

## 2018 Iowa District West Convention Daily Summary—Tuesday June 26, 2018

Morning devotions were held at the Christian Life Center, again, due to the weather. The Rev. Dr. Joseph Meyer, Senior Pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Urbandale, shared thoughts based on verses 14-17 of the Convention theme verse from Colossians 3: “Whatever you do...” We base a lot of our identification on what we do—our vocation or career, our kids or family, our sports associations. Pastor Meyer shared a cute story of how his family became a Lutheran through “beer evangelism.” Seems his father, who was Baptist at the time, worked for a 7-Eleven. His Baptist pastor gave him an ultimatum that not only could he not drink beer, he couldn’t sell it if he wanted to stay a member of the church. Pastor Meyer’s dad went over to the Lutheran parsonage and was welcomed with a cold one from the fridge.

We live in an age where there is the idol of autonomy to contend with in people’s lives. Quoting the book he referred to in day one’s devotion, (paraphrasing) “Individual people are the arbiters of their own authority.” Our ID affects our actions, as was mentioned in the essayist presentation on Monday. Romans 6 challenges us to “not live in sin...” but to “walk in newness of life” that is ours because we have died and been raised in Jesus’ death and resurrection in our baptism. We need to remind people of their ID in Christ—Redeemed to live for Him.

The convention opened with the Memorial service, during which Pastor Arno Melz, Pastor Jerald Firby, teacher/principal Byron Bockelman, and teacher Colene Kaiser were remembered for their service in God’s kingdom. The message by Pastor Leroy Riemer was based on Rev. 21:1-7. Pastor Riemer shared a story from his vicarage about a lady who was dying whom he visited. The lady had been estranged or delinquent from the church, but her demeanor and attitude changed as she responded to Pastor Riemer’s visits and the sharing of the Gospel. Not only was her life changed, but her family got more involved—including adult daughters being baptized, and a friend who came to know the Lord. This friend, who came to know Pastor Riemer as “Victor” not “Vicar,” asked him what the secret was to her friend’s transformation. Pastor Riemer remarked to the delegates, “What a fantastic message God has given us to share—the answer to sin, pain and all uncertainty. We gather in celebration of God’s promises in John 3:16 that all who believe in Jesus will not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The Essayist, Rev. Dr. Tim Saleska, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis continued his presentation from Monday. Quoting from “The Gospel comes with a house key,” Rosaria Butterfield, “Are Christians victims of this post-Christian World? No., sadly, [we] are co-conspirators. We embrace modernism’s perks when they serve our own lusts and selfish ambitions... Our cold and hard hearts; our failure to love the stranger, our selfishness with our money, time and home and our privileged back turned against widows, orphans, prisoners and refugees mean we are guilty in the face of God of withholding love and Christian witness.”

Romans 7 quoted, referring to Paul’s struggle with wanting to do right, but evil being close at hand. We, who have been given this new identity, are still in danger of being held captive by sin.

What does it mean to repent? Repentance is the posture of the Christian. Repentance comes becomes my sin and grace as God’s law and Gospel does its work in us. Repentance brings us down—humility, needed to recognize, admit and acknowledge our sins. Shame, guilt and fear are very real. Self-justification vs. despair are common responses.

But, Grace always flows downhill and meets at the bottom—God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Rosaria Butterfield quoted from “Openness Unhindered,” “Repentance is our daily fruit, our hourly washing, our minute by minute wake up call....Only solution to renewed Christian consciousness--proves the obvious, that God was right all along!”

Butterfield was an avowed atheist and lesbian who experienced an amazing conversion. (Reformed Presb. now)

Repentance is not a one-time thing but our daily life experience.

The Psalms help us recapture who we are and how we should act—cultivating a life of repentance.

Secret of the Psalms—Our identity is hidden in them. In them we find ourselves, and God. (Baker)

“The Psalms articulate cries for help, feelings of abandonment and confession of sins that desperate people can relate to...” (“Reading the Bible with the Damned,” Ekblad)

Psalms offer timeless truths that aren’t filled with a lot of time specific events. We can all apply the truth of our faith to the facts of our life through the Psalms. Psalms also apply a language so we can speak to others in their distress.

Psalm 31 examples shared. Deliberate tension created between God asking for deliverance and acknowledging that God is our deliverance. “Into thy hands...” speaks of trust and commitment. Jesus represents Israel even as He delivers Israel.

The Psalms does not give us permission to ill-treat another person. Hating those who do evil, while loving those who are faithful is about loyalties.

Many turning points in the psalm, verse 14-15a offers trust in God and acknowledgement of God in his life.

Verse 24 concludes the Psalm with waiting for the Lord in faith and trust—now and not yet paradox.

Closed with story about Lydia. “In repentance and rest is your salvation in quietness and trust is your strength.”

Video shared about Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Professor Saleska supplemented the video with a story of a Jewish individual who became a Christian and is now a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student at Concordia, St. Louis. Typical of many stories of transformation. Humbling to see what God has done and allows us to do with them and in their life.

Rev. Brent Smith, representing Mission Central, shared a fiery presentation in the spirit of Elijah (Old Missionary Gary Thies—who was representing at the Michigan District Convention). \$8 million in gifts from 48 states in support of our missionaries. The Lord’s Creation Theater is the newest addition to Mission Central for visitors to see. Funding the fields in the front lines continues to be the work of Mission Central. Many stories shared.

District Missions Committee Chair, Pastor Bruce Lesemann together with Mark Gerken, Assist. to the President shared the challenges in society to which our missions are aimed. Emphases shared include:

1. Moving from programs to people.
2. Not just attractional outreach but also incarnational outreach—being out among people. “Let’s eat together.” Joining Jesus on His Mission and Joining Jesus, Show Me How are resources to train churches to help with intentional outreach. Res. 1-01 referenced
3. From Congregation to kingdom, working together for the sake of God’s mission through partnering congregations, sharing resources. Res. 1-03 referenced

District mission grants allow congregations to begin new efforts to reach others in unique ways in their specific communities.

Missionary partners—The Gate, Ankeny; St. Paul’s, Council Bluffs; Christ our Savior, Norwalk; Hispanic Ministry, Sioux City; Hispanic Ministry, West Des Moines. Learn more in Convention Workbook and on District website.

Mission Prayer Partners encouraged—see slip in delegate packets.

Mission moment shared in video about partnership in Siouxland area with Hispanic ministry.

Floor Committee #1, Chair, Pastor Todd Jenks, presented resolutions:

Res. 1-03 To Make Outreach a Priority in Each Congregation and Circuit. Approved

Res. 1-02 To Develop Ethnic Leadership. Approved

Res. 1-04 To Foster Understanding of our Synod's Practice of Close Communion

Motion to consider a substitute motion—Overture 1-03 failed to pass

Back to Res. 1-04 as listed on the gray pages and referred to above.

Another amendment was offered to add the words “and implemented” to the resolve after “studied.” Approved  
FYI, no official difference between close and closed, per LCMS official present.

Ann Carrick, LWML of Iowa West Representative, was welcomed to greet delegates. Shared news of grants given to IDW missions both national and district grants.

Adjournment for lunch, following prayer by Chaplain Lyons.

Human Care Committee report called attention to the Witness, Mercy, Life Together emphasis of our Synod. Video shared that called attention to seeing the needs of others: Praying for God's Will; Look at Community Needs and Dreams; Assess Congregational Assets.

Rev. Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Lutheran For Life, shared greetings and thanks for support and encouraged to be Gospel-motivated for life. Shared resources and directed to websites for further info (lfl.org).

Cancercompanions introduced as another resource to help families dealing with cancer diagnosis. See the website: cancer-companions.org

Chaplaincy addressed. Two retired pastors in the Des Moines and Sioux City areas are available—magnets given delegates to help access their care. No charge for this ministry.

Church professionals a concern. Grace Place wellness ministries offers a way to help workers deal with stress through retreats, one of which IDW hopes to offer professional church workers in the coming year. District congregations were encouraged to assist their professional church workers to attend.

Mission Moment video shared of St. Paul's Music Conservatory.

Floor Committee #2 Chair, Pastor Dennis Martens, presented Resolution 2-02 To Uphold the Sanctity of Life. Approved

Res. 2-03 To Encourage Acts of Mercy (presented with slight changes). Approved

Res. 2-05 To Cease Activity Contrary to Scripture on the Concordia University Portland Campus. Significant changes were made since when the overture was first presented. Those changes were shared on the screen and verbally with the delegates prior to voting. Approved

Human Care Floor Committee #2 dismissed with thanks.

Ellie Menz shared her IOWAY (Individual Outreach With Adult and Youth) report. Ellie has been leading this work the past 17 years. Mission statement: Honor God by serving others! Various trips to consider: Aug. 10-12 Outreach to the Homeless in Omaha; IOWAY Petal Pushers (working on the Rose Bowl Lutheran Hour Ministries parade float—Lutheran Hour is the only religious float in the parade). Also serve at Skid Row area in LA after the Rose Bowl Parade. Christian organization serves 1,500 meals a day to the homeless. Other projects congregations can undertake: Underwear for the Homeless collection done in our district; Providing hats and health kits for the homeless; Witness bracelets; \$250 sponsors a child in Haiti—tuition, books, uniforms, meals; Refugee Children in Moulton Elementary in Des Moines; LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) Over \$100K went to Houston, Puerto Rico and Florida to help with hurricane relief efforts.

Mission moment video of Hispanic Ministry in West Des Moines. Thanks from Pastor Lincon Guerra.

Pastor Jonathan Conner, Chairman of the District Stewardship Committee, shared a video and presentation on District work in this vital area. Christian Stewardship definition and goals presented.

Committee goals:

- Workshopping to support us in being good stewards.
- Pursuing partnerships in 2019 with Doxology and Thrivent.
- Resourcing—providing products to help congregation members with financial management. Financial Peace University, based on Dave Ramsey's materials, will help utilize this resource, "Preview and Review," created by Pastor Jonathan Conner, helps congregations with the Financial Peace University materials. Go to the website ([idwlcms.org](http://idwlcms.org)) and look for Bible studies and helps regarding Stewardship. Mobile giving and beyond—encourage congregations to pursue mobile giving as an option.
- Connecting—Stewardship Cabinet Chairs will be conduits of information and resources to local churches.

Compensation Guidelines for District to be presented later. Looking ahead, Concordia Plan Services is developing a Compensation Decision Support Tool to assist in this process.

Floor Committee #4 Chair, Pastor Mark Hansen, presented Resolutions

Res. 4-01 To Encourage Congregations to Utilize Financial Peace University to Help Teach Financial Management. Approved

Res. 4-02 To Approve District Compensation and Benefit Guidelines for 2019-2021. Approved

Res. 4-04 To Request that the Synod Prioritize Clergy for the Congregational Pastoral Ministry. Approved

Res. 4-05 To Encourage Congregations to Expand the Opportunity for Financial Giving. Approved

Info—Res. 4-06 was removed, with approval of new Handbook.

Floor Committee #4 was dismissed with thanks.

Pastor Merle Mahnken, Chair of Floor Committee #5, shared Res. 5-02 To Further Encourage Official Circuit Visits by Circuit Visitors and Consideration of Reimbursement to Circuit Visitors for Expenses Incurred for Visitor's Responsibilities. Approved

Floor Committee #5 recognized for their work and dismissed with thanks.

Break shortened to commence with remaining business.

Floor Committee #1 called back. Res. 1-04 presented as amended.

An additional amendment: resolve was presented asking that "Circuit visitors encourage pastors (and congregations) of IDW to prayerfully review their communion practices and fraternally discuss communion practices at their circuit conferences." Amendment is approved.

Question called/seconded to end further debate on Res. 1-04. Vote to end debate passed.

Resolution 1-04, as amended...Approved

Floor Committee #1 recognized and dismissed with thanks.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Roger Carlisle, representing Nominating Committee—ratification of Circuit Visitors

Nominating committee was recognized, thanked and dismissed.

Registration Committee #7 Chair, Pastor Thackery, shared final report:

Voting Pastor 108 + 106 Lay Delegates = 214

Additional exhibitors, presenters, etc. bring the total to 302 attendees

Final thanks to various staff, convention workers, outgoing Board of Directors, and others by President Turner.

Special thanks and an appreciation plaque presented to Doug Kading, retiring Executive Director of Camp Okoboji.

Installation of The Rev. Dr. Steve Turner as President of Iowa District West of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The Rev. Dr. Scott Murray.

Installation of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Presidents of Iowa District West, Rev. Roger Carlisle and Rev. Paul Egger by The Rev. Dr. Steve Turner, President of Iowa District West of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Circuit Visitors were installed by President Steve Turner.

Finally, Secretary, Treasurer and newly elected Board of Directors were installed by President Steve Turner.

Thanks offered to all by President Steve Turner.

Closing devotion by President Steve Turner. Take home the picture of the logo, Bound Together in Christ's Love. Take home that our identity comes from God, Himself, who calls us to be a child of God.

Official Close of the 40<sup>th</sup> Convention of Iowa District West of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The hymn "Go My Children" was sung as a closing/sending song.