

# **“Your Word”**

**Psalm 119:105**

**35<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Montana  
District of the Lutheran Church –  
Missouri Synod**

**June 13-16, 2022  
Billings, MT**

**Proceedings**

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# 35<sup>th</sup> Montana District Convention Schedule

Billings, Montana

June 13-16, 2022

*"Your Word"*

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## Monday- June 13

- 8:00 Registration
- 9:00 Opening Devotions (In Committees)
- 9:15 Floor Committees meet (District President visits)
- 3:45 Welcome
- 3:50 Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 1)
- 4:45 Introduce Staff and Support crew
- 5:00 Closing prayer
- 7:00 pm Opening Worship-Christ the King

## Tuesday- June 14

- 8:00 Opening Devotions (Pastor Thomas)
- 8:15 Committee #7 - Registration and Credentials
- 8:20 Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 2)
- 9:10 Orientation- Parliamentary procedures
- 9:20 Convention Schedule
- 9:30 Report of Synodical President
- 10:15 District President's Report and Address
- 10:35 District Treasurer's report
- 10:45 Introduction of all nominees to all offices

10:55	Election Committee
11:05	Welcome of new members (Ordained, Commissioned, Congregations)
11:15	Report of Synodical President
12:00	Closing Prayer
12:05	Noon Recess
1:15	Opening Devotions (Pastor Brandt)
1:30	Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 3)
2:20	Concordia Plan Services
2:35	Break
3:05	Committee # 1 - Mission
4:05	Committee # 2 - Specialized Ministries
5:00	Closing Prayer
6:30	Banquet - Amicus Christi Award

Wednesday June 15

8:00	Opening Devotions (Pastor Behm)
8:15	Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 4)
9:05	Committee # 3 - Human Care
10:00	Break
10:15	Committee # 4 - Education
11:00	Committee # 5 - Administration
11:45	Closing prayer
11:50	Committees meet
12:00	Noon recess

1:15 Opening Devotions (Pastor Larson)

1:30 Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 5)

2:20 Committee # 1 - Mission

2:50 Break

3:05 Committee # 2 - Specialized Ministries

3:30 Committee # 3 - Human Care

4:00 Committee # 4 - Education

4:30 Committee # 5 - Administration

5:00 Closing Prayer

5:05 Advisory delegates meet with Secretary to elect  
Synodical Convention Delegate (Con. XII. B, Bylaw 3.1.3.1)

Thursday June 16

8:00 Opening Devotions (Pastor Merz)

8:15 Formula of Concord: Epitome (Session # 6)

9:15 Seminaries Present

9:30 Committees as needed

10:00 Break

10:15 Committees as needed

10:55 Committee #7 Registration/Credentials Committee - final report

11:00 Closing Worship- Memorial, Installations (Pastor Schultz)

## VOTING DELEGATES

<u>Congregation Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Pastoral Delegate</u>	<u>Lay Delegate</u>
Redeemer	Anaconda	Jim Pierce	
Holy Trinity/ Grace	Belgrade Three Forks	Charles Lehmann	Jerry Lehr
Emmaus Lutheran Mission	Big Timber/ Livingston	Daniel Merz	Brain Mittelsteder
Christ the King	Billings	Ryan Wendt	Kendall Hartman
Hope Our Redeemer	Billings Worden	Robert Lane	Jerome Schelle
Mt. Olive/	Billings/	Willis McCall	Gregg Hein
Our Savior	Billings	Ken Zoeller	Keith Myhre
Trinity	Billings	Daniel Rinderknecht	Ray Koschel
Faith	Boulder	Vacant – Non-Calling	Keith Fletcher
First	Bozeman	Samuel Grayl	Stephen Schultz
St. John St. Paul	Belfry Bridger	Paul Shupe	
St. Mark Zion	Butte Whitehall	James Mavis (Excused)	Michael McAnulty
Zion St. Paul	Chinook Havre	Vacant-Called	Chris Moen
Mt Calvary Concordia Trinity	Colstrip Forsyth Hysham	Blake Marshall	Tyler Larsen
Our Redeemer	Columbia Falls	Matthew Nelson	
Faith Holy Cross	Condon Seeley Lake	Erik Iverson	Jim Normark
Church at Creston	Creston	Kyle Winter (Excused)	
Crow Lutheran Ministry	Crow Agency	Daniel Jacobs	Bobbie Schenderline

<b>Congregation Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Pastoral Delegate</b>	<b>Lay Delegate</b>
Our Savior St. Paul Trinity	Denton Lewistown Stanford	Mark Wiegert	Timothy Crosmer
St. John	Deer Lodge	Gary Krumdieck	
Living Water Shepherd of the Hills	Dillon Ennis	Kenneth Stensrud (Excused)	Joe Veland
Holy Cross	Eureka	David McCarthy (Excused)	
St. John Zion	Fairfield Power	Vacant – Non-Calling	
St. John Trinity	Fairview Sidney	Vacant-Called	Tom Halvorson
Grace Our Savior	Fallon Glendive	Greg Lucido	Brady Smelser
First	Fort Benton	Joshua Reinke	Darrell Greenwood
Faith Trinity Trinity	Glasgow Plentywood Wolf Point	John Vallie	
Peace/Christ Trinity	Great Falls Great Falls	Joshua Reinke Jonathan Schultz	Darrell Greenwood
Grace	Hamilton	Vern Sandersfeld	Steve Jarvis
Redeemer	Hardin	James Koss	John Foster
Trinity St. Paul	Harlowton Roundup	Terry Forke	Dale Rittierodt
First	Helena	Larry Miller	Walter Wareham
Trinity	Kalispell	Brian Lee	Diane Lee
Circle of Life	Lame Deer	Dennis Bauer	Russel Lundgren
St. John	Laurel	Arlo Pullmann	Chad Nauman
St. John	Libby	Steven Thomas	Daniel Howard

<b><u>Congregation Name</u></b>	<b><u>City</u></b>	<b><u>Pastoral Delegate</u></b>	<b><u>Lay Delegate</u></b>
Trinity	Miles City	Howard Schreibeis	Alicyn Chapman
First	Missoula	David Johnson	Dudley Anderson
Messiah	Missoula	Russell Fitch	Keith Jakle
St. Paul	Park City	Russel Dewell	Allan Sipes
Mt. Calvary Zion	Polson/ St. Ignatius	Kyle Whaley	Mark Scott
St. Paul	Ronan	Richard Schneider	Amy Schneider
Shepherd of the Valley	Salmon, ID	Michael Musegades	Bryan Yamasaki
Our Savior	Stevensville	Andrew Eckert	Harry Miller
Trinity	Superior	Russell Fitch	Keith Jakle
Shepherd of the Valley	Thompson Falls	Jakob Berger	Roland Sweatman
St. Peter	Whitefish	Timothy Christenson	Otto Ratz
Concordia	Williston	David Behm	Eric Corneliusen

## ADVISORY DELEGATES

### Pastoral Advisory Delegates

Brandt, Rev. Christopher (Mt. Olive, Billings)  
Christensen, Rev. Matthew (Chaplain on Active Duty)  
DiConti, Rev. Marc (Chaplain on Active Duty)  
Keinath, Rev. Daniel (Trinity, Billings)  
Kerns, Rev. Scott (Candidate)  
Klug, Rev. Timothy (Candidate)  
Potter, Rev. Jeffery (Candidate)  
Preus, Rev. David (Deployed Missionary)  
Schiemann, Rev. Matthew (First, Bozeman)  
Timber, Rev. Park (Circle of Life, Lame Deer)

### Ordained Emeritus Advisory Delegates

Bueltmann, Rev. Kevin  
Christiansen, Rev. Eric  
Donnan, Rev. John  
Ebel, Rev. Al  
Everson, Rev. Gale  
Kaelberer, Rev. Erich  
Larson, Rev. Raymond  
Lehmann, Rev. Carl  
Linderman, Rev. Bruce  
Menagh, Rev. Jason  
Reiner, Rev. Darold  
Wareham, Rev. Christopher  
Weishoff, Rev. Robert  
Wiegert, Rev. Raymond

### Board of Directors Members

Rev. Terry Forke, President  
Rev. Christopher Tabbert, First Vice-President  
Rev. Ryan Wendt, Second Vice-President  
Rev. Charles Lehmann, Secretary  
Susan Loomans, Treasurer  
Rev. Matthew Nelson  
Roy Arves  
Kendall Hartman  
Keith Meier  
Jerry Roseleip  
Richard Thomas

### Commissioned Advisory Delegates

Boll, Caroline  
Boll, Jennifer  
Boll, John  
Buelتمان, Tawn  
Colclasure, Richelle  
Colclasure, Steven  
Doucette, Rachel  
Eberhrd, Susan  
Elliott, Sarah  
Erger, Lynne  
Groeling, Sarah  
Harding, Nicholas  
Hensel, Tanya  
Heiliger, Andrea  
Heiliger, Cameron  
Hobus, David  
Holste, Ken  
Johnson, Erin  
Johnson, Melody  
Kern, Becky  
Kosche, Kenneth  
Kosche, Thomas  
Lane, Julie  
Lee, Debbie  
Loomans, Ted  
McCoy, Laura  
Peiffer, Clarie (Hoy)  
Rasmussen, Suzanne  
Reeves, Sonja  
Rehbein, Erika  
Rehbein, Timothy  
Roache, Lorraine  
Scott, JeAnne (Faris)  
Thomas, Richard  
Van Luchene, Darrell  
Van Luchene, Sue Zann  
Wegner, Willem

### MT District Nominations Committee

Rev. Blake Marshall, Chairman  
Rev. Willis McCall  
Rev. Kyle Whaley  
Laura White  
Jerry Roseleip

# 2022 District Convention Committee Assignments

## *“Your Word”*

(Psalm 119:105)

### **Floor Committee # 1 Mission**

*Chair-* Arlo Pullmann *Secretary-* Jakob Berger

*Pastor:* David Behm, Russ Fitch, Brian Lee, Matt Nelson, Josh Reinke

*Commissioned:* Jennifer Boll

*Lay:* Kendall Hartman, Diane Lee, Chad Nauman, Bobbi Schenderline, Stephen Schultz, Roland Sweatman

### **Floor Committee # 2 Specialized Ministries**

*Chair-* James Pierce *Secretary-* Sam Grayl

*Pastor:* Dennis Bauer, David Johnson, Robert Lane, Vern Sandersfeld

*Commissioned:* Sue Eberhard

*Lay:* Tim Crosmer, Daniel Howard, Russ Lundgren, James Normak, Dale Rittierodt  
Amy Schneider, Mark Scott, Walter Wareham

### **Floor Committee # 3 Human Care**

*Chair-* Dan Rinderknecht *Secretary-* Michael Musegades

*Pastor:* Chris Brandt, Erik Iverson, Greg Lucido, Larry Miller, Jonathan Schultz, John Vallie

*Commissioned:* Sarah Elliott, Ted Loomans, Lorraine Roache, Laura White

*Lay:* Dudley Anderson, Eric Corneliusen, Darrell Greenwood, Steve Jarvis, Harry Miller, Otto Ratz, Allan Sipes, Joe Veland

### **Floor Committee # 4 Education**

*Chair-* Howard Schreibeis *Secretary-* Russ Dewell

*Pastor:* Tim Christenson, Michael Donnan, Gary Krumdieck, Dan Jacobs, Seve Thomas, Ken Zoeller

*Commissioned:* Nicolaus Harding

*Lay:* Alicyn Chapman, Gregg Hein, Keith Jakle, Ray Koschel, Michael McAnulty, Brian Mittelstedter, Jerry Roseleip, Brady Smelser

### **Floor Committee # 5 Administration**

*Chair-* Larry Miller *Secretary-* Matt Schiemann

*Pastor:* Andrew Eckert, James Koss, Dan Merz, Paul Shupe, Mark Wiegert

*Commissioned:* Cameron Heiliger

*Lay:* Keither Fletcher, John Foster, Thomas Halvorson, Tyler Larson, Jerry Lehr, Chris Moen, Jerome Schelle, Bryan Yamasaki

### **Nominations and Elections Committee**

*Chair-* Blake Marshall

*Pastor:* Kyle Whaley, Willis McCall

*Commissioned:* Laura White

*Lay:* Jerry Roseleip

### **Credentials/Registration Committee**

*Chair-* Mark Schultz

*Pastor:* Rick Schneider

Technical

Chair- Pastor Wendt

Assistants- Tom Kosche, Cameron Heiliger

Trinity School and Church Support Crew

Rick Thomas, Jonathan Boll

Office

Convention Manager- Ruth Kosche

Treasurer- Susan Loomans

Assistants- Laura McCoy, Andrea Heileger

Chaplain

First Vice-President Tabbert

Reader

Second Vice-President Ryan Wendt

Preachers

Circuit Visitors

Musician

Ted Kober

# 35<sup>th</sup> Montana District Convention Minutes

## Montana District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Trinity Lutheran School  
Billings, Montana  
June 13-16, 2022

**“Your Word”**  
(Psalm 119:105)

### Monday

District President Forke opened the convention in the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

District President Forke led the assembly in prayer.

Second Vice President Wendt led us in our initial study of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord (introduction and article I).

District President Forke introduced support staff and crew and made announcements.

Pastor Pullman closed the day with prayer.

### Tuesday

Convention Chaplain Tabbert and Pastor Thomas opened the day with a devotion.

Committee #7 presented the Credentials Report:

- 77 Voting Delegates (38 pastors, 39 lay delegates)
- 4 Advisory Active Pastors
- 4 Advisory Emeritus Pastors
- 12 Advisory Active Commissioned Ministers
- 3 Advisory Emeritus Commissioned Ministers
- 1 Advisory Commissioned Worker Candidate
- 1 Advisory Board of Directors Member
- 1 Vicar

103 registered delegates plus guests

District Second Vice President Wendt led us in our second session of the study of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord (articles II and III).

District President Forke conducted an orientation regarding parliamentary procedure (see workbook, page 13).

Agenda with seminary presentation added on Wednesday at 9:05 a.m. (**Moved, second, adopted. Subsequently this will be notated with *m-s-a.***) (see workbook, pages 4-6)

Vice President Nour (4<sup>th</sup> Vice President of Synod) presented the report of the Synodical President (part 1).

District President Forke gave his report (see workbook, pages 32-37).

District Treasurer Loomans gave her report (see workbook, pages 41-52).

Reverend Kyle Whaley introduced the candidates for all elected offices.

Balloting for District President took place.

All church workers new to the District since the last convention introduced themselves.

Vice President Nour (4<sup>th</sup> Vice President of Synod) presented the report of the Synodical President (part 2).

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the balloting for District President.

Rev. Terry Forke	58
Rev. Arlo Pullman	12
Votes Rejected/ Absentions	2
Total Votes	72

**Rev. Terry Forke is elected.**

Balloting for First Vice President of the District took place.

**Special Standing rules were proposed and adopted.** *m-s-a.*

Pastor Thomas closed the morning session with prayer.

First Vice President Tabbert and Pastor Brandt conducted the afternoon devotion.

District President Forke introduced his wife and offered thanks for his election. He announced that he will not be standing for election in 2025.

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the first ballot for First Vice President:

Rev. David Behm	6
Rev. Christopher Brandt	7
Rev. Richard Schneider	9
Rev. Christopher Tabbert	25
Rev. Ryan Wendt	26
73 votes cast	

**Rev. Behm was removed from the ballot and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot was conducted.**

Second Vice President Wendt led the third session of our study of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord (Articles IV-VI).

Mr. Sean Kowal presented concerning Concordia Plan Services.

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the second ballot for First Vice President:

Rev. Christopher Brandt	2
Rev. Richard Schneider	7

Rev. Christopher Tabbert 29  
Rev. Ryan Wendt 27  
65 votes cast

**Rev. Brandt was removed from the ballot and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot was conducted.**

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the third ballot for First Vice President:

Rev. Richard Schneider 6  
Rev. Christopher Tabbert 32  
Rev. Ryan Wendt 33  
71 votes cast  
1 absention/rejected ballot

**Rev. Schneider was removed from the ballot and the 4<sup>th</sup> ballot was conducted.**

Committee #1 (Missions) presented Resolution 1-01 and moved for adoption. **The resolution was adopted.**

Committee #1 (Missions) presented Resolution 1-02 and moved for adoption. **The resolution was adopted.**

Committee #1 (Missions) presented Resolution 1-03 and moved for adoption. **The resolution was adopted.**

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the fourth ballot for First Vice President:

Rev. Christopher Tabbert 36  
Rev. Ryan Wendt 35  
73 votes cast  
2 absentions/rejected ballots

**Rev. Christopher Tabbert elected.**

The primary ballot for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President was conducted.

Committee #1 (Missions) presented Resolution 1-04 and moved for adoption. **The resolution was defeated.**

Rev. Arlo Pullman, chairman of committee #1, explained the rationale for the floor committee's choice to decline Overture 1-02.

Committee #2 (Specialized Ministries) presented Resolution 2-01 and moved for adoption.

Motion to amend the whereas in lines 12-14 by replacing it with "the suggestion has been made that 2KR is a better paradigm than law and gospel for preaching and teaching, which suggestion has caused discussion around our synod" beginning with the second word. **Adopted.**

**The resolution is adopted.**

Results for the primary ballot for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President were announced:

Rev. David Behm	5	(accepted nomination)
Rev. Christopher Brandt	1	
Rev. Brian Lee	1	
Rev. Charles Lehmann	1	
Rev. Matt Nelson	2	
Rev. Arlo Pullmann	7	(declined the nomination)
Rev. Rick Schneider	7	(accepted the nomination)
Rev. Howard Schreibeis	2	
Rev. Ryan Wendt	42	(accepted the nomination)

Balloting was conducted for the following candidates for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Rev. David Behm  
 Rev. Rick Schneider  
 Rev. Ryan Wendt

Committee #2 (Specialized Ministries) presented Resolution 2-02 and moved for adoption.

Motion to amend line 49 by adding “as selected by the District President.” **Fails for lack of second.**

Motion to strike Pastors in line 49 and replace it with “Board of Directors” and in line 50 to add “to pastors” after instruction. **Defeated.**

Motion to Amend the Title to “To Reject and Condemn the Practice of Virtual (online) Communion.” **Adopted.**

**The resolution is adopted.**

Rev. Whaley presented the results of the balloting for Second Vice President:

Rev. David Behm	4
Rev. Rick Schneider	11
Rev. Ryan Wendt	56
Total votes	71

**Rev. Ryan Wendt is elected.**

Floor nominations were solicited for District Secretary. None were offered. **Rev. Charles Lehmann was elected unanimously by voice vote.**

**The slate of circuit visitors was ratified by unanimous voice vote.**

Rev. Christopher Brandt and Rev. Rick Schneider were nominated for Pastoral Member of the Board of Directors from the floor.

Committee #2 (Specialized Ministries) presented Resolution 2-03 and moved for adoption.

Motion to amend line 11 by adding “assisting congregations in outreach and training which encourages” after specific program and deletes “for outreach, training, and encouraging”. **Adopted.**

Resolution is adopted.

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the first ballot for Pastor Member of the Board of Directors.

Rev. Rick Schneider  
Rev. Christopher Brandt  
Rev. Matthew Nelson

Pastor Brandt closed the day’s business with prayer.

### **Wednesday**

Chaplain Christopher Tabbert and Pastor David Behm led the assembly in an opening devotion.

Second Vice President Wendt led us in our fourth session of study of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord (Article VII).

Rev. Kyle Whaley presented the results of the first ballot for Pastor Member of the Board of Directors.

Rev. Rick Schneider	15
Rev. Christopher Brandt	13
Rev. Matthew Nelson	43
Total Votes	71

**Rev. Matthew Nelson is elected.**

**Mr. Richard Thomas was elected as commissioned minister representative of the Board of Directors by acclamation.**

**Mr. Roy Arves, Mr. Eric Corneliusen, Mr. Kendal Hartman, and Mr. Andy Zoeller were elected as lay representatives to the Board of Directors by acclamation.**

**Rev. Kyle Whaley was elected as the pastor member of the Convention Nominating Committee by acclamation.**

**Mr. Jerry Roseliep was elected as the lay member of the Convention Nominating Committee by acclamation.**

**Mrs. Laura White was elected as the commissioned minister member of the Convention Nominating Committee by acclamation.**

Floor Committee #3 (Human Care) presented Resolution 03-01 and moved adoption. **The resolution is adopted unanimously.**

Floor Committee #3 (Human Care) presented Resolution 03-02 and moved adoption.

Motion to amend by striking lines 48 to 52. **Motion carries.**

Motion to amend by striking “except in exigent situations when attendance is not possible”. **Motion carries.**

Motion to amend by striking “be encouraged to” in lines 39-40. **Motion is defeated.**

**The resolution is adopted as amended.**

Floor Committee #3 (Human Care) presented Resolution 03-03 and moved adoption.

Motion to amend the title by adding “a commission to study the possibility of utilizing a” after “establish.” **Motion is adopted.**

**The resolution is adopted unanimously.**

Chairman Rinderknecht explained the rationale for the committee’s declination of Overture 03-03.

Committee #4 (Education) presented Resolution 4-01 and moved adoption.

Motion to amend line 20 by adding “and other widely accepted theories” after Darwinism. **Motion is adopted.**

**The resolution is adopted unanimously.**

Committee #4 (Education) presented Resolution 4-02 and moved adoption.

**The resolution is adopted unanimously.**

Committee #4 (Education) presented Resolution 4-03 and moved adoption.

Motion to amend by adding “fathers and” in line 31.

Motion to amend the amendment to “fathers and mothers and” and to strike “parents/”. **Motion to amend the amendment is adopted.**

**Motion to amend as amended is adopted.**

Motion to amend line 40 to add “make every effort to” after Committee. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to amend title to include “and Mothers and Caregivers” after “Fathers.” **Motion is defeated.**

Motion to amend to add a resolved before the resolved on line 30:

Resolved, That fathers in the Montana District be encouraged in their God-given responsibility to teach their children the faith, and be it further

**Motion is adopted.**

**The resolution is adopted.**

Committee #4 (Education) presented Resolution 4-04 and moved adoption.

**The resolution is adopted.**

Committee #5 (Administration) presented Resolution 5-01 and moved adoption.

**The resolution is adopted.**

Committee #5 (Administration) presented Resolution 5-02 and moved adoption.

**The resolution is adopted.**

Committee #5 (Administration) presented Resolution 5-03 and moved adoption.

Motion to amend the resolved starting in line 37 by adding “made available upon request” after “be,” striking the rest of the resolved until “and be it further” and to make an equivalent edit in the next resolved. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to refer to committee to address what the resolution is saying about men who are already in the office of the ministry. **Motion to refer is defeated.**

**The resolution is adopted.**

**A motion to amend the orders of the day to facilitate completing convention business on Wednesday was made, seconded, and adopted.**

Second Vice President Wendt led us in our next session studying the Epitome (Articles VIII-X)

Committee #5 (Administration) presented Resolution 5-04 and moved adoption.

**Resolution is adopted.**

Motion to use the convention offering to support the mission in Challis, Idaho. **The motion is seconded and adopted.**

Pastor Jacobs moved a resolution which is designated Resolution 1-05. The motion was seconded.

Motion to amend line 21 to add “which may be” after “study” and to delete “to be” after the insertion. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to amend the title to strike “the Issue of ‘Us/Them’” from the title. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to amend line 29 by adding “or his designee” after President. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to amend to strike everything from “into” on line 16 through “genocide” on line 20. **Motion is adopted.**

Motion to amend by striking “us/them” from the resolved. **Motion is adopted.**

**Resolution is defeated.**

Pastor Pullman made a motion designated Resolution 3-04. Motion was seconded.

**Resolution is adopted unanimously.**

Advisory delegates caucused and made the following selections:

**The commissioned minister delegate is Mr. Tom Kosche. The alternate is Mrs. Sue Eberhard.**

**The ordained delegate is Ray Larson. The alternate is Matt Schiemann.**

Committee #7 (Registration and Credentials) presented their final report.

Second Vice President Wendt led us in our final study of the Epitome.

President Forke adjourned the convention in the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

## **Election Results**

**District President** Rev. Terry Forke, Billings

**First Vice-President** Rev. Chris Tabbert, Anaconda

**Second Vice-President** Rev. Ryan Wendt, Billings

### **Board of Directors**

**Secretary** Rev. Charles Lehmann, Belgrade, Three Forks

**Pastor Member** Rev. Matt Nelson, Columbia Falls

**Commissioned Member** Principal Rick Thomas, Billings

### **Lay Members**

Mr. Roy Arves, Great Falls

Mr. Eric Corneliusen, Williston, ND

Mr. Kendall Hartman, Billings

Mr. Andrew Zoeller, Billings

### **Circuit Visitors**

Central Rev. Johnathan Schultz, Great Falls

Divide Rev. Daniel Merz, Livingston

Eastern Rev. David Behm, Williston, ND

Flathead Rev. Steven Thomas, Libby

Southern Rev. Christopher Brandt, Billings

Western Rev. Raymond Larson, Sr., Stevensville

### **Convention Nominating Committee**

**Pastors** Rev. Kyle Whaley, Polson

**Commissioned** Principal Laura White, Kalispell

**Lay** Mr. Jerry Roseleip, Deer Lodge

## **“Thy Word”**

### **President’s Report 2022 Montana District Convention**

Unmoored- our nation has been chewing away at the line that has provided safe anchor from the beginning. For centuries believers and unbelievers alike had some sense that the Word of God contained wisdom that stood the nation and its citizens in good stead. No more! We are completely unmoored from God’s Word. No one outside of the Church any longer finds value in God’s Word. What is more, huge swaths of “the Church” have abandoned God’s Word for their own understanding. Without this anchor we are subject to the wind, waves, tides, and terrors of this world. The authors of the Formula of Concord rightly reminded us that the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Let’s take a few minutes to look at what Psalm 119, the source of our theme verse, has to say about the Word of God.

#### **I. His Word.**

A. God’s Word gives life.

1. “My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word!” V25
2. “I am severely afflicted; give me life, O LORD, according to your word!” V 107

The Word of God created all life in the beginning when He spoke it into existence. His Word alone gives life when it is spoken as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As you receive physical life by God’s creation, so you receive spiritual life when He creates faith in Christ in you by the power of His Word.

B. God’s Word never changes.

1. “Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.” V89
2. “The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.” V160

The Word of God is the only permanent fixture of truth upon which we can build our lives. Our culture presses science forward as the final arbiter of truth, but this can only lead you away from the truth of God’s Word. Scientific truths change from age to age as observations change, but the Word of God is always true and fixed by God’s command.

C. God’s Word directs our life.

1. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” V 105
2. “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” V 130

Book stores are crammed full of self-help tomes. The Word of God does not teach you how to help yourself. It teaches you how God has helped you through the work

of Jesus and how it continues to help you by strengthening your faith. He provides the answers you need to live your life in faith in Jesus who is the light of the world.

D. God's Word gives salvation.

1. "My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word." V 81

2. "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word." V 114

The Word of God teaches the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith means to see what can be only seen through faith. It is not based on evidence, but on the Word of God. Consequently, Christians are alive in hope. We hope in Jesus to have all that we need for this life and the next.

E. God's Word gives strength

1. "My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!"

V 28

2. "Then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me, for I trust in your word."

V 42

Do you sometimes get weary with the drag and stress of this daily life? Where do you turn for strength? The psalmist reminds us that the Word of God is our strength. We cannot find strength in ourselves or in our own words. Likewise, the words of worldly voices may sound cute, and perhaps even wise, but only the Word of God can give the strength you need to endure in faith through this sinful world.

F. God's Word gives joy.

1. "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

V103

2. "I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil." V 162

The world depends on happiness to make it through the day. Happiness, however, is dependent on the circumstances of this life. If the circumstances are not what you envisioned, you will not be happy. Joy is not based the circumstances of life, but on the Word of God. We hear that we are forgiven in Jesus, and we rejoice despite the circumstances of life.

## II. His Word in the Church

As the pressures on the Church grow as result of living in a world that is less respectful of the faith, it will become more and more significant that Christians are steeped in the Word of God. It is the only source of strength, peace, and endurance for the days ahead. This is why we listen to the Word during the Sunday services and bible class. This is why we attend weekly bible studies and hold family devotions. That is why, even at district conventions we devote so much time to the study of God's Word.

The problem is that sinners forget God's Word. Even in the most dramatic of circumstances we can forget what God has said to us. The ladies went to the tomb on Easter morning and the angel said, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."* Luke 24:5-7. If the ladies who cared for Jesus had to be reminded of His Word how much more so do we, who in the busyness of our lives lose track of what He has to say to us, need to be reminded.

This is one reason that God invented the Office of Pastor. God sends Pastors to congregations to remind us of His Word, to deliver the gifts of Word and Sacrament so that we can regularly hear what God has to say to us. Pastors, as God's stewards, not only speak to the church members God has given them, but they also speak to a world that is lost in sin. Teachers in our Lutheran schools also teach God's Word daily to the children in their care.

Much has been written about how the Church is in decline. While the number of Americans who claim to be Christians fell from 70% in 1950 to 60% in 2020, the overall percentage of Americans attending church fell from 23% to 8% during the same time period.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the number of Americans claiming no religious affiliation grew from 36 million in 2007 to 56 million in 2014. Estimates are that 3500 people are leaving the church every day.

One perspective on this decline is to wring our hands, descend into a depression, and calculate the days until the Church disappears. On the other hand, we could begin to calculate how many people need to hear about Jesus. The answer, of course, is all of them. This ought to remind us that Jesus said, *"The fields are white for the harvest."* John 4:35 There is much for us to do.

When Jesus contemplated the harvest of those who were yet to know Him, He did not wring His hands. Instead, He folded them, and encouraged you to do likewise. *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."* Luke 10:2

In 2022 we can again say that the laborers are few. From 2004 to 2018 enrollment for pre-seminary (undergraduates) students declined 59% and for Lutheran school teacher 61%. Enrollment at the seminaries has declined 55%.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, 44% of active ordained men are over 55 years of age.

With these statistics in mind The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has initiated a program entitled "Set Apart to Serve" (SAS). It's goal is to encourage young men and women to go into full time church work. The program's early research has found that the top four influences that lead young people into church work are: Pastors, Commissioned workers, Family, Lutheran School teachers. They have also discovered that youth going into church work are generally deciding in late middle school to early high school years. Resources for this program can be found at the LCMS website.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Church workers, parents, grandparents, congregational members, for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel please prayerfully consider how you may encourage young people to consider church work. I sincerely hope that this convention will adopt a resolution encouraging congregations to participate in "Set Apart to Serve."

### III. His Word in the Home.

Worldly pressures are not only growing on the Church but also on the Christian family. There are forces that have proudly, publicly announced their desire to eradicate the nuclear family. These are generally anti-marriage forces. They believe that marriage harms their opportunities to function in the world as they desire. Christian families have only begun to feel this force. A more ubiquitous, if not widely recognized, force is that of extra-curricular activities that compete with Christian worship and education and fracture the family with a constant busyness. Many Christian parents have been convinced by the spirit of the age that they are being good parents when they enroll their children in multiple activities that just happen to preclude attendance at Sunday worship or catechism instruction. Somehow making it into a good university, or gaining a scholarship, has become more important than investing in an eternal welfare.

In contrast, listen to what God says about the responsibilities of parents. God commands parents to train children in the Word. *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 6:4 Long before Paul, Moses wrote, *"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* Deuteronomy 6:6-9. At its 2019 convention The LCMS called for parents to take these texts to heart in its Resolution 12-03a "Resolved, that congregations should encourage and train parents, guardians, and members to be active teachers and life-long learners of the faith..." (Emphasis added)

If Christian parents were to take this charge seriously perhaps we could head off a looming crisis. The family is in trouble in the United States. Although there is ample evidence, very few people seem to admit the significance of the father of the family actively living the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> If a father does not go to Church, even if the mother does only 2% of the children will become a regular worshipper in adulthood. If a father does attend, regardless of what the mother does over 66% of the children will become regular worshippers. If a mother is the first person in a family to become a Christian, there is a 17% probability the household will follow. If a father is the first person in a family to become a Christian, there is a 93% probability that the household will follow. These hard statistics are not meant to diminish the role of the mother, they are simply a much-ignored reality.

These statistics also reflect how households in America have changed. Fewer than 25% of households are traditional nuclear families.<sup>4</sup> Our Lutheran school Teachers experience the fallout of this truth daily. They are also undoubtedly aware that 33% of American children are born out of wedlock.

How can Christian parents prepare their children for life with Jesus while at the same time help fend off the decline of our culture? The answer is not rocket science. Simply put, do what our Father has told us to do, read, study, and discuss His Word in our families. Consider the following statistics. If the Word of God is not taught and discussed in the family around 20% of the children will continue in the faith. If the Word of God is taught and discussed in the family around 65% of the children will continue in the faith. When both parents attend Sunday School 72% of their children will attend Sunday School when grown. When neither parent attends Sunday School 6% of their children will attend when grown. I sincerely hope that this convention will adopt a resolution encouraging, and equipping parents to raise their children in the faith.

#### **IV. His Word in the Lutheran School.**

One of the most overlooked jewels in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is our Lutheran schools. These schools cannot take the place of Christian parents, but they are a marvelous supplement, and are pledged to the teaching of God's Word. We all know and agree that religion cannot be taught in public schools, but Lutheran Schools are places where God's Word is taught in every subject. Even if you do not have school age children you should be aware that our Lutheran Teachers seek to relate the Word of God to every subject taught in school. Jesus is not relegated to "religion" class. He is real in every subject.

In addition to godly subject matter, Lutheran Schools are also places where teachers model the love of Christ. Children are not subjected to the latest fads of the godless world in Lutheran schools. Instead, they are taught to avoid the ways of the world. This is not only taught. It is modelled in the words and lives of their teachers. Sometimes these attitudes are more readily caught than taught.

Lutheran Schools do not drive a wedge between the students and their parents. They are places where families are supported through the Word. A lateral benefit of Lutheran Schools is that because they follow the Word of God, they are also in the process of encouraging and enabling families to function as God calls them to function. I sincerely hope that this convention will adopt a resolution encouraging the support of our Lutheran grade and high schools.

One more issue should be drawn to your attention. Lutheran Schools depend on orthodox education of their teachers. I have already noted the dire statistics regarding the number of Lutheran Teachers available. This is not a matter of numbers only. Many of you will be aware of the difficulties that our LCMS universities have been experiencing. Most of them are educating a very low percentage of Lutheran Church workers. Some have struggled with outside forces like gender-theory and critical race

theory. If their primary objective is not to educate Lutheran Church workers, the pressure to compromise His Word in favor of one program or another is great. At our 2018 Montana District convention we adopted a resolution calling for a study of our LCMS universities. It was not acted on by the 2019 Synodical convention. I sincerely hope that this convention will adopt a resolution calling for a thorough study of the LCMS university system, with an eye toward prioritizing the education of Lutheran Church workers.

## **Conclusion**

Dear brothers and sisters, I conclude by encouraging you not to despair. Despite the severe statistics I have shared, we know that God's Word is victorious. The Word was put in the tomb once before, but death could not hold it there. He is risen! *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* Hebrews 4:12-13.

This sword is at work in you and in the world, and it will continue to be victorious. You can always depend on it for it is truly a lamp to your feet and a light to your path

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<sup>1</sup> Church information from "The Development of Lutheran Faith Formation for the Next Generation: A synopsis of the Generation to Generation Project of the Mid-South District LCMS.

<sup>2</sup> Set Apart to Serve research

<sup>3</sup> Family information from "The Development of Lutheran Faith Formation for the Next Generation: A synopsis of the Generation to Generation Project of the Mid-South District LCMS.

<sup>4</sup> Pew Research Group in "The Development of Lutheran Faith Formation for the Next Generation: A synopsis of the Generation to Generation Project of the Mid-South District LCMS.

# District President Oral Report

## 35<sup>th</sup> Montana District Convention

### 2022

#### I. The Word of God is living and active.

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

(Hebrews 4:12)

The English language comprises around one million words at present. The average American adult uses about 42,000 of them at his prime. That means the average English speaker uses about 4% of the words that are available to him. Nonetheless, words play a major role in our everyday lives. We are constantly using words. On one level we comprehend their power. We know they can be used for good or evil. We understand that words can whip a crowd into a frenzy of mob action, or they can calm and give peace in the midst of turmoil.

What we may never consider is the deficiencies of our words, what they cannot do. Our words cannot create or sustain life. They cannot peer into the soul of a man and discern the thoughts and intentions of his heart. These powerful functions are reserved for the Word of God. Imagine, for a moment a Word so powerful that, when spoken, can bring a universe into existence. Imagine a Word so powerful that, when believed, can raise a cold, dead, sin-drenched heart from the tomb of damnation to the throne of heaven where it becomes a living, breathing child of God. Imagine a Word so powerful that it can cause humans to see themselves as they really are, a Word that can direct all of humankind to a more meaningful, life of love for God and neighbor.

You don't have to imagine such a Word because you already hold it in your hands and in your heart. This is the Word of God. It is living and active, according to the writer to the Hebrews. Not only does it have life in it, but it also brings about life. It doesn't stir a foul furor of useless activity. The Word of God is always active toward faith in Jesus and life in His name. This you have witnessed in your own life. When the Word of God was spoken over you in your baptism its life, its energy was directed toward bringing you to eternal life through faith in Jesus.

The work of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is not to proclaim this powerful Word, (although that does happen incidentally). The synod is not the Church. The work of the synod is to support the congregations and church workers who are responsible for the proclamation of the Word. Sometimes, I hear people talk about “the synod” as if it is above the congregations. This should never be true. The synod exists only to assist congregations in various ways. As the president of the Montana district today I report to you some of the ways that the synod works to support the work of the Word that you church workers and lay people are doing every day.

## **II. The Montana district supports the work of the Word through finances.**

I am sure that it is difficult for you to know about or to remember all that the district does for the congregations and church workers. I want to remind you of this activity not for the purpose of drawing attention to the district, but in order to put the work of the district in the context of the work of the Word of God. It is the sincere desire of the leadership of the Montana district that all that it does is focused on supporting the congregations and church workers as they go about the work of the Word where God has placed them.

### Gifts

From time to time the physical needs of congregations get in the way of their efforts to proclaim the Word. Furnaces fail, roofs rot, and sidewalks sag. That is the way of life in a sinful world. The district is in a position to help with these needs through gifts to congregations when something goes wrong. Our Mission and Ministry fund, for these purposes is strong. Various congregations have asked for and received help from the district for these types of needs.

In addition, the district has helped facilitate gifts from one congregation to the next. Congregations that have been blessed with an abundance have called me to ask if there are any congregations that are in particular need. It is a great joy to observe brothers and sisters caring for each other's needs in this way.

### Grants

Lutheran Schools- The Montana district has a Schools Grant Fund through which grants are given, upon application, to support the work of the Word in our schools. The Montana district has six elementary schools and fourteen preschools that may benefit from this fund. The fund provides around \$5,000 a year in grants.

Church worker student loan repayment- I am sure you are aware that student indebtedness is a big problem. For church workers who come out of college and seminary owing thousands of dollars for their education this debt can prove debilitating. They may feel pressure to move to a larger congregation where they might be better able to handle their payments.

The Montana district has a program to help church workers with student loan repayments. Every year we give away around \$30,000 to help repay loans.

### Missionaries

In the past four years the Montana district has helped support five long-term and two short-term missionaries of the synod in the amount of \$51,900. The Board of Directors determined this was not only a good way to support the work of the Word but also a good example to the congregations of our district.

### Scholarships

Church workers- Educating church workers is a primary function of the synod. If we do not have enough church workers, which at present we do not, (see my written report page 34) the work of the Word will suffer. Education is expensive, so, the Montana district maintains a sizable fund to grant scholarships to students committed to church. Each year we give away around \$30,000 in scholarships to students who are committed to studying for full-time church work.

Lutheran school students- Sending your children to one of our Lutheran elementary schools is also expensive. We believe in our schools, so at the last district convention a fund was established to help schools have some money to offer to families that would like to attend a Lutheran school but need help. Each year we give around \$3000 to help students attend these schools.

### Subsidies

The Montana district supports four ministries through heavy subsidies. The members of these congregations certainly do their part to keep their congregations going, but the circumstances are such that they cannot do it on their own. That is where the district comes in. The district is able to distribute resources in such a way that tiny strategically located congregations can be supported.

#### Anaconda- Redeemer

We began work at re-invigorating this congregation in 2018. Anaconda is sixth largest community in Montana. We think it is important to be represented there. Pastor Jim Pierce serves.

#### Big Timber/Livingston- Emmaus

We began work in this field as an intentional dual-parish. Recently, the congregation determined that the work in Big Timber was not proving fruitful and regrettably, they closed that wing of the congregation. The work of the Word in Livingston, however, is growing strong.

#### Crow Agency- Crow Lutheran Ministries

Indian ministry began in the 1970s in Montana. For 50 some years the district has consistently agreed, despite the difficulty of advancing the Gospel on the Crow and Cheyenne reservations, that these are places that need extra care for the work of the Word to continue. Each reservation represents a large isolated population that needs to hear about Jesus. Pastor Dan Jacobs serves Crow.

#### Lame Deer- Circle of Life

Pastor Dennis Bauer serves Lame Deer.

## Disclaimer

The Montana District Board of Directors does its best to support the work of the Word through financial assistance. Obviously, everyone will not agree on the decisions of the Board, but the directors are good men that you have elected. They are always striving to make godly decisions. Please keep them in your prayers.

### **III. The Montana district supports the work of the Word through visitation.**

One of the primary duties of a synod is what goes by the name of “ecclesiastical supervision.” The term means that congregations of The LCMS can depend on the synod to supervise the doctrine and behavior of both church workers and congregations.

The chief mechanism of seeing to this supervisory responsibility of the synod is the visitation program of the district president. Every triennium the district president visits the congregations, the schools and the church workers of the district. The idea is that through presence and teaching the district president reminds congregations and church workers that they are not alone. They are apart of the larger body, the Church. Congregations and church workers need to be reminded that no matter how remote, how small, or how unpromising their work seems to be, they are an important part of the work of the Word. Whether proclaiming to hundreds or tens, God uses His people to speak the truth of His Word into the world.

The visitation of the district president is ultimately focused on the work of the Word. How is the congregation proclaiming the Gospel? How are the church workers doing the same? What are the unique characteristics of this community that create opportunities for God’s Word to be spoken and heard? What hindrances are they experiencing, and what can the district do to help them move forward? Without a visitation program congregations may tend to feel alone and isolated, and church workers may feel as if no one cares. They may forget they are part of the larger confession. Pressures may move them in the direction of thinking only of the benefits to their congregation. These pressures do not benefit the work of the Word. The district president visits for the sake of the proclamation of the Word of God.

### **IV. The Montana district supports the work of the Word through conflict resolution.**

Conflict is a normal part of life in a sinful world. Congregations and church workers sometimes end up at odds with each other. The synod has developed the office of district president as the primary guardian of doctrine and practice. This office then, is often the first resource within the synod for dealing with conflict. The intent is to bring healing for the sake of the work of the Word. If a church worker is behaving in an ungodly manner, or is teaching falsely, the congregation may need help to bring the worker to repentance. The district president is careful, on the one hand to protect congregations from church workers who would harm the work of the Word.

On the other hand, if a congregation is behaving in an ungodly manner, or is insisting on false teaching, the church worker may need help in bringing the congregation to repentance. In that case the district president works to protect the church worker from a congregation that would harm the work of the Word.

The goal is confession and absolution, and this powerful tool is often put to use so that the work of the Word can be restored in an effective manner. Conflict is never easy, but God works in mysterious ways. Through difficult times our faith is often strengthened. There are moments when we see God at work to save us. Conflict is often one of those moments, although we rarely think of it as a way that God uses to promote the proclamation of the Word. In that we would be wrong. Avoiding all conflict does not serve the proclamation of the Gospel.

#### **V. The Montana district supports the work of the Word through representation.**

I am convinced that the Montana district has much to say to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The congregations and church workers of this district are deeply devoted to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. This devotion to the Word, and the relationships between church workers based on the Word, has historically, preserved us from faddish influences of the world. The solid body of work offered to the synod by the previous district president, the sainted George Wollenburg has secured the Montana district a reputation for truth telling.

I have striven to maintain this reputation by representing the Montana district at all meetings on a synodical level. Chief among those are the meetings of the Council of Presidents. This quarterly meeting of the 35 district presidents as well as the President and vice-presidents of the synod usually runs around 5 days. During that time we study the Scriptures and Confessions, as well as manage the roster of church workers, deal with discipline, and plot strategy for the work of the Word. In all of these areas as well as others that occur from time to time, it is good for the synod to hear from the representative of the Montana district.

The voice of the Montana district is also heard by the LCMS through the work of this body. Solid, biblical, and common sense resolutions have flowed from the Montana district convention to the synod convention for decades. This convention will be no different.

The Montana district is represented to the LCMS not for the sake of its reputation, but for the sake of the proclamation of the Word. This opportunity is a great blessing, and by God's grace it will benefit the work of the Word.

#### **VI. The Montana district supports the work of the Word through a common confession.**

Look around you dear brothers and sisters. In this room are delegates from the 68 congregations of the Montana district. They are more than delegates. They are brothers and sisters in the family of God. They are more than brothers and sisters,

because all believers are so. These brothers and sisters hold the same confession of faith that you hold. That unity is a tremendous, if often overlooked blessing. I want to emphasize here how much we need each other. As the pressures rise on Christians to compromise the Word, I think we will find that we need each other more and more. There is great value in the encouragement we gain from each other to stay strong in the Word. It is easy to see this at times like this when we are all together. Remember this moment. Strive to maintain the unity of the faith, and to build each other up in love and good works. Pray for each other. Love at all times.

There is a tendency for every congregation to be primarily concerned with its own needs and desires, to make decisions that benefit its own bottom line. Focusing on the work of the Word upends the priority list. We are 68 congregations working together to enhance the pure proclamation of the Word in the area of the country that God has given to us. If the common confession gains the priority in the Montana district some decisions may be influenced in a different direction. This already happens but I am calling for us to be more mindful of the need.

For example, I was present when a triple parish was setting its budget for the year. The representative of one of the congregations stood up and said, "Our congregation has had a really good year. We know that your congregation has not had such a good year. This year we would like to shoulder a bit more of the financial burden in order to help you get back on your feet." I tell you that I had tears in my eyes on that day. Were purer words of concern for the common confession ever spoken?

We want the Word to be proclaimed in its truth and purity. We know that our confession does that, so we look to expand its reach. When we look at the map of Montana there are certain areas where the LCMS is not well represented. This concern for the common confession has everything to do with the work of the Word. It drives a strategic program for where we want to maintain congregations and where we want to open new ones. Today, we celebrate this common confession. We rejoice that God has brought us together in such a way that we agree to speak and act in accordance with the Word of God as confessed in the Lutheran Confessions.

So, I encourage you to cherish this moment. Use this week to develop lasting relationships with brothers and sisters from across the district. Get out of your comfort zone and introduce yourself to delegates you don't know. Ask them about their own lives and about the conditions of their home congregation. This is not just an exercise in human relations. This is about the work of the Word. I am certain that we will need each other when persecutions come. Now is a great time to lay a foundation for helping one another in the future work of the Word.

Look around you dear brothers and sisters. You are the Church, and God has given you to each other, and to the work of the Word.

## **VII. The Word of God does not return void.**

This mustard seed of a Word is a small thing in the eyes of the world. It does not seek political or personal power. It does not compromise itself for the sake of success.

It does not make financial profit a priority. It is the still small voice of the Spirit that changes hearts and minds by creating faith in Jesus. This is the work of the Word, faith in Jesus.

This Word does not always make sense to us. Why is it so difficult to support our church workers and our congregations? Why are so many of our congregations getting smaller? Why do people no longer want to attend Sunday services? Why does the world suddenly hate us? It may not always make sense, but it always accomplishes what God wants even if we don't understand or recognize what it has done. This is the foundation and goal of all that we do in the Montana district. We trust the Word of God to do the work God promised it would do, and we ask Him to bless our work to that end.

Hear the Word of the Lord through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, and find comfort in this truth.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but  
water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I  
sent it.*

Isaiah 55:8-11.

Pastor Terry Forke  
June 14, 2022  
Montana District Convention

## Resolutions of the Montana District Convention 2022

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Action</u>
1-01	To Prayerfully and Financially Support Shepherd of the Valley (Salmon, ID) Lutheran Church's Mission Ministry to the People of Challis, ID	Adopted
1-02	To Encourage Coordination within Circuits for the Mutual Benefit of Congregations	Adopted
1-03	To Invite Congregations to Utilize "Set Apart to Serve"	Adopted
1-04	To Create an Online Alternative Leading Toward Ordination and Full Master of Divinity Degree	NOT Adopted
1-05	To Develop a Bible Study to Address the Issue of "Us/Them" Divisions and How That Issue Impedes the Service of the Gospel	NOT Adopted
2-01	To Emphasize the Teaching of Law and Gospel	Adopted as Amended
2-02	To Reject and Condemn the Practice of Virtual (online) Communion	Adopted as Amended
2-03	To Implement the 2019 Synod Resolution 12-03a To Encourage and Train Parents and Guardians and Members to Be Active Teachers and Life Long Learners of the Faith	Adopted as Amended
3-01	To Encourage and Emphasize the Need for Congregations in the Montana District to Continue Efforts to Support the Sanctity of Human Life	Adopted

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Action</u>
3-02	To Reaffirm the Biblical Practice of Gathered Local Congregations with Rightly Called Local Pastors and To Encourage Congregations to Practice In-person Worship, Teaching, and Administration of the Sacraments	Adopted as Amended
3-03	To Direct Synod in Convention to Establish a Commission to Study the Possibility of Utilizing a Health Sharing Community Group	Adopted as Amended
3-04	To Acknowledge that Drag Queen Performances are an Offense to God	Adopted
4-01	To Develop Biblically Faithful Textbooks/ Curricula for Our Day Schools, High Schools, And Home Schools	Adopted as Amended
4-02	To Encourage Both LCMS Seminaries to Continue Training Men for Faithful Service and To Petition the Synod to Dramatically Increase Funds Sent to Undesignated Seminary Operations	Adopted
4-03	To Encourage and Equip Fathers in their God Given Task of Raising Children in the Faith	Adopted as Amended
4-04	To Appoint a Task Force to Refocus the Concordia University System for the Education of Professional Church Workers Consistent with the Lutheran Confessions	Adopted
5-01	To Amend the Montana District Bylaws to Provide for the Care of an Outgoing District President in a Manner Consistent With the Care Given by Synod to an Outgoing President	Adopted as Amended

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Action</u>
5-02	To Restore the Binding Key to the Rite of Ordination and Installation of a Pastor	Adopted
5-03	To Prevent the Admission, Reinstatement, or Colloquization of a Divorced Man into the Office of the Public Ministry who has Married Another Woman	Adopted as Amended
5-04	To Reform the Composition of the Board of Regents of the Universities of the Concordia University System to Improve Doctrinal Fidelity and Amenability to Ecclesiastical Supervision	Adopted

## RESOLUTION #1-01

**Title: To Prayerfully and Financially Support Shepherd of the Valley (Salmon, ID) Lutheran Church's Mission Ministry to the People of Challis, ID**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself gives us the command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19); and

WHEREAS, The 2019 LCMS Convention passed four National Witness resolutions, including Res. 1-02, "To Encourage the Planting of Churches"; and

WHEREAS, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Salmon, Idaho, has a history over the past decades of providing mission ministry and prayer support to the people of Challis, Idaho (60 miles upriver, south of Salmon); and

WHEREAS, There is a current need for mission work to the people of Challis; and

WHEREAS, The congregation of Shepherd of the Valley has been conducting worship services in the Challis Community Church twice a month since Easter of 2021, with an average attendance of 18.5 people, making it the highest attended worship service of any Christian denomination in Challis; and

WHEREAS, The congregation of Shepherd of the Valley has recently voted to expand the mission ministry efforts to the people of Challis to include weekly worship services, confirmation classes, Sunday School, and, God willing, the eventual planting of a new LCMS church; and

WHEREAS, The congregation of Shepherd of the Valley has thus far been the sole provider of all pastoral support, worship assistance personnel, worship service materials/resources, time, travel, and financial resources; and

WHEREAS, The Montana District President has obtained the blessing from the Northwest District President for the expansion of mission work into this area of Idaho; therefore be it

*RESOLVED*, That all congregations in the Montana District be encouraged to diligently pray for the mission work that the Holy Spirit is doing in the people of Challis through Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Salmon; and be it finally

*RESOLVED*, That – when and if needed – financial assistance from the Montana District be provided at the Board of Directors' discretion to help defray the costs of needs to support a mission in Challis, including, but not limited to: renting, heating the place of worship, supplies, and travel costs.

## RESOLUTION #1-02

**Title: To Encourage Coordination within Circuits for the Mutual Benefit of Congregations**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, "A visitation circuit is a network of congregations that 'walks together' for mutual care, support, advice, study, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and counsel – all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God's mission" (LCMS 2019 Handbook, bylaw 5.1.1); and

WHEREAS, The circuit gathers together in forum for its mutual benefit and encouragement in said work and outreach; and

WHEREAS, Congregations within each circuit, blessed by God in many and various ways, are in position to support one another to meet local needs; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That circuits working through the Circuit Forum evaluate shared needs, hardships, and opportunities; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the 2022 Montana District Convention encourage the circuits working through the Circuit Forum to coordinate opportunities for partnership, such as, but not limited to, Vacation Bible School, pulpit supply, support for new and ongoing missions, and needs that arise due to vacancies.

## RESOLUTION #1-03

**Title: To Invite Congregations to Utilize “Set Apart to Serve”**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, The pressure is growing on the Church as a result of living in a world that is less respectful of the Christian faith; and

WHEREAS, The need for pastors and church workers is urgent, as studies show that because of the significant number of pastors reaching retirement age, we will see the number of ordained pastors decline from 6,000 to 3,000 over the next fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, From 2004 to 2018 enrollment for pre-seminary (undergraduate) students declined 59% and for Lutheran school teachers 61%; enrollment at the seminaries has declined 55%, and 44% of active ordained men are over 55 years of age, according to “Set Apart to Serve” research; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that the top four influencers that lead young people into church work are: ordained and commissioned workers, Lutheran school teachers, and families; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has initiated a program entitled “Set Apart to Serve,” the purpose of which is to encourage young men and women to go into full time church work; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in convention invite congregations of the District, the ordained and commissioned workers, Lutheran school teachers, and families to utilize “Set Apart to Serve” as they encourage young men and women to enter church work vocations.

President Forke report, §II  
MT Dist. Convention Handbook, pp. 33-35

## RESOLUTION #1-04

**Title: To Create an Online Alternative Leading Toward Ordination and Full Master of Divinity Degree**

**Action: NOT ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, God's Word calls us to pray for additional workers in the harvest, "When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest'" (Matthew 9:36-37, ESV); and

WHEREAS, the reformers write in *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* that the local church is granted the rite of ordination, "[Christ] grants the power of the keys principally and without mediation to the church, and for the same reason the church has primary possession of the right to call ministers" (*Treatise*, 24); and

WHEREAS, The need for pastors and church workers is urgent, as studies show that because of the significant number of pastors reaching retirement age, we will see the number of ordained pastors decline from 6,000 to 3,000 over the next fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, From 2004 to 2018 enrollment for pre-seminary (undergraduate) students declined 59% and for Lutheran school teachers 61%; enrollment at the seminaries has declined 55%, and 44% of active ordained men are over 55 years of age, according to "Set Apart to Serve" research; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. James Baneck, in his August 2021 article "Understanding the Church Worker Recruitment Initiative" wrote, "Yet, we are not driven by fear but hope. We raise up workers in the church not to sustain institutions but to serve the church"; and

WHEREAS, the congregations of the Montana District LCMS give thanks to God and celebrate the various alternate routes to ordination and pastoral ministry available in the LCMS, there is a growing need for general ordination pastors who are able to receive divine calls from congregations without restriction, provide supervision for other rostered church workers, supervise vicars, hold elected or appointed office on the district or national Synod level such as a Circuit Visitor, and vote as delegates at the Synodical conventions of the church; and

WHEREAS, there are pathways by which pastors, from church bodies outside the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, who meet specific criteria may secure admission to

the ministerium of the LCMS as general ordination pastors through Colloquy. This admission may be provided through a “colloquy” (discussion, interview) with the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry; therefore be it

Resolved, to encourage the Montana District in convention to support the exploration of an online and remote option leading to ordination and a full Master of Divinity degree; and be it finally

Resolved, the Montana District in convention memorialize the LCMS to be gathered in convention in 2023 by submitting this resolution to same.

President Forke report, §II  
MT Dist. Convention Handbook, pp. 33-35

## RESOLUTION #01-05

**Title: To Develop a Bible Study to Address Divisions and How That Issue Impedes the Service of the Gospel**

**Action: NOT ADOPTED**

To clarify, in this overture "division" is defined as standing apart, usually with some hostility. This is not to be confused with "difference", which is to acknowledge (and hopefully respect) that everyone is different in some way. For example, respecting that there is difference between female and male, and that there is blessing in the difference; whereas with division between female and male can lead to conflict and harm of one another.

WHEREAS, God created the human race, male and female, from one (Genesis 2:7 and Acts 17:26) in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28), and, therefore, all people are equal by virtue of creation; and

WHEREAS, Because of Adam's disobedience, everyone is infected by sin and comes short of the glory of God, yet God gave His Son to reconcile to Himself all people (II Corinthians 5:19, John 3:16, and Genesis 3:15), and, therefore, all people are equal by virtue of Christ's redemptive work; and

WHEREAS, It is God's desire to have all people live in His salvation (Ezekiel 18:32, I Timothy 2:4, Titus 2:11 and II Peter 3:9) and, therefore, the Gospel is for all people; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that the only true division between humans is whether they are in Christ or not, because of our sinful nature, generally people throughout history have in some way divided; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District President or his designee develop a Bible study which may be used in Circuit forums over the next triennium to address the issue of divisions and how that issue impedes the service of the Gospel.

## RESOLUTION #2-01

**TITLE: To Emphasize the Teaching of Law and Gospel**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, The Montana District devoted time to the study of the Formula of Concord, Epitome at its 2022 District Convention; and

WHEREAS, This confession placed special emphasis on the teaching of the Law and the Gospel by saying, in part, “We believe, teach and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be kept in the Church with great diligence as a particularly brilliant light.” (Formula of Concord Epitome Art. V.); and

WHEREAS, Without the proper distinction of Law and Gospel the Holy Scriptures remain a closed book<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, The suggestion has been made that “two kinds of righteousness” is a better paradigm than law and gospel for preaching and teaching, which suggestion has caused discussion around our synod; and

WHEREAS, The law/gospel structure of sermons has been cast as outdated in some circles, in favor of more creative rhetorical approaches; and

WHEREAS, As few as 34% of the teachers in the K-12 school of our Synod are rostered Lutheran teachers<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, This “particularly brilliant light” offers a key understanding of the “Good News” to both catechumens and seasoned believers; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That delegates to the 2022 Montana District Convention rejoice in being renewed in this article of doctrine by sharing it in their reports to their congregations; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Pastors and teachers of the Montana District be encouraged to keep this teaching with great diligence through proper instruction and supervision; and be it further

*Resolved*, That pastors of churches in the Montana District which operate schools engage with school leaders to ensure that teachers are instructed in the proper application of Law and Gospel in teaching; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That pastors of churches in the Montana District which operate schools engage with school leaders to ensure that teachers receive adequate supervision in the proper application of Law and Gospel in teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Walther, C.F.W, *Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, “Concordia Publishing House: 1986”, page 60.

<sup>2</sup> “LCMS School Ministry – Lutheran School Statistics – 2020-21 School Year.” *lcms.org*, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, <https://files.lcms.org/f/FE73327C-9F50-4F74-BD96-83CD394F885C>. June 13, 2022.

## RESOLUTION #2-02

**Title: To Reject and Condemn the Practice of Virtual (online) Communion**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, The churches of the Lutheran Confession have diligently and respectfully followed the practice of communion in the midst of a gathered local congregation served by local pastors who are “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,” (1 Cor. 4:1) as was handed down by Jesus to St. Paul and the first Apostles and to us; and

WHEREAS, These local pastors “are to be found trustworthy” (1 Cor. 4:2) and have vowed “to administer the holy sacraments in accordance with their divine institution,”<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confession teaches specifically regarding Holy Communion:

[83] But this “blessing” or the recitation of the Words of Institution of Christ by itself does not make a valid sacrament if the entire action of the Supper, as Christ administered it, is not observed (as, for example, when the consecrated bread is not distributed, received, and eaten but is instead locked up [in the tabernacle], made into a sacrifice, or carried around in a procession). [84] On the contrary, Christ’s command, “Do this,” must be observed without division or confusion. For it includes the entire action or administration of this sacrament: that in a Christian assembly bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, and drunk, and that thereby the Lord’s death is proclaimed, as St. Paul presents the entire action of the breaking of the bread or its distribution and reception in 1 Corinthians 10:16 [85] In order to preserve this true Christian teaching on the Holy Supper and to avoid and eliminate many kinds of idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, this useful rule and guide is taken from the Words of Institution: nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the use [*usus*] instituted by Christ or the divinely instituted action [*actio*]. (That is, when Christ’s institution is not observed as he established it, there is no sacrament.) This rule dare not be rejected in any way, but it can and should be followed and preserved in the church of God with great benefit.<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, It is not possible to provide in-person pastoral care or complete the “entire action or administration” of the sacraments “in a Christian assembly” when members of the congregation participate remotely using the internet or other electronic means; and

WHEREAS, The sacraments were instituted by Christ to destroy doubt and bring the certainty of His forgiveness; and

WHEREAS, “Virtual” or “online” communion, as it has been variously called, is a rejection of proper pastoral care, negates the ability to practice the immediate Pastoral oversight of confession of sins and faith, breaks the “useful rule and guide” established by our Lutheran Confession, and creates uncertainty, doubt, and a division of the local gathered body of believers and a division in practice between congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents unanimously adopted the resolution: “To Encourage Advocating In-Person Communion,”<sup>3</sup> wherein the final resolved encourages congregations and pastors “to refrain from the practice of online communion,”; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Pastors of the Montana District provide a careful Biblical and catechetical instruction to their congregations regarding Holy Communion giving attention to the duties of a pastor and that of the congregation in this matter; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District be encouraged to clearly and unequivocally reject and condemn the practice of virtual (online) communion by teaching members of the specific dangers; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the President of the Montana District (the Ecclesiastical Supervisor), seek information from all Montana District congregations about this practice and begin specific discussions to dissuade any congregation of this district that is considering, teaching, or practicing virtual (online) communion; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Montana District memorialize the Convention of the LCMS to broaden its scope to include every District and adopt this at its 2023 convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation

<sup>2</sup> Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Solid Declaration: Article 7 Concerning the Holy Supper, pp. 607–608). Fortress Press.

<sup>3</sup> “To Encourage Advocating In-Person Communion.” [lcms.org, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/6CAF272D-692A-4653-9005-A5C931CD045B?](https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/6CAF272D-692A-4653-9005-A5C931CD045B?) June 13, 2022.

## RESOLUTION #2-03

**Title: To Implement The 2019 Synod Resolution 12-03a To Encourage and Train Parents and Guardians and Members To Be Active Teachers and Life Long Learners of The Faith**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, The President's Report to the Montana District made clear there is an urgent need to engage our families to a growing faith life; and

WHEREAS, The scriptures direct parents to be faithful in the faith formation of their children (Deuteronomy 6); therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District President and Board of Directors be directed, in the next Triennium, to develop and implement a specific program assisting congregations in outreach and training, which encourages parents in home faith development; and be it further

*Resolved*, That specific training be made available to the congregations of the Montana District involving pastors, parents, and lay-leaders; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That a report of the same and its results be brought before the next Montana District Convention.

## RESOLUTION #03-01

**Title: To Encourage and Emphasize the Need for Congregations in the Montana District to Continue Efforts to Support the Sanctity of Human Life**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and The Montana District of The LCMS affirm that God created human life and blessed it: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you..." (Jeremiah 1:5), and "You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14), and "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS therefore supports the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death; and

WHEREAS, With the possible reversal of Roe vs. Wade in the U.S. Supreme Court, and the subsequent remanding of life-related law to the states, there are groups in Montana supporting a special session of the legislature to pass laws further restricting or prohibiting abortion; and

WHEREAS, The Montana state constitution has been interpreted to protect the right to abortion on demand based on the right to privacy, and certain groups are interested in changing the Montana constitution to protect the sanctity of life; and

WHEREAS, Members of LCMS congregations of the Montana District have the vocation of citizens of their state; and

WHEREAS, The Montana District congregations support pro-life ministries and organizations, and speak in favor of life and support for parents; therefore be it

*Resolved*, We commend the Montana District Board's past and current support of, and financial contributions to, pro-life ministries, as listed on page 42 of the Convention Workbook; and be it further

*Resolved*, That congregations of the Montana District be encouraged to redouble our efforts to speak for life and support pro-life ministries as the issue is discussed by state leaders and supporters of abortion over the coming triennium; and be it finally

*Resolved*, that the Montana District Board of Directors issue a news release stating the District's action in convention to reiterate its support for the sanctity of human life and its opposition of abortion

## RESOLUTION #3-02

**Title: To Reaffirm the Biblical Practice of Gathered Local Congregations with Rightly Called Local Pastors and To Encourage Congregations to Practice In-person Worship, Teaching, and Administration of the Sacraments**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, The churches of the Lutheran Confession have consistently maintained membership rosters for the sake of good order and pastoral care; and

WHEREAS, Local congregations have long striven to work with one another fraternally and for the sake of good order in regard to transfers and changes in membership, as well as honoring church discipline when such has been necessary; and

WHEREAS, Pastors are instructed to “shepherd the flock of God that is *among* you, exercising oversight,” (1 Peter 5:2, italics added) and they have vowed to “perform the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner; to aid, counsel, and guide members of all ages and social conditions; to visit the sick and the dying; to admonish the indifferent and the erring,”<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, A pastor, who is not physically *among* his people, is not able to shepherd the flock by visiting the sick and the dying or to exercise oversight or to administer the sacraments in person; and

WHEREAS, The emerging practice of congregations seeking and receiving as members those who are geographically distant, especially when there is a local congregation near such individuals, creates confusion and division in congregations, circuits, and districts while generating many questions about pastoral oversight and visitation, care at the time of death, and Christian burial, etc.; and

WHEREAS, There are already a number of “churches”<sup>2</sup> in the quickly expanding online world of remote pastors who teach and guide virtual members; and

WHEREAS, A growing number of Christians are choosing to join virtual churches and participate exclusively online, and our Lutheran congregations are not immune from this temptation to abandon the traditional gathered body of believers as recorded in Acts 1:12-14; and

WHEREAS, The writer to the Hebrews teaches, “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some,

but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near,” (Hebrews 10:24-25); therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Pastors and congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS be encouraged to study God’s Word and our Lutheran Confessions to be reminded what it means to be a Christian congregation and a member of the body of Christ; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS, be encouraged to limit online worship; and be it further

*Resolved*, That congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS be discouraged from practicing remote membership and virtual congregations; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS, be encouraged to teach our members the specific dangers of remote and virtual worship attendance; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That this resolution be forwarded to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod for adoption at its 2023 convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation

<sup>2</sup> For example: Life.church/metaverse

## RESOLUTION #03-03

**Title:**       **To Direct Synod in Convention to Establish a Commission to Study the Possibility of Utilizing a Health Sharing Community Group**

**Action:**     **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, Concordia Health Plans (CHP) only offers health insurance for church staff and professional church workers employed by LCMS congregations, schools, districts and other approved Synod entities; and

WHEREAS, The cost of providing CHP health care coverage often proves cost prohibitive to many smaller congregations/schools and/or restricts the viability and growth of their respective ministries; and

WHEREAS, The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires the purchase of health insurance that complies with government regulations but also allows for health care cost sharing programs to provide such health care coverage, often at a more reasonable cost; and

WHEREAS, Some health insurance providers pay for medical procedures that violate Biblical teachings and values, such as abortions or “gender reassignment surgeries;” therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in convention request the Synod at its 2023 convention to appoint a commission to study establishing a health care cost sharing program open to all members of Synod, as well as all individual members of LCMS congregations, with the objective of reducing health care costs.

## RESOLUTION #03-04

**Title: To Acknowledge that Drag Queen Performances Are an Offense to God**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ especially blessed little children during His earthly ministry (Mark 10:13-16) and issued a vivid warning to those who would endanger the innocence of children (Matthew 18:5-6); and

WHEREAS, Each child deserves the protection and care not only of his parents, but also of the community at large and it is simply evil to expose children to sexually explicit themes; and

WHEREAS, This fact is recognized in the Montana law against obscenity, which makes special mention of obscenity aimed at children, "anyone under 18 years of age," (Montana Code Annotated 2021, 45-8-201); and

WHEREAS, Inviting a drag queen to perform for children is intended to introduce children to sexually explicit themes, which is contrary to common sense, natural law, and all that is good and holy; and

WHEREAS, Zoo Montana has invited a drag queen to do exactly this on June 22, 2022; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the convention of the Montana District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod acknowledge that all such drag queen performances, especially directed at children, are an offense to God and all decent people; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Montana District President write a letter to the leadership of Zoo Montana expressing the truth of the evil of drag queen performances, God's judgment, and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Montana District Board of Directors issue a news release state-wide stating the District's action in convention.

## RESOLUTION #4-01

**Title: To Develop Biblically Faithful Textbooks/Curricula for Our Day Schools, High Schools, and Home Schools**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, Education in all subject areas is first and foremost about what is taught, namely that which is good, true, and beautiful; and

WHEREAS, Secular education in all subject areas is increasingly subject to forces from anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-family, pro-death, amoral, anti-truth, and even anti-beauty perspectives; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures provide the norm and framework for knowledge in all subject areas, all being interwoven in significant ways with right theology, ethics, history, and human nature as revealed by God therein; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has the second largest system of parochial schools in America, but too often they are using secular textbooks/curricula, or publications from non-Lutheran traditions; and

WHEREAS, Many Lutheran parents who homeschool their children find good, biblically faithful textbooks/curricula options to be sorely lacking; and

WHEREAS, Christian schools and home schools in general would benefit greatly from having more biblically faithful Christian textbook/curricula options; and

WHEREAS, The natural sciences, especially biology and earth sciences, are prone to the grievous errors of Darwinism and other widely accepted secular theories which directly undermine the integrity of the Scriptures, and the Gospel itself, by putting Death before the Fall; and

WHEREAS, The Discovery Works science textbooks available from Concordia Publishing House (the only day school curricula available from CPH besides Religion Curriculum and some Lesson Plans) are outdated (© 1999) and rather limited (Grades 1-6); and

WHEREAS, The need is urgent, since surveys show that sixty percent of young adults raised as Christians are rejecting the faith,<sup>1</sup> their doubts arising in middle school and high school when Darwinism and its many related false “-isms” are taught by the secular textbooks but either no counter arguments for biblical truth are available or those presented are inadequate; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has a university system and two seminaries comprising expertise across all subject areas, including early childhood education, for producing excellent textbooks/curricula for grades K-12 as well as providing theologically sound editorial oversight to ensure content is biblically faithful in its Christian apologetic; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has its own publishing house; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District of the LCMS memorialize the Synod in convention to direct and coordinate the preparation and production of biblically faithful textbooks/curricula across all subject areas, for grades K-12; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this curriculum be among the highest priorities for CPH; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the first drafts for textbook/curricula material be made available by 2025 with the rest of the textbooks/curricula to follow in a timely manner; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That CPH engage the expertise of LCMS university and seminary faculties, as well as LCMS day school, high school, and homeschool teachers for the development of these textbooks/curricula.

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<sup>1</sup> Ham, K., Beemer B., Hillard, T. (2009). *Already Gone: Why your kids will quit church and what you can do to stop it*. Master Books.

## Resolution #4-02

**Title: To Encourage Both LCMS Seminaries to Continue Training Men for Faithful Service and To Petition the Synod to Dramatically Increase Funds Sent to Undesignated Seminary Operations.**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, Both of our LCMS Seminaries continue to teach and prepare theological pastors who understand, believe, and teach the Lutheran Confession faithfully; and

WHEREAS, Our seminaries have increasingly been forced to secure their own funding for operations, necessitating the formation of separate development offices and staff<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, One of the reasons for the formation of a Synod was the common and truthful belief that congregations could do together what none could do alone, including providing seminaries for the training of pastors in the Synod<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS model of residential seminary education has served the Synod well since its founding and has become a model for seminaries around the world, with partner churches calling for aid and counsel in providing similar educational opportunities and standards for their students<sup>3</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Congregations of the Synod and global missions will always need well-educated pastors and experienced and gifted faculties; and

WHEREAS, The cost of maintaining academic standards, recruiting and teaching future pastors, and operating residential seminaries continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, Many other church bodies in the United States are abandoning residential models and moving to online teaching and remote learning while requiring less overall education and training in the sacred texts and doctrine of the Christian Church to the detriment of pastoral formation; and

WHEREAS, Many in our Synod are also tempted to close a seminary and find cheaper and more expedient ways to solve the short-term clergy shortage that we face; and

WHEREAS, Such short-term thinking can provide some relief for the immediate crisis, but often has unintended consequences and creates greater struggles for the future; and

WHEREAS, Jesus has told us that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, to pray to Him to send out laborers into His harvest field; and

WHEREAS, The Lord, in His mercy, has faithfully and generously provided these seminaries for the preaching and teaching of His Word, and they are a great blessing to confessional Lutheranism in the United States and throughout the world; therefore be it

*RESOLVED*, That letters of encouragement be sent to each seminary from the Montana District Board of Directors thanking them for their faithfulness to our Lutheran Confession and the formation of pastors, while also encouraging them to continue this work; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That congregations of the Montana District be encouraged to consider generous contributions to the Joint Seminary Fund<sup>4</sup>, a fund that provides roughly one million dollars per fiscal year to each seminary<sup>5</sup>, or directly to one or both of the seminaries; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the Montana District lead this effort by example, setting a goal of contributing 5% of unrestricted giving from District congregations to the Joint Seminary Fund beginning in fiscal year 2023; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the Montana District petition the Synod in convention to return to the earlier practice of our Synod when seminaries were mostly funded by unrestricted monies given to the Synod at large by districts, member congregations, and individuals. Specifically, that the Synod would adjust budget priorities as necessary so as to make our seminaries a priority by providing for 50% of each seminary's budget beginning in 2024, with a stated goal of increasing that percentage at each convention until both seminaries are fully funded by the Synod budget; and be it finally

*RESOLVED*, That this resolution be forwarded to The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod for adoption at its 2023 convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Current support for our seminaries from the Synodical budget amounts to 1% of the seminaries' budgets.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth reason listed under "Reasons for forming a Synodical Organization" of the first Synodical Constitution reads, "5. To make possible the promotion of common church projects. (Seminary, agenda, hymnal, Book of Concord, schoolbooks, Bible distribution, mission projects within and outside the Church.)"

<sup>3</sup> "Today, the single most frequent and fervent request received by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod from partner and non-partner Lutheran church bodies around the world is to share our theological treasures." <https://www.lcms.org/makeagift/gsi>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lcms.org/seminary-education/seminary-topics/lcms-joint-seminary-fund>

<sup>5</sup> <https://reporter.lcms.org/2020/reporter-supplement-pastoral-education-the-truth-of-christ-is-that-important>

## RESOLUTION #4-03

**Title: To Encourage and Equip Fathers in their God-Given Task of Raising Children in the Faith**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, God commands fathers to train their children in the Word. “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4); and

WHEREAS, Moses wrote, “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9); and

WHEREAS, One-quarter of the world’s population is under 15 years of age ([www.statista.com/statistics/265759/world-population-by-age-and-region/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/265759/world-population-by-age-and-region/)); and

WHEREAS, Some children are not raised with their father present; and

WHEREAS, Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren while trying to help their adult children (“When Grandparents Raise Their Grandchildren,” Psychology Today, 2017); and

WHEREAS, Many adults have limited parenting skills or may not accomplish their responsibility in passing the faith to their children. “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6); and

WHEREAS, 25 percent of children whose primary faith influence is the church will remain faithful in adult life, and 81 percent of children whose primary faith influence is the family will remain faithful into adulthood (Peter L. Benson, *Congregations at Crossroads: A National Study of Adults and Youth in the LCMS* [Search Institute, 1995], 21), which suggests that a home-centered paradigm is more effective for retention than one that is exclusively church-centered; and

WHEREAS, Synod in 2019 resolved that “LCMS districts share successful strategies among their congregations, with other districts, and with Synod as a whole”; therefore be it

*Resolved,* That fathers in the Montana District be encouraged in their God-given responsibility to teach their children the faith; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Montana District in Convention directs the District Education Committee to find and highlight suitable material to assist fathers and mothers and caregivers in the God-given task of raising children in the faith; and be it further

*Resolved,* If gaps are found in the educational materials, the District Education Committee will ensure further resources will be developed; and be it further

*Resolved,* Montana District in Convention directs our Education Committee to create an instructional seminar on how to best access and utilize the materials for the home. This seminar to be available district wide, whether in-person or online to train parents/caregivers; and be it finally

*Resolved,* That the Montana District Education Committee make every effort to submit their findings to the District President in time to be placed in the 2023 Synodical Convention Workbook district report in accordance with the 2019 LCMS synod resolution 12-03a.

## Resolution #04-04

**Title:** To Appoint a Task Force to Refocus the Concordia University System for the Education of Professional Church Workers Consistent with the Lutheran Confessions

**Action:** ADOPTED

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System (CUS) is comprised of six colleges and universities in the United States which are affiliated with The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS); and

WHEREAS, The initial purpose of these colleges and universities was to prepare men and women for full-time service in the church; and

WHEREAS, The majority of students at CUS institutions are not preparing for full-time church work; and

WHEREAS, From 2004 to 2018 enrollment for pre-seminary (undergraduates) students declined 59% and for Lutheran school teacher 61%. Enrollment at the seminaries has declined 55%.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, 44% of active ordained men are over 55 years of age; and

WHEREAS, A number of the faculty at CUS institutions are not rostered members of Synod nor members of LCMS congregations; and

WHEREAS, The encroachment of false teachings from the secular culture onto CUS campuses threatens the confession of our faith; and

WHEREAS, A refocused CUS would enhance the ability of the Synod to attend to the integrity of our confession; be it therefore

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod at its 2023 convention to direct the President of the Synod to appoint a blue-ribbon task force to perform the following:

- A. Establish a plan for restoring and retaining an LCMS identity on CUS campuses.
- B. Prioritize the training of rostered church workers of Synod with our confession of faith.
- C. Develop a plan to increase the percentage of LCMS rostered faculty, with a goal of 100%.
- D. Prepare a report on these tasks for the 2026 LCMS convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Set Apart to Serve research

## RESOLUTION #05-01

**Title: To Amend the Montana District Bylaws to Provide for the Care of an Outgoing District President in a Manner Consistent with the Care Given by Synod to an Outgoing President**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, Montana District Bylaw 2.2.1.4.c reads “If the District President is not reelected, he shall continue to receive his full salary and benefits for a period not to exceed ninety days from the day the newly elected President takes office. If he finds other employment, accepts a call, or retires before the end of ninety days, his salary and benefits from the District shall end by the first of the month following his assumption of such employment, call, or retirement”; and

WHEREAS, The equivalent bylaw (3.2.4.1.a-b) in the Synod bylaws provides for an outgoing President for a period of six months while rendering transitional service; therefore be it

*Resolved,* That Bylaw 2.2.1.4.c of the District Bylaws be amended as follows:

2.2.1.4.c If the District President is not re-elected, he shall continue to receive his full salary and benefits for a period not to exceed six months from the day the newly elected President takes office, while rendering transitional service. If he finds other employment, accepts a call, or retires before the end of six months, his salary and benefits from the District shall end by the first of the month following his assumption of such employment, call, or retirement.

## RESOLUTION #05-02

**Title: To Restore the Binding Key to the Rites of Ordination and Installation of a Pastor**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, Jesus says in Matthew 16:19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Again, He says in Matthew 18:18, "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." And, in John 20:21-23, "Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld,"; and

WHEREAS, The ordination and installation rites in the The Lutheran Hymnal Agenda ask only three questions of the man to be ordained and installed and do not go into detail about the duties of the Christ's Office that he will perform, but asks only if the man intends to discharge those duties faithfully in accordance with the Scriptures and the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, The ordination and installation rites in the Lutheran Worship Agenda specifically include the reading of John 20:21-23 and expand the number of questions asked of the man being ordained and installed to six while also going into more detail about the duties of Christ's Office that he will fill, including explicitly mentioning the Loosing Key but omitting mention of the Binding Key<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, The ordination and installation rites in the Lutheran Service Book Agenda add a seventh question for the man being ordained and installed while making only a minor change in the wording of other questions and also explicitly mention the Loosing Key but continue to omit mention of the Binding Key<sup>3</sup>; and

WHEREAS, This omission of the Binding Key leaves out a significant portion of Christ's command and necessary Christian doctrine and may improperly teach the full extent of the pastoral office's responsibility; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in Convention instruct the current and all future Montana District Presidents to include these words in the Rites of Ordination and Installation of Pastors: "and do you promise to retain the sins of those who are impenitent as long as they do not repent," when he or his agent conduct these rites; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in Convention request the Board for National Mission of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to insert the Binding Key language where applicable into the Rite of Ordination; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Board for National Mission of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod deliver the revised rite to Concordia Publishing House for publication, or announce that they choose not to include the Binding Key in the Rite of Ordination and publicly provide the rationale for continuing to omit the Binding Key by November 30th, 2024; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in Convention petition the Synod in Convention to direct the Board for National Mission of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to make this inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> “Dost thou hold and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures? Answer: I do so hold and profess.”  
“Art thou determined to discharge faithfully the duties of the holy ministry [in this Congregation] in full accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the said Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? Answer: I have so determined by the grace of God.”

The Ordination and Installation of a Minister:

“Dost thou believe the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice? Answer: I do so believe.”

“Dost thou hold and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, especially the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures? Answer: I do so hold and profess.”

“Art thou determined to discharge faithfully the duties of the holy ministry in this Congregation in full accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the said Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? Answer: I have so determined by the grace of God.”

The Installation of a Pastor:

“I ask thee, therefore, dear Brother, in the presence of God and this Congregation: Art thou willing and ready to take upon thee the charge of this Congregation, and to perform faithfully all the duties of thy ministry? Answer: I am.”

“Wilt thou preach and teach the pure Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and adorn the doctrine of our Savior by a godly and holy life? Answer: Yes, with the help of God.” (TLH Liturgy and Agenda, CPH 1921, pg. 375 – 385)

<sup>2</sup> “Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine; will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you; will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying; will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry, admonish the people to a lively confidence in Christ and holy living? Response: I will with the help of God.” (LW Agenda, CPH 1984, pg. 205-221)

<sup>3</sup> “Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying, and will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living?” Response: Yes, I will, with the help of God.” (LSB Agenda, CPH 2006, pg. 160-181)

## RESOLUTION #05-03

**Title: To Prevent the Admission, Reinstatement, or Colloquization of a Divorced Man into the Office of the Public Ministry who has Married Another Woman**

**Action: ADOPTED AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, Christ our Lord says with regard to marriage, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate," (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9; cf. Genesis 2:24); and

WHEREAS, A man is guilty of adultery if he marries another woman while his wife lives; however, if his wife dies he is free to marry, (Romans 7:2-3); and

WHEREAS, Men called into the Office of the Public Ministry are called to be above reproach. Specifically, with regard to marriage, this requires him to be the husband of no more than one wife, (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6); and

WHEREAS, Divorce and remarriage disqualifies a man from the Office of the Public Ministry, (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6); and

WHEREAS, The decision whether to accept or deny a request for reinstatement shall be at the sole discretion of the Council of Presidents, (Bylaw 2.18.1); and

WHEREAS, The decision to declare applicants for colloquy to be qualified for the pastoral ministry and to certify such men for placement rests at the sole discretion of the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, (Bylaw 3.10.2.2.b); and

WHEREAS, In the action of reinstating or not reinstating a man into the office of the ministry, the Council of Presidents does so as an officially established advisory body of the Synod, (Bylaw 1.2.1.g); and

WHEREAS, By the actions of admitting, reinstating, or colloquizing, the Council of Presidents and Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, respectively, state that a man is qualified for the Office of the Public Ministry in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. As this is an assignment given to them by the members of the Synod in convention (having been codified in the Bylaws of the Synod), they do so as representatives of the members of the Synod (Bylaw 3.10.1.4; Bylaw 2.18.1); therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Council of Presidents not admit a divorced man into the Office of the Ministry who has married another woman; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Council of Presidents not reinstate a divorced man into the Office of the Ministry who has married another woman; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry not colloquize a divorced man into the Office of the Public Ministry who has married another woman; and be it further

*Resolved*, That when a man is reinstated into the Office of the Public Ministry, the reason for reinstatement be made available upon request; and be it further

*Resolved*, That when a man is colloquized into the Office of the Public Ministry, the reason for colloquization be made available upon request; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Montana District in convention adopt this resolution and submit it to the Synod Convention for adoption.

## RESOLUTION #05-04

**Title: To Reform the Composition of the Boards of Regents of the Universities of the Concordia University System to Improve Doctrinal Fidelity and Amenability to Ecclesiastical Supervision**

**Action: ADOPTED**

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System is a synodwide corporate entity of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (Bylaw Section 1.2.1(w)); and

WHEREAS, Synodwide corporate entities are separate corporations established by the Synod for business and legal reasons, and not for purposes of independence from the Synod, immunity from ecclesiastical supervision by the Synod, or propagation of positions contrary to the teachings of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Synodwide corporate entities including the Concordia University System “are to be servants of and to the Synod and its members,” (Bylaw Section 3.6.1); and

WHEREAS, Synodwide corporate entities shall be accountable to the Synod in convention for the discharge of their assigned duties (Bylaw Section 3.6.1.6(h)); and

WHEREAS, Synodwide corporate entities “shall be accountable to the President of the Synod for doctrinal faithfulness” (Bylaw Section 3.6.1.6(i)); and

WHEREAS, All governing documents and instruments of synodwide corporate entities must be in conformity with the Constitution, Bylaws, and applicable resolutions of the Synod in convention (Bylaw Section 3.6.1.7) and must provide that the entity is “a component part of the Synod” (Bylaw Section 3.6.1.8); and

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System has the overall responsibility to provide for the education of pre-seminary students, ministers of religion-commissioned, other professional church workers of the Synod, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education by facilitating prior approval for theology appointments to college or university faculties (Bylaw Section 3.6.6.1); and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System is charged with a mandatory duty to ensure that the boards of regents and campus administrators are actively working to preserve their Lutheran identity by supporting the objectives of the Synod (Constitution Art. III) and deliver academic and student programs designed to give students Christ-centered values (Bylaw Sections 3.6.6.6(a) and (b)); and

WHEREAS, The composition of the boards of regents of the institutions of the Concordia University System was expanded to include from 4 to 8 regents appointed by each board of regents itself to add expertise to the boards; and

WHEREAS, Expertise certainly is needed in the boards of regents, subsequent experience has shown a tendency resulting in part from the new composition of the boards of regents for those boards and campus administrators to exhibit independence from the Synod, propagation of positions contrary to the teachings of the synod, and resistance to ecclesiastical supervision by the Synod; and

WHEREAS, A board of regents of an institution of the Concordia University System violated in multiple substantial ways numerous bylaws governing the search for and appointment of a new president of the institution, insomuch as to practically abdicate their responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, By virtue of the duties imposed upon him and the powers vested in him by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod to exercise ecclesiastical supervision (for example, Bylaw Section 1.2.1(j)), the President of Synod with a visitation team visited the campus of that institution to gather facts; and

WHEREAS, Following the visitation by the President of Synod and visitation team, the President delivered to that institution a letter exercising the ecclesiastical supervision imposed upon and vested in him (letter from The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of the Synod, to members of the CUWAA Board of Regents, Monday of Easter IV, A.D. 2022, May 9, 2022); and

WHEREAS, The board of regents of that institution has failed or refused to give the letter of ecclesiastical supervision even the consideration, let alone the action, due in the circumstances and under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, This failure or refusal is, in part, a symptom of the independence from the Synod and resistance to ecclesiastical supervision by the Synod that stems in part from the new, expanded composition of the board of regents where many members are appointed by the board of regents itself; and

WHEREAS, The harms resulting from independence and resistance to ecclesiastical supervision clearly outweigh the benefits of expertise provided by the new, expanded composition of the boards of regents; and

WHEREAS, Therefore it is necessary to reform the composition of the boards of regents for the sake of maintaining the Concordia University System as a component part of the Synod, as servant of and to the Synod and its members, in doctrinal faithfulness, with Lutheran identity and Christ-centeredness, amenable to ecclesiastical

supervision by the Synod through the Synod's chosen office for exercising supervision; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That Bylaw Section 3.10.6.2(1) through (5) on the composition of the boards of regents of the colleges, universities, and institutions of the Concordia University System be amended to provide as follows:

1. Two ordained ministers, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the conventions of the Synod.
2. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the geographical district in which the institution is located. If any board is required by its governing documents to include one or more persons holding residence or church membership in a specific locality, the institution is responsible for ensuring (including by appointment, if necessary) that individual(s) meeting such requirements are included among those persons serving on such board, and no such geographical restriction shall apply to Synod elected regents.
3. [Deletion of current provision in subsection (3) for the appointment of no fewer than four and no more than eight members by the board of regents. When codified in the revised and update synodical handbook, this deletion would cause a renumbering of the remaining subsections.]
4. The president of the district in which the college or university is located or a district vice-president as his standing representative shall serve as a voting member.
5. One member, who may be an ordained minister, a commissioned minister, or a layperson, shall be appointed by the President of the Synod;

and be it further

*Resolved*, That each college, university, or institution of the Concordia University System shall devise a plan of transition to the number of regents and composition of the board of regents mandated by this resolution to be fully implemented no later than the regents' first meeting in the third quarter of 2026 so that no current regent shall have the regent's current term shortened but no unnecessary delay in implementing this resolution is allowed; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the plans of transition shall be subject to approval by the President of Synod, and shall be submitted to the President of Synod for review by February 1, 2024; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That this resolution be forwarded to the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod for adoption at its 2023 convention.

## CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

### 2019

60 Mount Olive, Billings  
100 Trinity, Billings  
90 First, Bozeman  
90 Concordia, Forsyth  
100 Grace, Hamilton  
100 St Paul, Havre  
65 Trinity, Stanford  
65 Our Savior, Stevensville  
60 St. Peter, Whitefish

### 2020

65 Holy Cross, Eureka  
65 St. John, Fairfield  
90 St. John, Fairview  
100 Trinity, Harlowton  
125 Trinity, Kalispell  
20 Circle of Life, Lame Deer  
120 First, Missoula  
105 St. Paul, Ronan  
60 Trinity, Superior  
90 Trinity, Wolf Point

### 2021

125 Redeemer, Anaconda  
105 St. John, Belfry  
55 Christ the King, Billings  
65 Our Redeemer, Columbia Falls  
55 Faith, Condon  
70 Our Savior, Denton  
90 Grace, Fallon  
60 Christ Lutheran for the Deaf, Great Falls  
65 Peace, Great Falls  
115 Trinity, Miles City  
55 Messiah, Missoula  
40 Mt. Calvary, Polson  
55 Holy Cross, Seeley Lake  
95 Grace, Three Forks

### 2022

20 Holy Trinity, Belgrade  
50 Hope, Billings  
40 Our Savior, Billings  
110 St. Paul, Bridger  
25 Crow Lutheran Ministry, Crow Agency  
40 Shepherd of the Hills, Ennis  
130 Trinity, Great Falls  
80 Redeemer, Hardin  
135 First, Helena  
80 Trinity, Hysham  
105 St. Paul, Lewistown  
110 Trinity, Plentywood  
110 St. Paul, Roundup  
75 Zion, St. Ignatius  
10 Shepherd of the Valley, Thompson Falls

## 2022 ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Dennis Bauer	40	Arlo Pullmann	35
David Behm	10	Darold Reiner	50
Jakob Berger	7	Joshua Reinke	8
Christopher Brandt	41	Daniel Rinderknecht	39
Kevin Bueltmann	11	Vern Sandersfeld	39
Steven Carlson	40	Matthew Schiemann	6
Matt Christensen	15	Richard Schneider	6
Timothy Christenson	11	Howard Schreibeis	37
Eric Christiansen	31	Jonathan Schultz	14
Russell Dewell	15	Mark Schultz	39
John Donnan	29	Paul Shupe	11
Al Ebel	34	Ken Stensrud	14
Andrew Eckert	26	Christopher Tabbert	24
Gale Everson	44	Steven Thomas	23
Russell Fitch	13	Park Timber	11
Terry Forke	39	John Vallie	22
Sam Grayl	18	Christopher Wareham	42
Mark Grunst	41	Ryan Wendt	18
Erik Iverson	16	Kyle Whaley	12
Daniel Jacobs	36	Raymond Wiegert	63
David Johnson	34	Marcus Williams	5
Erich Kaelberer	11	Kyle Winter	6
Daniel Keinath	13	Bruce Zagel	37
Timothy Klug	32	Ken Zoeller	23
James Koss	26		
Robert Lane	24		
Raymond Larson	47		
Carl Lehmann	27		
Charles Lehmann	15		
Bruce Linderman	46		
Greg Lucido	22		
Blake Marshall	21		
James Mavis	29		
Willis McCall	13		
David McCarthy	8		
Jason Menagh	35		
Daniel Merz	6		
Larry Miller	39		
Michael Musegades	10		
Matt Nelson	18		
Mark Nicolaus	52		
Gerald Paul	22		
James Pierce	4		
Jeffery Potter	35		
David Preus	11		

## 2022 Commissioned - Ministers Anniversaries

Jennifer Boll	20
Susan Eberhard	8
Sarah Elliott	16
Sarah Groeling	2
Nicolas Harding	6
Andrea Heiliger	14
Cameron Heiliger	6
Tanya Hensel	8
Erin Johnson	1
Thomas Kosche	19
Debbie Lee	13
Ted Loomans	27
Laura McCoy	21
Kianna Ogilvie	1
Claire Peiffer (Hoy)	5
Sonja Reeves	7
Erika Rehbein	8
Timothy Rehbein	8
Richard Thomas	40
Laura White	30

## **Triennium Treasurer's Report 2022 District Convention**

The importance of the relationship of service and oversight that exists between the Montana District and the District Congregations, expressed in part during District Conventions, is invaluable. Over the past triennium, in keeping with the Board of Directors (BOD, Board) focus on transparency and faithful stewardship, the Office of the Treasurer has pursued providing clear and useful financial information regarding the district finances and relevant financial information for use by congregational treasurers and their congregations. Included in the Triennium Report (expanded into four years) are comparative financial statements of The Montana District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, reporting years 2018-2020 (audited) and 2021 (unaudited). Through generous gifts, donations, and bequests from our district congregations and individual donors, as well as investment income, the Montana District has been able to both meet its financial obligations and plan for future ministry with confidence. This is possible both through the faithfulness of the Board in honoring the mission of the District and the faithfulness of the District Congregations in providing direction to the Board. For instance, the by-laws of the Montana District, proposed by the Board and approved at a District Convention, prevent any Board of the Montana District from engaging a loan to conduct operating activities (salary, office expenses, purchase of fixed assets for operations, etc.). This assists in keeping budgetary planning focused not just on the year ahead, but on the effect of the budget on future ministry years.

A brief review of the financial highlights of the past triennium, expanded, includes the following:

### 2018-2021 Highlights

- Periodic review of financial procedures and internal controls was conducted and updates were made as recommended.
- New FASB standards were enacted during the triennium and the District reporting was updated for implementation; the goal of these new standards is transparency in expense and liquidity reporting. Beginning with 2018, the Statement of Functional Expenses is included with District reporting.
- \$93,605 in scholarships were awarded to church worker program students at Concordia Seminaries and Universities. These scholarships were funded through donations, bequests, and investment revenue received from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Foundation where the monies are held in investment to maintain a scholarship program supporting the training in ministry of members of Montana District Congregations.

- Montana District awarded \$97,423 in student loan repayment grants to church workers serving Montana District congregations to support both district church workers and their congregations. These awards were funded primarily through LCEF Operating Results given to the District, and in part General Fund monies.
- Lutheran schools in Montana District applied for and received \$15,774 in grants in support of their programs. This fund was begun with donor money, increased with Board directed General Funds, and is held with LCMS Foundation to maximize income on the balance to maintain the grant program.
- The BOD directed \$25,584 in assistance to MT District congregations for various financial difficulties over the expanded triennium.
- \$15,116 in Mercy Fund Grants were awarded during the triennium. The Mercy Fund was created to aid MT District called workers who are facing catastrophic medical costs beyond their ability and their congregations' capacity to assist. This fund is fully supported by individual and congregational restricted donations.
- The BOD has been active in supporting pro-life ministry and in supporting religious freedom in Montana and nationally. \$934 was sent to Lutherans for Life, \$335 supported religious freedom in Montana and the Montana Life Coalition, and nationally \$2,250 was invested in religious freedom through Alliance Defending Freedom.
- To support District congregations in communicating the truths of God's word on His creation of men and women, the BOD purchased and provided 200 copies of God Made Boys and Girls by Marty Machowski. LCEF provided funding to support this.
- Montana District has four congregations that are subsidized mission foci of the District: Crow Lutheran Ministry, Circle of Life Lutheran Church, Emmaus Lutheran Mission and Redeemer Lutheran Church.
  - To support Indian ministry congregations, the Board directed \$308,494 in subsidies supporting Circle of Life, with \$4,146 sent in support from District congregations, and \$206,148 in subsidies supporting Crow Lutheran Ministries, with \$3,596 sent from District congregations.
  - Emmaus Lutheran Mission serving Big Timber and Livingston was begun in a previous triennium. This support has continued through this triennium. \$279,502 has been spent in support of this ministry as well as \$49,000 to assist in providing facilities for worship. MT District Congregations and individuals sent \$14,937 to the District office to support this subsidy, and LCEF supported the District subsidy in the amount of \$27,416.
  - During the Triennium, the BOD initiated a revitalization mission effort in Anaconda, Montana, through Redeemer Lutheran Church. The Montana District subsidizes this effort and has invested \$227,102. This subsidy was

funded by MT District congregational support of the subsidy in the amount of \$1,919, and LCEF funding in the amount of \$9,616.

- Congregational convention assessments of \$45,100 were collected over the triennium, with \$26,976 expended for the 2018 District Convention and \$25,386 for the 2019 Synodical Convention.
- As directed through resolution 1-04 at the 2015 District Convention, the MT District sends support for missionaries called out of service in Montana District to the mission field. During the Triennium and 2021, the Board directed \$35,000 in support of 6 missionaries.
- In 2019, the District vehicle was destroyed by hail and replaced. The Board sets aside General Funds into a Vehicle Replacement Fund during every month with positive unrestricted net income to be prepared for such events, and the vehicle was replaced using these monies.
- The District office is moving locations in Billings. The BOD has signed a contract with Christ the King Lutheran Church, paying \$250,000 taken from the General Fund for 15 years rent in advance at a flat rental fee to rent office space in their new building, and anticipates moving into the facility in the Spring of 2022. The BOD plans to sell the current District facility within 2022.

## Convention Study Summary

During the Convention, in five sessions, over 4 hours were dedicated to the study of the Formula of Concord: Epitome. The delegates listened as Rev. Ryan Wendt read selections each day. The readings were one to two articles each. Following the reading, the delegates formed small groups and discussed these truthful words by following a discussion guide prepared by President Forke. Special emphasis was placed on our confession proclaiming the truth of God's Word alone. If the Word does not speak, we do not speak. We refuse to speculate; instead, we confidently stand on His Word, and are comfortable leaving the mysteries of God as mysteries.

## AMICUS CHRISTI - Mr. Kenneth Holste

Born and raised on a small farm in northwestern Kansas, the second of six siblings, five boys and a girl (poor Betty) and attended one and two room Lutheran Elementary schools. After graduating from Atwood High School, attended Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska, graduating with a Science and Math degree in Secondary Education thinking I wanted to teach in a Lutheran High School.

The Lord had other plans...being assigned to Trinity Lutheran School in 'Cowsbell' (Kalispell) MT, teaching math in grades 3-8 and science in K-8. It was a bit scary that week, after man first walked on the moon, for someone who had never been farther west than Denver to head for the Flathead Valley having no idea what or where the Flathead Valley was but after 1100 miles, all 2 lane highways, and topping the hill on Hwy 93 at Polson with Flathead Lake and the mountains in front of me, was an experience not to be forgotten. That same summer the Lord sent a young parish worker (Carol Bluhm) from northeastern Kansas to Trinity and after working together for three years we started our life together on June 25, 1972.

The month of July was camp counselor time until the mid 90's with both of our sons living with us in our one room cabin at Trinity Lutheran Camp. We took a break in the summers of the early 80's as I earned my Masters degree from Concordia, Seward, (no on-line courses then). The opportunity to work with hundreds (?thousands) of youth from across the State of Montana and beyond was wonderful and during this time the Basketball Camp was born which is still going strong 30+ years later.

During the late 70's and 80's I had the privilege of serving on the MT District Board of Directors, being able work with and learn from many gifted servants of our Lord. For the majority of my time at Trinity, I have been a part of the Board of Christian Day School as the Assistant Principal or in an Interim role as Principal, and since retiring from the classroom after 43 years, have become a part of the Board of Directors of TLC. Driving the school bus still gives opportunity for lots of contact with the students (including our grandkids).

It has truly been a team ministry with my wife Carols' support and encouragement ever present throughout the journey. Her, and consequently my, involvement with the Developmentally Disabled program at Trinity and the Pro-Life stance in the Flathead Valley have been a part of our lives since the early 70's.

I thank God for the many blessings He has given us and pray that we can continue to further the spreading of His Kingdom in Montana and the Flathead Valley now and in the future.

## **AMICUS CHRISTI - Pat Lewis**

Patrick "Pat" Lewis was Baptized into Christ in 1975 at Pilgrim Luther Church in Santa Monica, California. He completed LCMS adult confirmation at St John's Lutheran Church (PLC), Rome New York circa 1983. In the summer of 1989 his family and he were accepted into membership at Peace Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Montana.

Shortly after becoming a member of Peace Lutheran Church, Pat volunteered to serve as a Trustee until moving to Hawaii in 1993. Upon his return to Peace in 1996, he resumed duties as a Trustee. A short time later, the Pastor encouraged him to serve on the Board of Elders which Pat has done so for over 20 years.

Over the years Pat has taught adult Bible studies and youth pre-confirmation classes. He has served as a lay assistant to previous Pastors during worship services at Peace. Most notably, he was one of a few laymen from Peace to lead worship services at both Peace and First Lutheran in Fort Benton during their Pastoral vacancies. To this day, he continues to do so during Pastoral absences.

In 2002 he began serving as a Synodical Reconciler and currently serves as a Synodical Dispute Resolution Panel Facilitator. He has assisted Pastors at Peace Lutheran Church, Zion Lutheran Church in Power Montana, and Messiah Lutheran Church, Missoula, Montana in facilitating Parish planning. Finally, he served two separate three-year terms on the Montana District Board of Directors.

Pat is married to Helen Lewis (MT Lutherans for Life and Peace Lutheran Church's LWML). They have three grown children: Brandon, Jennifer and Michael, and eight grandchildren.

## CALLED TO GLORY

### **Rev. Dr. William Melvin Bliese**

Rev. Dr. William Melvin Bliese was called to Glory on Sunday, September 26, 2021, at his home in Bozeman.

His service to the church led him to congregations in Maryland, Virginia, Ohio and Montana, where he assisted at First Lutheran Church, Bozeman.

Rev. Bliese is survived by three of his sons and their spouses, Karl (Nancy), Rick (Nina), and John (Melody), and a total of eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. A Memorial Service was held at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, November 13 at First Lutheran Church in Bozeman.

### **Rev. Edwin Iverson**

Rev. Edwin Iverson was called to glory on Friday, February 1, 2019.

Pastor Iverson served mostly with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod except for a six year period in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. He served in Norfolk, NE, Eden, ID, Angel, OR, Schuyler, NE, Rapid City, SD, Boscobel, WI, La Valle, WI, and Montana. He retired in 2009 due to health issues.

His memorial service was held at Mr. Olive Lutheran Church, Billings on Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

### **Rev. Robert Mitchell**

Rev. Robert Mitchell was called to glory on December 11, 2021.

Pastor Mitchell taught and served as a Director of Christian Education, before becoming a pastor and serving his first call at First Lutheran Church, Bozeman. He then served St. John Lutheran Church, Deer Lodge for 10 years before retiring in 2019. Pastor Mitchell is survived by his wife, Michele, three daughters, Genelle, Kathryn, Keren and son, Matthew.

His funeral was held at St. John Lutheran Church on January 2, 2022.

### **Rev. Dr. Mark Nicolaus**

Rev. Dr. Mark Nicolaus was called to glory on April 28, 2022.

Pastor Nicolaus graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, and was ordained in 1970. He served congregations in Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Montana District; including, Peace (Great Falls and Ronan), Shepherd of the Valley (Thompson Falls), Trinity (Sidney), St. John (Fairview), and Concordia (Williston). He was preceded in death by his lovely wife, Jane, and is survived by children, Leah, Micah, and Sarah.

His funeral will be held in Wisconsin.

**Rev. Herbert Schiefelbein**

Rev. Herbert Schiefelbein was called to glory on April 29, 2019.

He was ordained in 1952, and served congregations in Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, and Montana (Holy Cross, Seely Lake and Faith, Condon), before retiring in 1995. He continued to serve vacancies in Minnesota and Montana, eventually, settling in Billings, where he was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Frances and son, Dennis.

The funeral was held on at Trinity Lutheran Church on May 6, 2019.

**Mr. Jerry Schreck**

Mr. Jerry Schreck, long-time lay-minister at Trinity, Kalispell, was called to Glory on December 16, 2021.

Jerry served His Lord faithfully at Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalispell from 1991 to his retirement 17 years later. Prior to his serving Trinity as a Lay Minister, Jerry had attended Concordia University, Mequon, Wisconsin, for two years to acquire certification to serve in that capacity. Jerry was preceded in death by his wife, Helen, in 2005. Jerry spent the later part of his life at the Hidden Meadow Care Center, between Whitefish and Columbia Falls.

His Memorial Service was held at Trinity Lutheran Church on Dec 28, 2021 and burial at Trinity Lutheran Cemetery.

**Mrs. Cynthia Speed**

Mrs. Cynthia (Cindy) Speed was called to glory on September 12, 2018.

Cindy served of the Director of Parish Music for Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Billings. Cindy was a devoted follower of Christ and provided a shining example of her faith throughout her life. Family and friends remember Cindy as vibrant, energetic, cheerful, generous, and loyal. Cindy loved her family fiercely and was an adoring daughter, sister, mother, and proud grandmother.

Her memorial service was held at Trinity Lutheran Church on September 19, 2018.

**Rev. Kent Stenzel**

Rev. Kent Stenzel was called to glory on March 29, 2022.

Pastor Stenzel graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1973, and went on to serve congregations in Idaho, Nebraska, Indiana, Missouri, and Montana; including Trinity (Sidney and Great Falls) and St. John (Fairview). He is survived by his wife, Barbara, and their children, Kara, Roger, and James.

His funeral was held at Grace Lutheran Church, Hamilton, on April 22, 2022.

**Rev. Robert Weishoff**

Rev. Robert Weishoff was called to glory on October 20, 2018.

He was born in 1935 in Black Creek, Wisconsin. He received his education through Wartburg College and Seminary, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. His first call was to Christ Lutheran, Irvington, NE, after which he served various congregations in California before he came to serve the multiple parish of Trinity, Stanford, Our Savior, Denton, and St. Paul, Lewistown. Prior to his death, Rev. Weishoff served as the supervising pastor to Pastor Mark Wiegert, as he completed his SMP training to serve the multi-parish. He is survived by his wife, Lois, their four children, and numerous grandchildren.

His Memorial Service was held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lewistown, on October 26th, 2018.