

2025 Iowa District Convention – One Generation Commends Your Works to Another

The 42nd Convention of Iowa District West (IDW) was held on June 8-10, 2025, at beautiful Camp Okoboji, Milford, Iowa. The convention theme was: “One Generation Commends Your Works to Another” based on Psalm 145:4, a fitting theme as three term President Rev. Dr. Steven Turner Retired passing on the mantel to a new generation of leadership, along with the retirement of 46-year veteran as Administrative Assistant of the Iowa District West office, Sue Light. Likewise, long-time gift planning consultant for Iowa District West, Jim Schroeder. This theme formed the basis of Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich’s convention essay which challenged all the delegates and congregations to the urgency and need to pass on the faith in Jesus from one generation to the next with practical steps from the Book of Numbers.

The convention began with Divine Service at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Spirit Lake with a powerful Word of the Lord spoken by the Synod’s President, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, commending all pastors to convict God’s people with the harshest judgments of God but to declare and give clear absolution and forgiveness in every sermon. Forgiveness, he said in sermons, families, and churches, is necessary for God’s church. He urged the laity to demand such from their pastors. He compassionately talked about the clear proofs for God’s active role in creation that are being discovered regularly, which call all of us to believe in God.

The convention’s business began June 9 with the election of the District President, Vice Presidents and Board of Directors. The Rev. Paul Egger of Galva was elected on the first ballot to his first term as President. Egger is currently serving as the sole pastor to St. John, Galva. He has served there for the past 24 ½ years and also served as Iowa District West’s First Vice President since 2022.

The Rev. Jonathan Riggert was elected to his first term as the IDW First Vice President. He currently also serves as Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Cherokee. He has formerly served as the Second Vice President of IDW since 2022. Pastor Riggert resides in Cherokee, Iowa.

The Rev. Benjamin Dose was elected for his first term as IDW’s Second Vice President. He currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Algona and St. John Lutheran Church in Burt. He resides in Algona, Iowa.

After the elections, President Harrison gave his report on the Synod by calling us “Book of Concord Christians.” He then went through the first 13 articles of the Augsburg Confession. The Book of Concord is “dedicated to the advancement of the glory of God, the Gospel.” Harrison related this advancement to planting seeds with modern large-scale farming equipment, but still, the seed has the power! The Seed is God’s Word! He talked about how, “We are dedicated to peace and tranquility of schools and churches...We make this confession for troubled consciences.”

He admonished the church through the articles. For example, on Who is God? He said, “Father, Son, Spirit...We believe the early church got it right. You cannot steal a creed from people.” What is sin? Harrison echoed his sermon from the day before, quipping, “If sin is not real and not a problem, you don’t need a Savior! Harrison strongly defended the centrality of Christ, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, including defending the church's practice, no matter what it is called, Closed, Close, etc. communion, explaining it clearly and defending the Synod’s long-standing practice of pastoral discretion.

Harrison then described the health of the Synod, “Blessed.” Financially, the Synod is good with 110 million on hand. Thanks to Mission Central, he said, Missionaries are paid for 13 months.

The Convention spent the other portion of its time taking up 12 resolutions and memorializing them. Some that especially stood out. The first Resolution was “To Promote Wellness Among Church Workers” by resolving to “Encourage local congregations to create supportive environments that foster open dialogue and mutual care among church workers. Provide resources and training to help church workers manage financial, relational, and vocational challenges.”

Another memorialized Resolution: “To Support and Encourage Adoption” the convention recognized that “Christians have a historical legacy of enacting this Gospel by undertaking and coordinating care for ‘widows and orphans in their affliction’ (James 1:27...); and Some 115,000 children nationwide are awaiting families and homes through adoption this year... To deal with this problem, the convention committed the church to “affirm our Christian privilege and responsibility to advocate and undertake protecting and providing for children awaiting adoption and fostering, particularly that they might enter His kingdom by baptism and belief in His saving name.” The church further resolved to promote awareness of adoption and fostering needs, agencies, and opportunities; recognizing our RSOs and praying for them, especially those who promote and offer adoptions. Later in the convention, Lutheran Family Service of Iowa was commended and directed in memorial to receive support from the church at the level of 3 percent from the District Board of Directors. For more information, visit www.lfsiowa.org.

A special moment in the convention was to “Give Thanks for the One True Faith as Confessed in the Nicene Creed.” 1700 years ago in 325 AD, the church met in the Council of Nicea “attended by 318 bishops, ruled against the Arians, who taught that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God, but was created by the Father and was called Son of God because of His righteousness; The council at Nicea, faithfully defended and confessed the one true faith of the Homoousians, that the Father and the Son are of the same essence.” The Nicene Creed thus was born, the convention rose, said the faithful Creed, and sang the common doxology to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.