

2018 Iowa District West Convention Daily Summary—Monday June 25, 2018

Morning devotions were held at the Christian Life Center, due to the weather. The Rev. Dr. Joseph Meyer, Senior Pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Urbandale, shared some thoughts based on verses 12-14 of the Convention theme verse from Colossians 3. Noting the challenges of the church moving forward, and following solicited responses from gathered delegates, Pastor Meyer noted the need to remind people of sin's offensive to God and that we have been empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit to reject sin and live for Christ. Quoting Paul, "It is not I who live, but Christ who lives within me...", and tying into the Convention theme verses, Pastor Meyer noted that Paul's words are not a suggestion, "If you want...; if you get around to it...; etc. but "Put on..." followed by all those wonderful things that God works in our lives.

Opening devotions and the President's report was shared by The Rev. Dr. Steve Turner. Highlights of his presentation include:

Staff highlighted as the best in the Synod, according to President Turner and his predecessor, Pastor Paul Sieveking. Staff introduced by name: Sue Light, Jill Davis, Carole White, Jim Schroeder, Ellie Menz, Roger Curtis, Jason Fuller, Mark Gerken and Rhonda Mohr. The staff works together as a team, referring to the Convention theme, "Bound together in Christ's love."

Challenges: Is it a good time or bad time? Seminaries placed 90 graduates; 86 next year; 300 pastors retiring in 2018. Also shortage of parochial school principals and qualified teachers. President Turner encouraged delegates to encourage those in our congregation to consider being a professional church worker.

Great time to be a church worker—because this is God's time. Great time to be District President because of the wonderful pastors and professional church workers and congregations in our district.

Challenge in IDW, it takes about 75 average attendance to keep a pastor in fulltime ministry.

We are called to bear with one another with the challenges we face in our lives. It may mean partnering with smaller congregations as a mission to help keep congregations open.

Trinity, Creston/First, Mt. Ayr unique shared ministry—one governing board, two worshipping presence.

Zion, Manning/Trinity, Manilla work together as a partnership that allows Trinity to call their own pastor, supported by Zion, Manning—"Stronger Together."

Trinity, Algona/St. John, Burt chose to call a third pastor together to share ministry in both communities, because they saw themselves as being "bound together in Christ."

Christ, Bouton/Zion, Ogden/Perry Nursing Home—two part-time pastors and one fulltime pastor.

The Gate, new congregation in our District, formed out of a partnership/flexibility and willingness of area congregations committed to growing the kingdom through an increased presence in communities.

Confident because of Christ and His love for us. We have new life in Christ. We belong to Him.

If we are united with Christ in His life, death and resurrection, we are also united with one another.

"Bound together in Christ's love" – rope pieces on tables a reminder of the convention theme. Our rope sections are separate, not what God intends for us to be. The cross is at the center of the logo and the rope is tied to the cross, by which we are tied together. Knot-tying exercise done. Cool!

Square knot—the strongest part of the rope—"We are...stronger together!"

Because we are bound together in Christ's love, President Turner encourages leaders of congregations to join forces to bring the love of Jesus Christ and His forgiveness to their communities!

Registration report - Pastor Nick Thackery

Voting Delegates: Pastors 104 + Lay 104 = 208

Quorum established! Report accepted!

Appointments: Mark Gerken, Conv. Mgr; Ronda Mohr, assistant to President Turner

Roger Curtis, Conv. Business Mgr

Dave Daumer, publicity

David Simonson, Judge of Election

Parliamentarian—new Secretary of the Synod, Rev. Dr. John Sias

John Schonkaes, District Secretary

Dave Lyons, Chaplain

Jason Fuller, techie

Approved standing rules, shared by Secretary Pastor John Schonkaes.

Report on application for membership—BOD approved The Gate Lutheran Church, Ankeny, IA. Additional constitutions and by-law revisions for various churches were shared and approved.

Pastor Todd Jenks, Missions Committee #1 presented Res. 1-01 To receive The Gate Lutheran Church of Ankeny as Member of IDW—passed. Mission video about The Gate was shared before the vote. Doxology sung.

Dr. Christensen introduced as organist for the Convention.

District Secretary, Pastor John Schonkaes presented information regarding election of District President.

Following prayer by Pastor David Lyons, the election took place:

Candidate/votes received

Steven Turner 180* elected
Roger Carlisle 14
Jonathan Riggert 13

Election for 1st VP then took place

Candidate/votes received

Roger Carlisle 143* elected
Paul Egger 54
Thomas Schlund 8

Election for 2nd VP took place

Candidate/votes received

Benjamin Dose 29
Paul Egger 124* elected
Kevin Johnson 14
Merle Mahnken 13
Russell Senstad 24

Pastor Aaron Hannemann and members of The Gate were welcomed and acknowledged as a new church of Iowa District West!

New Camp Okoboji Director, Kirk Warnke introduced and welcomed. Greetings shared. Delaine Warnke, Kirk's wife and Convention nurse, introduced.

South Dakota President Scott Sailer introduced and shared briefly.

Carole White, VP LCEF shared a brief report. Ruth Gerken was identified as promotions person. Carole has served approximately 20 years. Carole shared examples of churches that have benefited from LCEF loans for various purposes. LCEF works with Laborers For Christ to help churches. LCEF VisionPath helps churches identify their vision. LCEF Immeasurably More capital campaigns helped raise funds for building projects. LCEF Architects support; demographic info on communities are other resources as well. LCEF provides loans to rostered workers. Scholarships provided to students. Savings through LCEF YI clubs, other resources. Coloring cards provided to delegates, based on the theme/logo.

Luke 10:2 call for prayer regarding sending out workers into harvest field.

Followed a recess, the hymn A Mighty Fortress was sung by convention participants.

LCEF gift card giveaway of spending cards! Register at the LCEF table at the Discover Center.

Reelected 1st Vice President Roger Carlisle shared a report on the Handbook Review Committee.

Committee members include: Pastors Al Buelow, Bob Riggert and Ralph Shorey, along with Stan Ullerich, layperson. Thanks given to these committee members for their help.

Revision process explained: Current Handbook is from 1985, with some revisions. Constitution is the same as the Synod's. By-laws are the District's with unique features. New Handbook revisions will be "user-friendly." The revised Handbook was reviewed at the 2017 fall Pastors Conference and was submitted as an overture from that conference for this convention's consideration and ultimate approval.

Notable changes were highlighted from each chapter, i.e. "Executive Assistant" title changed to "Assistant to the President" to reflect the working together that is done. Term limits on office of District President, Secretary and Treasurer. Human Care Chairman will now be an "ordained" person and added another "lay-at-large" member to the Board of Directors. Addition/inclusion of Circuit Cabinet Representatives and duties and a Congregational Constitutions and District Handbook Committee; allowance of electronic media in various ways; Benevolent groups, i.e. LFS and others, are required to make an annual request to ask their needs; guidelines for electronic voting; proposed electoral circuits reflect changes from 19 to 17 circuits, in keeping with the Synod's requirements (7-20 churches with total membership numbers). Circuits will caucus, especially where changes in circuit composition requires selection of the Circuit Visitor to represent all churches in those newly reconstituted circuits.

Committee #5 chair Rev. Merle Mahnken presented Res. 5-01 for consideration and a vote. An amendment to remove the term limit for the District President passed by a 55-45% margin. The vote on the revised 2018 Handbook, as amended, passed by a 96-4% margin.

Handbook Review Committee acknowledged and thanked for their hard work!

Committee #8 Nominating Committee chair, Pastor Bob Riggert, was introduced to present the comprehensive ballot for various positions on the Iowa District West Board of Directors.

Comprehensive Ballot approved without additions.--The election takes place in the afternoon.

Delegates are encouraged to review positions and candidates for consideration.

President Tom Ries and Jane Wilke from Concordia University—St. Paul, were introduced and greeted the convention delegates. Concordia will be observing a special 125th anniversary year celebration, based on Psalm 90—“Leaders in Legacy.” There are 4,732 students with 150 students from 24 countries on campus.

\$7,041.91 offering from opening service to be used for Ministry Excellence Fund.

Annual statistics from congregations—IDW one of two that provided record number of statistics.

Noon prayer was offered for the meal.

Following lunch the convention resumed.

The Rev. Dr. Tim Saleska, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, was introduced as our essayist. Focusing on the Convention theme, “Bound together in Christ’s Love” Professor Saleska posed the good Lutheran question, “What does this mean?”

“The Dynamic between Identity and action” was looked at in Colossians 3:1-17, passage which includes our Convention theme text. Using texts to open theological discussions.

“I can only answer the question, ‘What am I to do? If I can answer the prior question “Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?” MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.201

If you find your identity in something else, you are assuming a certain story.

“I am born with a past and to try and cut myself off from the past...is to deform my present relationships.” MacIntyre, p.205

If dementia affects our ties to the past it greatly affects our present relationships.

Magnolia, “You may be finished with the past, but the past isn’t finished with you.”

The story of God and the redemption of His creation.

Sin makes us want to be God.—referencing the fall account in Genesis 3.

Jeremiah 29:11 shows that Israel’s past behavior does not determine their future. Forgiveness does not let your past determine your future. It is always looking forward to God fulfilling His promise.

In Jesus, God fulfills the promise He made to Israel.

Romans 1:1-6 tells how God declares Jesus His Son through the resurrection, which points to us and our relationship, as well.

Gal. 3:23-29 “All sons of God through faith...” Israel’s story is Jesus’ story is our story.

Romans 6 shows present tense reality to the fact that we have been buried and raised with Christ. In baptism we have been “Israelized”. It gives us a new identity and story for our lives. “Walking in newness of life” points to our different perception of time. We have been raised with Christ and live as God’s resurrected people in the present.

We forget our sense of identity. We fail to live according to the implications of our identity in Christ. When people forget who they are they lose their sense of meaning.

Election for members of Board of Directors takes place.

District Secretary—Rev. Richard Merrill

Treasurer—Scott Ernst

Chairman of the Board of Directors—Stan Ullerich
Chairman Christian Education—Rev. Scott Kosizek
Chairman Stewardship—Rev. Jonathan Conner
Chairman Youth Services—Rev. Jonathan Riggert
Chairman Missions—Rev. Bruce Lesemann
Chairman Human Care—Rev. Seth Kaiser
Ordained, Minister-at-Large—Rev. Dan Vogel
Commissioned Minister-at-Large—Merrilee Slump
Lay Minister-at-Large—Timothy Buelow, Mark Kramer, Jane Morris

District Nominating Committee:

Ordained ministers: Timothy Geitz*, David Lyons, Michael Wolfram (Pastor Geitz is chair with the most votes.)
Commissioned Minister: Amy Schmidt
Laypersons: Timothy Buelow, Ruth Gerken, Wanda Pritzel

Rhonda Mohr, Assistant to the President for Education, Youth and Family Life, shared a brief report. She has served as Lutheran school teacher and principal, DCE, and Family Life Coordinator.

Stats: 8 Lutheran Day Schools, 42 Lutheran Early Childhood enters, 7 out of 8 are accredited by Lutheran School Ministry office in St. Louis. Soon to be 8 out of 8. 569 students total in schools, 1,832 students in preschools. Support of teacher staff in schools/preschools.

Youth gatherings offer quality programming planned by professional church workers and lay workers.

Building relationships with young people, i.e. Millennials, is so important to retain and gain them for Jesus.

VBS Best Practices Workshops, Strengthening Marriage Workshops (LFS), Christian Education Workshops, recommending resources are other things the District is involved in with Family Life ministry.

After the break/caucuses, President Brian Friedrich of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska, shared greetings and info about Concordia, Seward.

20% of LCMS rostered workers are Concordia, Seward alumni; 30% of grads in church work programs; 90% faculty Lutheran—100% Christians.

98% graduates employed after graduate; 100% church worker students

Promises of a Lutheran Education: Inquiry, Purpose, Wisdom, Community

Floor Committee #3 chair Rev. Christopher Nitzel presented resolution 3-03 To Celebrate and Give Thanks for the 125th Anniversary of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska. Carried unanimously.

Resolution 3-01 To Encourage Fulltime Church Work as a Career APPROVED BY 99%

Resolution 3-02 To Encourage All Iowa District West School Boards to Invite the Assistant to the President for Educational Services Each Triennium for Board Training APPROVED

Student aid presentation by Pastor Thomas Schlund, new Student Aid Committee chair. Pastor David Loeschen recognized for his past work as IDW Student Aid Director. Thanks for support at offering.

Jim Schroeder, Christian Estate Planning Counselor working with the LCMS Foundation in our District, presented his report. Jim's cell number, 515-490-7371, given to help delegates schedule an appointment with him to discuss estate planning personally, or to do a presentation in your church. Congregations (lay people and

pastor) are concerned that the church is heading into a financial storm. 57% of our church is over 55. 90% of what we own is not in our checking accounts. Congregation endowment or legacy funds help members to give non-cash gifts.

Greetings from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne representative. 100% Tuition Aid plans for all full time and deaconess students. Shortage of students studying to be pastors is due, in part, to concern of adding financial debt to college debt. Endowments at the Seminary helps, as well as gifts from individuals in the congregations.

Lutheran Laymen's League rep greeted delegates, thanking them for volunteer support, i.e. with Petal Pushers with Rose Bowl parade prep. Short video shared promoting the work of LHM.

Pastor Max Phillips, Exec. Director for LFS, thanked delegates for their support and shared a video that shows the work of LFS across our district and state. God uses our church to wrap people in our area in Jesus' love. Advocating for LIFE in the public square in Iowa has been on the move. Pastor Phillips explained that by taking the name "of Iowa" off of the LFS name has opened doors to reach across state borders and assist in LIFE situations in other states. Education/information sessions continue to bring the LIFE message of Jesus into congregations. Strengthening marriages is also an important ministry, preparing Marriage First Responders as a proactive approach to helping members in congregations help their families.

A Mission Moment was shared—Christ our Savior, Norwalk

David Hendricks brought greetings from Concordia Plan Services. Highlighting the work of CPS and tying into the theme of the convention—"bear with each other" we are stronger together; "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...since you were called to peace" to give peace of mind with retirement plans; "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish each other"—helping us to do what we do so you can do what you do best.

Pastor Dennis Martens, Committee #2 presented resolutions from Human Care Committee

2-04 To Affirm and Support the Work of Lutheran Family Service - APPROVED as amended to change the language in a Whereas to state: "a married couple of one man and one woman."

2-01 To Promote Church Worker Wellness APPROVED

Rev. Roger Carlisle, 1st Vice President, led closing devotions prior to the evening meal.

1 Cor. 1:2-10 text. Devotions used the familiar greeting, "Dear brothers and sisters in Christ" as an introduction to talk about who we are and our relationship to one another. Paul is confident that God will continue to work in them until the last day to keep them faithful and to work unity within them. Yes, we continue to fall short, as did the Corinthians, but this passage is a hopeful one because it speaks of God's call and provision. Terry Dittmer's song, "Brothers and Sisters in Christ" reflects our hope. (Sung)

Chaplain, David Lyons offered the supper prayer.

Following supper, 1st Vice President Herb Mueller shared the Synod's President's report. Included in this report: VP Mueller noted that it is the 488th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession being presented to Charles V in 1530. The AC explains how we're saved and what the church is.

Greetings from the Synod headquarters. Thankful for support of the Synod and missions—50% of offerings received by the District office is passed on to the Synod. Mission Central supports our work together.

Four elements of the report—video, VP Mueller presentation, Q & A, “Joy:Fully Lutheran” handout that prepares the church for the 2019 Synod Convention.

“Joy:Fully Lutheran” simply means living in the joy of the full and free Gospel, referencing 1 Thes. 5:16-24, mentioned in President Harrison’s comments on the video and referred to in the handout, which is also available on the Synod website: <https://blogs.lcms.org/2018/message-to-the-church-about-challenges-we-face-and-how-to-face-them/>. See the site/handout for further information and a detailed reading/discussion of this subject.

Joy begins with repentance, referencing Luther’s 95 Thesis. “The joyous exchange” came about a year later in Luther’s theology and expression of the faith.

We are Lutheran, not for the sake of denominational loyalty, but for the sake of the Gospel and its joy.

Q & A from VPs Dr. Herb Mueller and Rev. Dr. Scott Murray followed.

2nd Vice President Rev. Paul Egger shared the closing devotion. Reference to the Augsburg Confession, mentioned earlier as having been 488 years ago today.

Articles 3 - were shared by the delegates.

An ice cream social closed out the evening.