the vice presidents.

Election #3 – Kory Boster received 68 votes and Greg Brown received 38 of the 106 votes cast. Henke then declared that Boster would serve as 2nd Vice President (2nd term) and Brown would serve as 3rd Vice President (3rd term) for the upcoming Triennium.

Synod Report – President Henke introduced the Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. President Harrison began his report with a video on the **2019 Synod convention theme – “Joy: Fully Lutheran” based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24.** Harrison then referenced his full report presented as a handout to the delegates. Harrison stated that the Synod’s emphasis on “Mercy, Witness, and Life Together” is still the driving force behind all that is being accomplished in this country and around the world. Harrison then concluded with answering questions asked by delegates from the floor. After Harrison’s time for Q&A, Henke noted the agenda called for a break.

Memorial Service – After the break the assembly gathered for a **Memorial Service commemorating those who had entered the Church Triumphant during the concluding triennium.** Rev. Marvin Henschel served as the preacher for the service and President Henke served as the lector. Those called to glory are: **Rev. Gilbert Becker** (8/21/16), **Irma Hall** (3/23/17) [Mrs. Rev. Lester Hall], **Rev. August “Gerald” Quiram** (6/21/15), **Lay Minister John Romero** (3/14/17), **Debbie Tabisz** (2/26/16) [Mrs. Rev. Rick Tabisz], **Rev. John V. Wackler** (3/3/18), and **Rev. Walter Wehmeier** (12/15/15).

Registration and Credentials Report – Committee #2 reported that as of 11:29 am there were a total of 116 voting delegates (54 pastor and 60 lay), 22 advisory (9 ordained and 13 commissioned) – voice but no vote, 5 special invited participants (no voice and no vote), 4 vicars and interns (3 vicars and 1 intern) – no voice and no vote, 6 convention staff – no voice and no vote, and 29 guests – no voice and no vote for a total of 182 registered for the convention. **The committee moved for adoption of the registration and credentials report.** Henke asked for a voice vote and the report was approved with a majority in the affirmative.

Election #4 – Henke called on Secretary Rains to **present for ratification the slate of Circuit Visitors** elected in the circuit forums late last year and earlier this year. Rains directed the assembly to his report behind **Section 2 of the workbook on page 29** and asked the assembly if the names needed to be read, but a consensus indicated that there was no need to have the names read.

Circuit #1 – Panhandle: **Rev. Gary W. McClellan**; Christ, Shattuck (7th full term + filled 1 unexpired term prior to election)

Circuit #2 – Enid: **Rev. Timothy Dorsch**; Zion, Fairmont (2nd)

Circuit #3 – Kingfisher: **Rev. Donald R. Hefta**; Trinity, El Reno (2nd)

Circuit #4 – Lawton: **Rev. David B. Thompson**; First, Chickasha (3rd)

Circuit #5 – Ponca City: **Rev. John E. Wackler**; Zion, Stillwater (1st)

Circuit #6 – Miami: **Rev. Mark M. Burger**; Redeemer, Claremore (4th full term + filled 1 unexpired term prior to election)

Circuit #7 – Tulsa: **Rev. Christopher D. Hall**; Grace, Tulsa (2nd)

Circuit #8 – Oklahoma City: **Rev. Ronald Lee Simpson**; Good Shepherd, Midwest City (3rd)

Circuit #9 – Norman: **Rev. Phillip Borntrager**; Trinity, Ardmore (1st)

Henke then asked the assembly for a voice vote to ratify the list of Circuit Visitors. The voice vote passed with a majority.

Election #5 – Henke then asked Rains to **present for ratification the slate for the District Board of Directors (BOD)** elected at regional caucuses prior to the convention. Rains again directed the assembly to **Section 2 of the workbook pages 29-30**. Rains asked the assembly if the names for the BOD needed to be read, and by consensus the names were not read.

Central Region:

Circuit #4 – Lawton (Commissioned): **Mr. Brandon Armstrong**; Faith Altus (1st)

Circuit #8 – Oklahoma City (Ordained): **Rev. Mark Muenchow**; Messiah, Oklahoma City (1st)

Circuit #9 – Norman (Lay): **Mr. Don Riley**; Redeemer, Shawnee (1st)

Eastern Region:

Circuit #6 – Miami (Ordained): **Rev. William J. Shupe**; Redeemer, Bartlesville (2nd)

Circuit #5 – Ponca City (Lay): **Mr. Doug Eisenhauer**; St. John, Newkirk(3rd)

Circuit #7 – Tulsa (Lay): **Mr. Robert Krahm**; Immanuel, Broken Arrow (1st)

Western Region:

Circuit #2 – Enid (Ordained): **Rev. Travis Orr**; Immanuel, Breckinridge (1st)

Circuit #3 – Kingfisher (Lay): **Mr. Walter Backhaus**; Our Savior, Guthrie (2nd)

Circuit #1 – Panhandle (Ordained): **Rev. Randy Foote**; Zion, Buffalo (1st full term + filled 1 unexpired term prior to election)

Henke then asked the assembly for a voice vote to ratify the BOD. The vote passed with a majority.

Elections #6-10 – President Henke called on Election Committee chairman, Rev. Carlton Riemer to present the **slates for the district officers, staff, camp committees, and nomination committee for the next district convention.**

Election #6 District Officers. The first position was that of district secretary, and the second position was for district treasurer. Since there was only one name for each position Henke asked if there was a motion to elect by acclamation. **A motion was made and seconded that the officers be elected by acclamation – the motion passed. Rev. W. R. Rains begins his fourth term as district secretary. Mr. Brent England begins his ninth term as district treasurer.**

Election #7 District Staff. Members of the executive staff were the next to be elected. The names presented to the floor were for the position of education executive Mr. David Birnbaum, Evangelism Executive Rev. Dwayne Schroeder, Mission Executive Rev. Scott Burmeister, Stewardship Executive Rev. Rick Tabisz, and Youth Executive Ms. Suzanne Watt. Since only one name was listed on the ballot for each position Henke asked if there was a motion to elect by acclamation. **A motion was made and seconded that the officers be elected by acclamation – the motion passed. Mr. David Birnbaum will be serving his second term as Education Executive. Rev. Dwayne Schroeder will be serving his third term as Evangelism Executive. Rev. Scott Burmeister was elected to a second term as Mission Executive. Rev. Rick Tabisz will begin his fourth term as the elected executive, but began by filling the unexpired term of the previous elected Stewardship Executive. Ms. Suzanne Watt will be serving her second term as Youth Executive.**

Election #8 Camp Lutherhoma Committee. The next slate for Lutherhoma committee members consisted of: Mr. Brian Aussieker, Ms. Lisa Bellmard, Mr. John Collison, Mr. Scott Dittmer, Ms. Laura Hagen, Rev. Sean McCoy, Mr. Zach McIntyre, Ms. Michelle McKay, Ms. Shelly Michael, Dr. Jason Remington, Mr. David Ross, Ms. Laura Schaulat, Ms. Julie Stewart, Mr. Gabe Woolery, and Ms. Renee Young. The vote was conducted electronically. The committee needed at least one ordained member and consists of 6 voting members and other elected and appointed members. Votes received: Aussieker (45), Bellmard (21), Collison (40), Dittmer (54), Hagen (25), Rev. Sean McCoy (102), McIntyre (21), McKay (40), Michael (32), Remington (50), Ross (54), Schaulat (36), Stewart (42), Woolery (30), and Young (48). **The Camp Lutherhoma Committee Members are: Rev. Sean McCoy (2nd term), Mr. Brian**

Aussieker, Mr. Scott Dittmer, Dr. Jason Remington, Mr. David Ross (2nd term), and Ms. Renee Young (2nd term).

Election #9 Lutherhaven Retreat Center Camp Committee. The slate for Lutherhaven Retreat Center committee members consisted of: Rev. Martin Herzberg, Rev. Thomas House, Mr. Monty Lohman, Mr. Steve Merz, Mr. Billy Scarborough, Rev. Mark Wescoatt, and Ms. Jody Wiederstein. **A motion was made and seconded that since Scarborough was no longer eligible to serve on the committee that the Lutherhaven Retreat Center Committee members be elected by acclamation – motion passed. The committee members are: Rev. Martin Herzberg (1st), Rev. Thomas House (2nd), Rev. Mark Wescoatt (2nd), Mr. Monty Lohmann (2nd), Mr. Steve Merz (1st), and Ms. Jody Wiederstein (2nd).**

Election #10 The 2021 Nomination Committee. The next election was for members to the 2021 district nominating committee. The committee will be made up of two ordained and two lay members. The names presented were Rev. Clint McMullin, Rev. Travis Orr, Karen Karner, and Allison Ross. With only four names presented, President Henke asked if there was a motion to elect the committee by acclamation. The next election was for members to the 2018 district nominating committee. **A motion was made and seconded that the committee be elected by acclamation. The 2021 District Convention Nominating will be Rev. Clint McMullin, Rev. Travis Orr, Ms. Karen Karner, and Ms. Allison Ross.**

Orders of the Day – At approximately 11:58 am, President Henke noted that the agenda called for lunch and adjourned the assembly reminding them that the meeting would reconvene.

Call to Order – President Henke called the assembly to order at 1:04 pm, and invited Rev. Don Hefta from Trinity, El Reno to lead the devotion.

Greetings – After devotions, President Henke called the convention back into session, stating that the convention would be hearing from several invited guests. But before the introductions he announced to the assembly that the **offering from the opening worship service totaled \$3068 and would be sent to the joint seminary fund**. He then called **Ms. Diana Just who serves as the Oklahoma District President for the LWML**. She mentioned it was the 90th anniversary of the founding in Oklahoma of what was to become LWML. She mentioned that the ladies had just wrapped up their biennial convention the previous weekend in Lawton. She also mentioned that the district had set a mite goal of \$104,600 for the coming biennium. Henke then recognized the **national LWML Ms. President, Patti Ross**. Patti then showed a video and spoke of the work that the LWML was doing through the mites that are sent to national and also invited everyone to attend the next national LWML convention in Mobile, Alabama in June of next year. The next to bring greetings was **Rev. Dr. Gerhard Bode of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis**. Then **Mr. Gary Nahrwold** brought greetings **from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne**. **Mr. Jeff Maltz, LCEF vice president for Kansas and Oklahoma, brought greetings** via a video **from Rev. Dr. Bart Day**, newly appointed **President and CEO of LCEF**. Finally, **Mr. Ralph Simon with LCMS Foundation** brought greetings.

Essayist – President Henke then introduced **Rev. Dr. Jeffery Kloha** as the **essayist**. Dr. Kloha used the convention theme verse as the basis for his essay and spoke about “**Witnesses, Gathered, and Going!**” [attached]. Dr. Kloha formerly taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis but now serves as Director of Collections Operations for the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D. C. but lives and works in the Oklahoma City area.

Orders of the Day – After Kloha’s presentation, President Henke noted that the agenda called for a break and dismissed the assembly reminding the delegates there was still much work to do and our time was growing short.

Henke called the assembly to order after the break and called on **Registration and Credentials** for a final report. Chairman Hall reported that as of 3:04 pm there were a total of 97 voting delegates (47 pastor and 50 lay), 22 advisory (9 ordained and 13 commissioned), 4 vicars and interns (3 vicars and 1 intern), 5 special invited guests for a total of 134 plus an unknown number of guests. **The committee moved for adoption of the registration and credentials report.** **Henke asked for a voice vote and the report was approved with a majority in the affirmative.**

President Henke noted that since there were no additional elections, the committees would begin to bring their various resolutions to the convention.

Committee 12 Administration – Rev. Kory Boster and his committee of Rev. W. R. Rains (Resource), Mr. Tim Meyer, Rev. Clint McMullin, and Rev. Ned Moerbe brought several resolutions to the convention floor for consideration.

Resolution 12-01 To Adopt The Oklahoma District Handbook [attached]. The resolution brings to fruition a district handbook that the 2006 district convention charged the board of directors to produce. After many hours and several reviews by the Synod Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM), the handbook was reviewed and approved by the Synod Secretary and committee chairman provisionally on February 3, 2018, and by the full committee on April 6-7, 2018. **The resolution passed by a vote of 95 Yes and 1 No.**

Resolution 12-02 To Amend The Articles of Incorporation [attached]. This was to meet the requirements of the 2016 Synod Convention Resolution 9-02A To Assure Uniformity of Relationship and Asset Disposition Language in Governing Documents of Corporate Agencies of Synod. **The resolution was passed by a unanimous vote 96 Yes 0 No.**

Resolution 12-03 To Reconfigure Visitation Circuits in The Oklahoma District [attached]. This resolution allows the district board of directors to reconfigure the visitation circuits in order to maximize the number of pastor and lay delegates that can attend the 2019 Synod convention. **The resolution passed by a vote of 89 Yes and 4 No.**

Resolution 12-04 To Amend the Synod Constitution to Grant a Lay Vote to Every Congregation [attached]. This resolution allows every individual congregation to have a voice and vote at a district convention, and to have a vote for Synod president, where currently in

multi-congregation situations, the congregations share the vote. **The resolution passed by a vote of 85 Yes and 10 No.**

Resolution 12-05 To Change the Way Electoral Circuits are Formed [attached]. This resolution asks the Synod in convention to allow district boards of directors to move congregations rather than combine visitation circuits to form electoral circuits. **The resolution passed by a vote of 86 Yes and 7 No.**

Resolution 12-06 To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod [attached]. This resolution asks the Synod in Convention to direct the Chief Financial Officer to provide reports on the financial positions “in a format easily understood by persons unfamiliar with financial terminology,” and “That the congregations of Synod be encouraged to support financially the work of Synod including with unrestricted giving.” **This resolution passed by a vote of 93 Yes and 2 No.**

Resolution 12-07 To Amend The Oklahoma District Bylaw IV 3 [attached]. The resolution allows for means of voting for members of the district board of directors other than by in person meetings. **The resolution passed by a vote of 89 Yes to 5 No.**

With Committee 12’s work completed Henke called on Committee 5.

Committee 5 Missions – Rev. Gary McClellan and his committee of Rev. Scott Burmeister, Mr. Eric Wassilak, Rev. Mark Wescoatt, and Rev. Mark Muenchow brought one resolution to the convention floor for consideration.

Resolution 5-01 To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724 [attached]. **The resolution was declined by the convention by a vote of 10 Yes and 82 No.**

With Committee 5’s work completed Henke called on Committee 10.

Committee 10 Public Relations – Rev. John Wackler and his committee of Ms. Linda Bradford, Mr. Orval Peters, Rev. Jonathan Meyer, and Mr. Gary Hixon brought one resolution to the convention floor for consideration.

Resolution 10-1 To Increase Public Awareness of The Lutheran Church Missouri—Synod in Oklahoma [attached]. The resolution charges the district board of directors to appoint a committee to foster better public relations between the Lutherans of Oklahoma and the broader community by producing a video and other resources that the congregations of the district may use to make their communities aware of the LCMS and the Good News we have to share. **The resolution passed by a vote of 90 Yes to 3 No.**

With Committee 10’s work completed Henke called on Committee 11.

Committee 11 Education – Rev. Don Hefta and his committee of Mr. David Birnbaum, Rev. Joel Heckmann, Ms. Lindsay Duerr, and Ms. Rosalind Burger **did not bring any resolutions to**

the convention floor. They did consider two overtures, but declined both and presented their rationale to the delegates.

Overtures 11-01 To Provide Regional Support for Our Concordia Universities and Colleges [attached]. One reason listed was that the overture “stifles the potential for passionate and highly invested personnel to serve on the board of regents in favor of local representation, whereas local representation designates large and diverse regions, thus not necessarily providing the local representation they seek.” **Declined by committee.**

Overture 11-02 To Modify the Governance of Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System [attached]. One reason listed was “The language presented in this overture does not indicate or provide sound minimum and maximum regent representation, potentially leading to over or under representation.” **Declined by committee.**

With Committee 11’s work completed Henke called on Committee 6.

Committee 6 Evangelism – Rev. David Thompson and his committee of Rev. Dwayne Schroeder, Rev. Glenn Meyer, Rev. Martin Herzberg, Mr. Bob Krahn, and Mr. Mike Dodds presented one resolution.

Resolution 6-01 To Reactivate Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ (OAFC) in Oklahoma [attached]. It charges the district Evangelism Executive to develop a leadership team during the first year of the triennium and during the second and third years to begin holding OAFC weekend events and encourage participation in national OAFC events. **The resolution was approved by the convention by a vote of 89 Yes and 4 No.**

With Committee 6’s work completed Henke called on Committee 7.

Committee 7 Youth – Rev. Gary Brandt and his committee of Ms. Suzanne Watt, Ms. Samantha Wagner, Rev. Thomas House, Ms. Pamela Owens, and Rev. Dr. Christian Tiews had no business to present.

With no business to present from Committee 7, Henke called on Committee 8.

Committee 8 Stewardship – Rev. Timothy Dorsch and his committee of Rev. Rick Tabisz, Rev. William Shupe, Mr. Mark Yates, and Rev. Todd Harrison had no business to present.

With no business to present from Committee 8, Henke called on Committee 9.

Committee 9 Human Care – Rev. Ron Simpson and his committee of Rev. Randy Foote, Rev. Aaron Wagner, Mr. Brad Cage, and Mr. Steve Hurry had no business to present.

With all committees having reported, Henke thanked them for their work.

Henke then asked the district staff if they had any other information to present to the assembly not covered by their reports in the convention workbook.

Recognition and Thanks – President Henke took a few moments to thank the outgoing board members, camp boards members, and committee members for their service to the district.

Announcements – Various people took time to report on or announce upcoming events in the district.

Installation – Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison assisted by **Rev. Daniel Preus**, the Central Region and 5th Vice President of the Synod, **installed President Henke into his office**. Following his installation, **President Henke** invited the vice presidents to come forward. He then **installed Rev. David Nehrenz, Rev. Kory Boster, and Rev. Gregory Brown into their respective offices**. Henke then asked the circuit visitors to come forward and he installed them into their office. Henke then installed the district officers, the members of the district board of directors, executive staff, camp committee members, and the members of the 2021 nominating committee members to their respective positions. Henke ended with the benediction.

Closing – President Henke asked if there were any further announcements or business and with none forthcoming, Henke declared at 5:19 pm that the 49th Convention of The Oklahoma District was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. W. R. Rains
OK District Secretary, LCMS

OVERTURE 5-01

To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724

WHEREAS, The Texas District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, at its 2015 convention, adopted the following resolution:

“RESOLUTION: 02-01-15A
RE: OVERTURES 02-04-15, 02-05-15, 02-06-15, 02-07-15, 02-08-15, 02-09-15, 02-10-15,
02-11-15, 02-12-15, 02-13-15

SUBJECT: TO OVERRULE CCM OPINION 14-2724

Whereas, The Word of God (Acts 13) clearly reveals that in the first century of the New Testament, a local congregation of believers in the Lord Jesus, assembled in Antioch, after much prayer and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, freely consecrated and sent missionaries, notably Barnabas and Saul, into mission fields; and

Whereas, Article III. 2 of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod identifies an objective of the Synod as to ‘Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world;’ and

Whereas, Article VII of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod states, ‘In relation to its members, the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body’; and

Whereas, Article XIV of the Constitution states, ‘The Synod in convention may adopt bylaws that are consistent with and do not contradict the Constitution of the Synod, which controls and supersedes such bylaws and all other rules and regulations of the Synod’; and

Whereas, 2010 Synod Convention Res. 8-32B encourages the Synod to study Article VII of the Constitution, including study of ‘Congregations and Synod, Background Material on the Advisory Nature of the LCMS’ along with opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters related to this topic (including CCM Opinion 09-2573 listed in a ‘Whereas’ paragraph in Resolution 8-32B); and

Whereas, 1983 Synod Convention Res. 5-10A in a ‘Resolved’ clause states that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaffirms that its synodical polity is essentially and principally congregational in nature; and

Whereas, CCM Opinion 09-2573 states in part that ‘. . . there is a common understanding that a congregation exercises its self-government . . . in carrying out . . . its own ministry programs and financial affairs . . .’; and

Whereas, Synod Bylaw 3.8.3 deals only with who has authority to send ministers of religion and other workers into Synod foreign mission fields, and prior bylaws have been careful not to restrict congregational activity specifically relating to whom congregations could send funds overseas, and nothing in the current bylaws restrict or could restrict the right of member congregations to (a) fund ministries in foreign countries, or (b) send/fund congregation members for service with organizations seeking to share the Gospel; and

Whereas, 1983 Synod Convention Res. 5-37 amending the bylaws only dealt with who on behalf of Synod as a whole could send missionaries at the expense of the Synod, and where the restriction applied, it being a sending bylaw only, clearly not applicable to congregations in any event; and

Whereas, CCM Opinion 14-2724 referring to 2013 Synod Convention Res. 1-08, ‘To Work Together in Mission,’ called for a two-fold response: First, ‘Resolved, That the Synod, by the next convention, develop and provide a mission best practices policy document for districts and congregations engaged in mission projects to assist them to better carry out their mission and their life together’, indicating that districts and congregations have and are recognized to have mission work and practices of their own, and because they have their own mission work and practices, the Synod should assist and support those efforts by developing a best-practices policy; and second, ‘that these best practices include encouragement to districts and congregations to communicate their international mission activities to the Synod’s Director of Church Relations and Offices of National and International Mission for the purposes of healthy coordination and stewardship’, indicating that districts and congregations can have their own mission activities and when they do they are encouraged to communicate these activities to the Synod for coordination and good stewardship; and

Whereas, CCM Opinion 14-2724 states in part, ‘Congregations may not send funds to mission societies and non-Synod entities for work in foreign areas without taking into consideration policies developed and determined for this purpose by the Board of International Mission as the only sending agency;’ and

Whereas, CCM Opinion 14-2724 incorrectly restricts the mission outreach of congregations and others to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Texas District and of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged, with much prayer and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to send missionaries to foreign areas; and be it further

Resolved, That the Texas District affirms and encourages congregations, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, districts, and individual members of the Synod, in their efforts to give bold witness by word and deed, to the love and work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness to all the world; and be it further

Resolved, That nothing in the bylaws of Synod should ever be interpreted to limit efforts by congregations, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, districts, and individual members of the Synod, to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness to all the world, but only be interpreted as requesting information which might allow Synod to support (and to assist in connecting potential support for)

congregations and individual members, to assist in connecting potential mission partners, and to provide best practices information which could assist the efforts; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Texas District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to adopt this resolution and to overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724, to be thereby declared null and void and of no effect.

Rev. Larry Krueger, Chairman
Rev. Brian Hesse, Secretary"; and

WHEREAS, The above resolution appears in the 2016 LCMS Convention Workbook as Overture 2-04; and

WHEREAS, Three other LCMS districts, three district boards of directors, one circuit, and seventeen LCMS congregations also adopted this resolution; and

WHEREAS, Two other overtures (2-07, 2-09) were submitted to the 2016 LCMS Convention that also requested that CCM Opinion 14-2724 also be overruled; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) regarding the CCM says, in part: "An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod. Overtures to a convention that seek to overrule an opinion of the commission shall support the proposed action with substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. All such overtures shall be considered by the floor committee to which they have been assigned and shall be included in a specific report to the convention with recommendations for appropriate action."; and

WHEREAS, No such report was given to the 2016 convention of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, No disposition of these overtures whatsoever is recorded in the 2016 Synod convention Proceedings; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the resolution quoted above be submitted as an overture to the 2019 Synod convention by the adoption of this, current resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod in Convention be encouraged to adopt the rule of convention that the provisions of Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) are followed with respect to this resolution and any other resolution that becomes an overture to the Synod asking for a CCM opinion to be overruled; and be it further

RESOLVED that Congregations and Synod be highly encouraged to work closely and collaboratively in the international Mission of the Church, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That also in our agreements in how we will work together in the LCMS, things "be done in a fitting and orderly way" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Evangelism floor committee #6

Resolution 6-01

Whereas, the Oklahoma District has a rich history of evangelism in the Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ program, and

Whereas, no leadership team is operating or organizing to do OAFC weekends in the District or encouraging youth/adults to participate in Summer Training or other activities of the National OAFC, and

Whereas, past results from OAFC weekends point to lives changed for Christ, some led to lives in professional church work and many individuals in congregations trained in basic evangelism skills; therefore be it

Resolved, that during the first year of the triennium the evangelism secretary develops a leadership team within the District, and be it further

Resolved, that the leadership team begin holding OAFC weekend events and participating as possible in National OAFC events in the last two years of the triennium.

Public Relations Floor Committee #10
Resolution 10-1

To Increase Public Awareness of Missouri Synod Lutherans in Oklahoma

- WHEREAS,** there are a myriad of methods of communication available to us, including social media (Facebook, Instagram, twitter, websites, YouTube, etc.) along with traditional methods (TV, radio, print and signage); and
- WHEREAS,** the media visibility of the LCMS of the OK District is lacking; and
- WHEREAS,** each congregation in all the different communities of OK could and should communicate God's love in Christ through these methods;
- WHEREAS,** we are witnesses of Christ in this place and culture; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the Board of Directors appoint a committee in order to create and foster a better public relationship between the Lutherans of Oklahoma and the broader community; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the BOD consider producing a 30 second video that can be used on the different media platforms; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** that the congregations in the various places in Oklahoma endeavor to use any or all of these methods in order to best foster relationships within their context.

Submitted by the Public Relations Floor Committee

Rev. John E. Wackler, Chair

April 20, 2018

May 12, 2018

Overture 11-01

To Provide Regional Support for Our Concordia Universities and Colleges

We move to decline this overture based on the facts presented below:

- The central region, including the OK district, would be precluded from having representation as a reagent since no CUS colleges reside in the central region.
- The current overture stifles the potential for passionate and highly invested personal to serve on the board of regents in favor of local representation whereas local representation designates large and diverse regions thus not necessarily providing the local representation they seek.

Overture 11-02

To Modify the Governance of Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System

We move to decline this overture based on the facts presented below:

- The language presented in this overture does not indicate or provide sound minimum and maximum reagent representation, potentially leading to over or under representation.
- This overture does not indicate voting vs. non-voting members leading to questions of representation and uncertainty regarding lay representation.

We would like to see a simple and concise layout as to exactly who would be included as regents - voting, non-voting, etc. to alleviate ambiguity.

Resolution 12-01

To Adopt The Oklahoma District Handbook

WHEREAS, at the 2006 district convention a resolution was passed authorizing the district president to appoint a handbook committee for the purpose of developing a handbook for the district and to present it to the 2009 district convention to consider; and

WHEREAS, the district president appointed a committee and the committee prepared a handbook for presentation to the 2009 convention; and

WHEREAS, the handbook was presented to the convention and adopted as a work in progress; and

WHEREAS, it was submitted to the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) for review; and

WHEREAS, the CCM returned the handbook saying it still needed work before it was ready for review; and

WHEREAS, it was returned to the district for further consideration and the district president in consultation with the district board of directors appointed another committee to continue work on the handbook; and

WHEREAS, the handbook was presented to the 2012 district convention for further consideration; and

WHEREAS, the district in convention moved to send it to the CCM for review; and

WHEREAS, the CCM made comments and suggestions which the committee attempted to address; and

WHEREAS, one area the CCM had questions about was in the district camps relationship to the district; and

WHEREAS, the handbook was presented to the 2015 district convention for consideration, minus the relationship question regarding the camps; and

WHEREAS, the convention moved to send it to the CCM for review; and

WHEREAS, the district in convention directed the camps to develop bylaws for inclusion in the handbook to be presented to the district board of directors for consideration at its May, 2017 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the camps made suggestions but the district board of directors determined that because the two camps are managed and operated differently it would be better to appoint a committee to consider how to cover both camps and their relationship to the district for inclusion in the bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the district president in consultation with the district board of directors established another committee to determine the relationship of the camps to the district; and

WHEREAS, the committee presented a recommendation concerning the relationships of the district camps to the district, and the district board of directors approved the recommendation and had it submitted to the CCM for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the CCM has reviewed the entire district handbook including the relationships of the camps to the district and has given its approval, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2018 district in convention accept The Oklahoma District Handbook as approved by the CCM.

May 12, 2018

Resolution 12-02

To Amend The Articles of Incorporation

WHEREAS, The 2016 Synod Convention passed Resolution 9-02A (To Assure Uniformity of Relationship and Asset Disposition Language in Governing Documents of Corporate Agencies of Synod); and

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 1.5.3.6 addresses that uniformity of relationship and asset disposition; and

WHEREAS, the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) reviewed The Oklahoma District's articles of incorporation and found that they needed to be addressed, and

WHEREAS, the articles have been addressed and updated; and

WHEREAS, they have been reviewed by the CCM have been approved as updated and amended; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the district in convention approve the updated and amended articles of incorporation as approved by the CCM

To AMENDED CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
(non-stock corporation)

TO OKLAHOMA SECRETARY OF STATE
421 N.W. 13th, Suite 210
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

In accordance with title 18, Oklahoma Statutes, section 1077, the undersigned executes on behalf of THE OKLAHOMA DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD the following for purpose of amending the Oklahoma religious corporation's Articles and Amended Articles of Incorporation:

1. The Name of the Corporation remains THE OKLAHOMA DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD. (No amendment.)

2. The principal location of the corporation **is amended to:**

308 N.W. 164th Street, Edmond, OK 73013

3. The name and street address of the registered agent for service of process in the state of Oklahoma **is amended to:**

THE OKLAHOMA DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

308 N.W. 164th Street, Edmond, OK 73013

4. Duration of the corporation is perpetual. (No amendment.)

5. **AS AMENDED:** The purpose or purposes are as stated as follows:

A. Purpose: The purpose of this corporation shall be to carry out, within the Oklahoma District as defined by The Lutheran Church---Missouri Synod (hereafter "Synod"), the objectives of Synod.

B. Membership:

1) The membership of this corporation is the congregations accepted into the Synod and placed in the Oklahoma District, and the ordained and commissioned ministers of religion on the roster of Synod who have affiliated with this district.

2) The voting power of this corporation resides in the congregations which are members of the corporation. These congregations exercise this voting power through the accredited pastoral and lay delegates of those same congregations of the Synod that have affiliated with this district.

C. Meetings: This corporation shall have general meetings of its members in the years prescribed by the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod. Special meetings may be called in such manner as may be provided by Synod.

D. Officers and Board of Directors:

1. The officers of this corporation shall consist of a president, vice-presidents as specified by the bylaws of this corporation, a secretary, a treasurer and such other officers as bylaws of this corporation may specify.
2. The board of directors of this corporation shall be of the size and composition as shall be determined in the bylaws of this corporation.
3. The officers and members of the board of directors shall be elected at the general meetings of this corporation for such terms as shall be specified by the bylaws of this corporation and shall serve until their successors are duly elected and have qualified; except if an officer or director (a) has resigned, or (b) is suspended as a rostered member of Synod, or (c) is no longer a member, or (d) is otherwise disqualified from serving the position, then that officer or director shall be immediately removed from the position and have no authority to act or further serve.

E. Property: This corporation shall have power to receive, acquire and maintain by gift, grants, demise, devise, bequest, purchase, or otherwise, property of every kind and description, whether real, personal, or mixed; to hold and use such property and deal with, or dispose of, any or all such property by sale, exchange, or gift, when necessary or expedient to carry out the objectives of the corporation; provided that all such property shall be acquired, dealt with, or disposed of in a manner not in conflict with the laws of the State of Oklahoma or the laws of any state in which said property is located.

F. Subordination to Synod Constitution and Bylaws:

1. The Constitution of Synod is also the Constitution of this corporation.
2. The Bylaws of Synod shall primarily be the bylaws of and govern this corporation. All provisions of these Articles of Incorporation and associated Bylaws are subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the resolutions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention. This corporation may adopt additional bylaws that are not in conflict with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of Synod.

6. AS AMENDED: In the event of dissolution, all assets of this corporation, subject to liabilities, shall be transferred and assigned to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a Missouri non-stock corporation.

7. **ELECTRONIC MAIL** address of the primary contact for the registered entity is:

bhenke@htlcok.org

The governing body of the corporation duly adopted a resolution setting forth the amendment proposed and declaring its advisability.

At a subsequent meeting held upon proper notice, a majority of all the members of the governing body voted in favor of the amendment.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the corporation has caused this Amended Certificate to be signed by its President and attested to by its Secretary, on: _____, 2018.

Rev. Barrie Henke

May 12, 2018

President

Attested to by:

Rev. W. R. Rains

Secretary

Resolution 12-03

To reconfigure visitation circuits in the Oklahoma District

- WHEREAS,** the handbook of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) states that electoral circuits shall consist of one or two adjacent visitation circuits as shall be determined by the District Board of Directors (Bylaw 3.1.2.a); and
- WHEREAS,** the LCMS handbook also requires electoral circuits to consist of 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate confirmed membership ranging from 1500 to 10,000, (Bylaw 3.1.2.a); and
- WHEREAS,** exceptions to these requirements may be made only by the Synod President upon request of a District Board of Directors (Bylaw 3.1.2.b); and
- WHEREAS,** The Oklahoma District currently has nine visitation circuits, several of which historically have not met the numerical requirements to be electoral circuits but were granted exceptions, or were temporarily reconfigured by temporarily reassigning the electoral circuit designation of congregations to meet the numerical requirements; and
- WHEREAS,** Synod officials have told District officials that in the future, there will be few exceptions granted regarding the numerical requirements of electoral circuits, and they will not accept the temporary reassignment of congregations to meet the requirements; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the Oklahoma District in Convention authorize the Oklahoma District Board of Directors to reconfigure the makeup of the nine visitation circuits to meet the requirements for electoral circuits, and such reconfiguring be completed before the deadline dates set to name delegates to the 2019 Synod convention; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the histories and geographic proximities of congregations be taken into account in such reconfiguration.

Resolution 12-04

To Amend the Synod Constitution to grant a Lay Vote to Every Congregation

Preamble

When Jesus directs those attempting to admonish an erring brother, He states that the final attempt of such admonition is to take the matter before the Church (Matt. 18:17). To that assembly Jesus predicates the authority to exercise the Office of the Keys saying, “And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 18:17b-18 ESV). This God-given authority is not limited by the size of a congregation, for Jesus goes on to add a clear promise to be with even the smallest assembly or congregation. “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them” (Matt. 18:19-20 ESV).

The Lutheran Church in general and the LCMS in particular have always held the autonomy of the congregation in high esteem. The Confessions of the Lutheran Church testify to the authority given by Christ to the Church as recorded in the Scriptures. Particularly, the above mentioned verses of Matthew 18 are cited in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* defending the church’s right of calling ministers (Tr. 24, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*). Later it is made clear that this authority comes down to each congregation: “Therefore when the regular bishops become unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain their own right [to ordain ministers]. Wherever the Church is, there is the authority to administer the Gospel” (Tr 66-67).

When the question of church and ministry was raised in the early days of our Synod’s history, Pastor C.F.W. Walther expressed the urgency of clarifying the scriptural position on the matter in part, because of its implications for church polity (cf. Walther’s preface to the first edition of *Church and Ministry*, especially pages xvii-xix in the 2012 edition edited by Matthew C. Harrison and published by CPH). Because of the divine institution of the Church and the Office of the Holy Ministry, the LCMS has consistently upheld the temporal right of a congregation to have a say in the business of the Synod, and this say is not limited to pastoral representation, but has also included the laity. In recent times, the voice of the congregation has been heard through the voting of two delegates appointed by a congregation to represent her at district conventions as well as at circuit forums, where representatives to Synod conventions are elected.

However, even though we acknowledge the God-given authority of each congregation, our Synod has not allowed certain congregations to be represented equally in the affairs of our Synod. As we walk together we have muted the voices of many congregations by calling “dual or multiple congregation arrangement served by the same pastor” a “parish” and limiting each parish in such a context to one pastoral and one lay vote (CCM Opinion 03-2327, “Voting Rights of Congregations”). In one extreme case four congregations served jointly by two pastors have been allowed a total of two votes at district meetings (CCM Opinion 09-2545, “Voting Rights of Congregations”).

By disenfranchising certain congregations who hold membership in the Synod, we have acted inconsistently on a number of levels.

- Though we confess no divinely appointed form of church polity, denying some congregations the right to the same representation that other congregations have in matters of the Synod is at best at a disconnect with our theological understanding of a congregation's embodiment of the catholicity of the Church.
- In some matters of the Synod that are dealt with on a congregational level, every congregation is allowed to speak for herself. However, in other matters, multiple congregations served jointly by one or more pastors are required to come together and speak with one voice thereby reducing the value of each congregation's voice.

	Independent Voice	Shared Voice
Representation at District Conventions		X
Representation at Circuit Forums	X	
Election of circuit delegates to Synod Convention	X	
Vote on Amendments to Synod Constitution	X	
Nominate Synod Officers including Synod President	X	
Voting for Synod President		X
Establishing necessary number of congregations for electoral circuits	X	

- In regard to voting at district conventions, the term parish has come to mean a “dual or multiple congregation arrangement served by the same pastor,” but the majority of times parish is used in the *Handbook* it is used synonymously with the term congregation, for example in the following titles: “director of parish music” and “parish assistant.” Such servants of the church are certainly not limited to settings where two or more congregations have come together to call a pastor.

- Furthermore, if the term parish is used consistently we must also re-evaluate whom we elected to the CTCR seeing as Bylaw 3.9.5.1 requires “Two ordained ministers who are *parish pastors*” (emphasis added).

The problems created by such a situation are only intensified when the congregations making up a multiple congregation setting lie in different circuits or even districts.

Some would claim that allowing each congregation in a multi-point setting a vote at district conventions would throw off the balance between laity and clergy. Historically the synod has allowed for an equal number of pastoral and lay voting delegates; however, no great effort has been made to ensure that an equal number of lay and pastoral delegates actually attend the convention of synod. The constituting convention of Synod in 1847 consisted of sixteen voting delegates. Of those only four were lay delegates. A year later there were six voting lay delegates and 25 voting pastoral delegates. That was a significant imbalance, but there is no evidence that anyone was bothered by it since the opportunity was given for significant lay participation along with the clergy.

If there are 473 multi-point settings comprised of 989.¹ Given that there are approximately 6,100 congregations in the synod, such a change would permit 6,100 voting lay delegates to 5,095 pastoral delegates.

Granted, these numbers could change according to changing demographics, but currently, if every congregation sent a lay delegate, on average across the various districts lay delegates would outnumber clergy by a ratio of less than 1.1 to 1. And, it is likely that a sizable minority of congregations who are able to send lay delegates do not, so that even if congregations in multi-point settings were each allowed a voting lay delegate, pastoral delegates may still outnumber the lay delegates in general.

Regarding the objection that granting a voting lay delegate to every congregation would change the historic precedent, it should be noted that other aspects of our structure have changed significantly since 1847. For example, we now have the possibility for (and numerous real examples of) multi-congregation settings consisting of congregations in different districts. In those cases the congregations in a district other than the district in which their pastors are members, receive no representative with a voice at their district conventions.

WHEREAS, “Article V Membership, A. Voting Members” of the Synod’s Constitution deals with voting members of Synod and states: “All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate....”; and

WHEREAS, The term “*or parish*” is used for the first time in the constitution and only in this place has it been interpreted to mean “multiple congregations” served by the same pastor(s); and

WHEREAS, “Multiple congregations” are only allowed to send a single lay delegate to district

conventions and does not respect the equal dignity, gifts, and authority of all member *congregations*. Rather, it creates degrees of voting membership in the Synod because every congregation is allowed a vote in some places, but not in others (see chart in preamble); and

- WHEREAS, congregation The basic meaning of parish is more geographical than the basic meaning of (congregation membership is not limited by geography, and a parish would, strictly speaking, include many people [even members of other denominations, as well as unbelievers] who are not members of an LCMS congregation); and
- WHEREAS, The presence of a pastor is not what determines the presence of a congregation. According to C.F.W. Walther's *Church and Ministry* (2012 edition) concerning the Church, Article VII, "As visible fellowships [*Gemeinschaften*] that still have the Word and the Sacraments essentially according to God's Word bear the name "**church**" because of the true invisible Church of genuine believers that is found in them, so also they possess the **authority** that Christ has given to His whole Church, on account of the true invisible Church hidden in them, even if there were only two or three [believers]"; and
- WHEREAS, The polity of the LCMS is based on congregations and not on parishes; and
- WHEREAS, The emphasis of our polity on the representation of congregations is intrinsically connected to the scriptural and confessional understanding of a congregation bearing all the characteristics of the Church; and
- WHEREAS, the The restructuring of LCMS passed by the delegates at the 2010 convention included provision that congregations of the Synod would directly vote for the Synod President (Congregations Walking Together in Mission as They Elect President and First Vice-President, Resolution 8-17 "To Elect the Synod President")²; and
- WHEREAS, Requiring that multiple congregations share a vote or voice disenfranchises one or more of the congregations in so-called multiple congregation settings who are forced to share representation at district conventions and election of Synod President; and
- WHEREAS, vote at The idea of congregations electing the Synod President and having an opportunity to a district convention enhances the representative nature of the election and the district convention; and
- WHEREAS, The 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod resolution 3-07A *To Further Promote Mission Awareness, Support, Collaboration, and Coordination for Rural and Small town, Urban and Inner City, and Suburban Ministry* was adopted by an overwhelming majority (981 to 15). The final resolve of which stated: "That the

² 2010 Convention Proceedings, 167
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LCMS in convention continue to respect the equal dignity, gifts, and authority of all member congregations, regardless of demographics or size;³; and

WHEREAS, certain congregations; and

WHEREAS, Allowing every congregation an independent voice at the district convention and the election of Synod President does not change the one layman and one pastor representation at the Synod Convention; and

WHEREAS, At the last Synod Convention a majority voted to amend the constitution to address this inconsistency, but a two-thirds (2/3) majority (66.67 %) needed to amend this inconsistency failed by three (3) votes (Yes 635; No 321) or 66.42%; and

WHEREAS, be it Further discussion has taken place in the Synod over the past triennium; therefore

RESOLVED, that the 49th district convention of The Oklahoma District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at its 2019 convention to

- Give all organized congregations that hold membership in the Synod the opportunity to vote for Synod President and to be represented by a lay delegate and a pastoral delegate at district conventions (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 c – allows representation at circuit forums and regional caucuses);
- Retain a single vote for a pastor who represents more than one congregation
- Amend Article V A of the Synod Constitution be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the district of the Synod, every congregation ~~or parish~~ is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate, and no individual shall cast more than one vote. At the meetings of the Synod, a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.

and be it further

RESOLVED, that Synod bylaw 3.12.2.3 (a) be amended to read:

- (a) This voters list shall include:
 - (1) the pastor of each member congregation(s)
 - (2) a lay person from each ~~the~~ congregation ~~or parish.~~

³ 2013 Convention Proceedings, 119

and finally, be it

RESOLVED, that the Commission on Handbook update the handbook to remove all references to dual or multi congregations/parishes or parish(es) as a qualifier in all representative or voting matters.

Resolution 12-05

To Change the Way Electoral Circuits Are Formed

- WHEREAS, Synod divides itself into districts and allows each district to create circuits, and the criteria to create districts and circuits are determined by the Synod in convention (1.3.2); and
- WHEREAS, electoral circuits are established for the sole purpose of sending representative voting delegates to Synod conventions; and
- WHEREAS, the district board of directors of each district is authorized to determine electoral circuits in its district (3.1.2.a); and
- WHEREAS, electoral circuits meet at the call of the circuit visitor to elect its voting delegates, and the circuit visitor is responsible for conducting those meetings (3.1.2.1.a, e, and i); and
- WHEREAS, not all visitation circuits meet the criteria of being an electoral circuit (currently set at 7-20 member congregations, and aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1500-10,000), so electoral circuits are by definition not necessarily equivalent to visitation circuits, (3.1.2.a); and
- WHEREAS, visitation circuits consisting of small or geographically distant congregations may find it difficult to reach Synod's current criteria for an electoral circuit; and
- WHEREAS, congregations are the basic units of Synod (1.3.1), and congregations, not circuits, are members of Synod; therefore be it
- RESOLVED*, that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at its 2019 convention amend Bylaw 3.1.2.a to include that district board of directors of each district be allowed to reassign one or more congregations from one or more adjacent visitation circuit(s) for the purpose of establishing electoral circuits that meet the criteria for electing delegates to the Synod convention; and be it finally
- RESOLVED*, that the number of electoral circuits within a district shall not exceed the number of visitation circuits in that district.

Resolution 12-06

To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod

WHEREAS, A principle of Biblical stewardship is to be accountable with the resources with which one has been entrusted, as expressed in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14 ff.); and

WHEREAS, Much is required of those to whom God has entrusted his gifts. As Jesus said, “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more” (Luke 12:48b, ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach “it is required of stewards that they be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has historically recognized its responsibility of accountability and faithfulness in the handling of the finances entrusted to it by its members, as is witnessed in Bylaw 1.5.4, “The Synod and each of its agencies shall fully disclose their financial books and records to any member congregation of the Synod;” and

WHEREAS, The Synod in previous conventions has expressed its opinion that such accountability and faithfulness be found additionally in regular reporting of such financial disclosure by adopting 2010 Convention Resolution 4-03, “To Broadly Communicate the Statement of Financial Position of LCMS,” which reads in its totality:

“Whereas, It is helpful to understand the Synod’s financial position and communicate it to the members of the congregations of Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That each November, the Vice-President–Finance—Treasurer of the Synod use widely available means, (i.e., The Lutheran Witness, Reporter, the LCMS Website) to state the financial position of the Synod in a format easily understood by persons unfamiliar with financial terminology.” (2010 Convention Proceedings, p. 120); and

WHEREAS, The members of the Synod expressed even further the need for full transparency in all areas of financial disclosure by adopting 2016 Convention RESOLUTION 9-04A, “To Improve Disclosures Related to Financial Gifts from God’s Stewards for Special Appeals,” which stated in part:

“Whereas, Monies for special appeals requested by corporate Synod (e.g., following natural disasters) are reported only in part in Synod publications (e.g., Reporter and The Lutheran Witness) and sometimes only annually; and ...

Whereas, Donors and members of the Synod are interested in the impact of funds raised for special appeals and will appreciate improved disclosure of results; therefore be it

Resolved, That the financial offices of corporate Synod continue to recognize the desire of donors and members of the Synod to improve processes of reporting and work to provide clear, timely, and transparent accounting for all funding and special appeals, so that the Body of Christ may experience the joy of Gospel-

centered mission and ministry beyond the local context or community.” (2016 Convention Proceedings, p. 189); and

WHEREAS,

It was reported to the 2013 Convention of the Synod by the Board of Directors in its Report on the Disposition of Funding the Mission Recommendations (R6-03-01) that “the decline in the Synod’s annual unrestricted revenue continues...The board believes that congregations will respond through better, open, and honest communication about the great things God is able to accomplish for His kingdom when we work together. Numerous conventions have passed resolutions calling on congregations to maintain and increase unrestricted support for district and Synod ministries, yet the unrestricted support passed through our districts to the Synod has continued to decline at the average rate of \$1 million each year.” (2013 Convention Workbook 2013, p. 114-115); and

WHEREAS,

In 2016, the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod, in reporting to the Synod about offerings received, stated, “This sharing from God’s bounty continues to decline. Although the amount of decline in the past three years has not been as severe as the average decline of the previous 20 years, it is still trending negatively. In the face of continued declining unrestricted revenues, the ability of Synod, Inc. to respond quickly and nimbly to mission and ministry opportunities and challenges laid before us by our Lord also declines, as does our ability to “fill in the gap” when restricted revenues, needed to fund much of our mission and ministry activities, fall short of their goals. The financial challenges facing our beloved Synod persist. I believe that these challenges are of our own making, a product of how we distribute the resources provided by our loving Father.” (2016 Convention Workbook, pp. 61-62); and

WHEREAS,

In the face of such challenging financial times, transparency and regularity in reporting of the financial situation of the Synod is of upmost importance to the members and constituency of the Synod who have a vested interest in the financial viability of the Synod and who merit clear, concise, and timely reports; and

WHEREAS,

The president of the synod recommended in his report to the Synod in 2016 that the synod have “Uniform Financial Reporting.” (2016 Today’s Business, p. 28); therefore be it

RESOLVED,

That the Synod in convention direct the Chief Financial Officer to report in the Synod’s official publications about the financial position of the Synod in a format easily understood by persons unfamiliar with financial terminology, such reporting to include, but not limited to income and expenses, budget versus spending, cash reserves and cash position, etc. (Synod bylaw 3.1.4.3 (g); and be it further

RESOLVED,

That these reports include information about the regular Synod budget and the reporting on special appeals as stipulated in 2016 Resolution 9-04A; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the congregations of Synod be encouraged to support financially the work of Synod including with unrestricted giving; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Synod be shrewd managers with the resources God has given it; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That the Synod give thanks to God for the resources He has entrusted to us, recognizing “That the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1, ESV).

Resolution 12-07

To Amend Oklahoma District Bylaw Article IV.3

WHEREAS, God calls us to use time and resources wisely, and the time, travel, and other costs to hold an in-person meeting of pastors and laypersons of the regions of the Oklahoma District to elect members to the Oklahoma District Board of Directors may not be the best stewardship of what God has provided; and

WHEREAS, technologies now exist to enable meetings to be held without the time and travel demands of in-person meetings; and

WHEREAS, meetings to elect members to the Oklahoma District Board of Directors involve elections, not discussion of issues best served by in-person meetings; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod already permits meetings by fair and suitable means including e-technologies (Synod Bylaw 3.1.2.1.a); and

WHEREAS, there is a need to provide for more specificity in Oklahoma District Bylaw Article IV.3; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Oklahoma District Bylaw Article IV.3 be amended to read as follows:

Members of the District Board of Directors: No later than three (3) months prior to the district convention each region shall elect on a rotational basis three (3) members to the Board using the “Election Cycle for Each Region” in Appendix B. Each region shall meet at the call of the district Vice President of the region. The meeting may be done in-person or by another manner of meeting (e.g., e-meeting technologies) that is suitable and made available to all participants, taking into account the need to provide for necessary exchanges and secure voting (Synod bylaws 3.1.2.1.a and 4.7.1). When the regions meet to select (by use of mechanical, electronic, or other methods of casting, recording, or tabulating votes ballot) their members of the district board of directors, the ordained members shall be selected first, followed by the commissioned minister (if applicable), and then the lay member. Only one individual may be selected from each circuit. The individuals selected by their regions will then have their name submitted via a resolution to the district convention for ratification. The resolution will be subject to amendment. Adoption of the resolution shall constitute election to the board.

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May 12, 2018

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