

Convention Minutes

(draft)

Opening Worship Service

Saturday, July 9, 2016

Opening Divine Service with Holy Communion

The opening worship service of the 66th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was held in the Wisconsin Center in downtown Milwaukee under the theme, “Upon This Rock Repent, Confess, Rejoice.” The service was hosted by Peace Lutheran Church of Sussex, Wisconsin, with its pastor, the Reverend Peter Bender, presiding. Rev. William Weedon, Director of Worship and LCMS International Center Chaplain served as Assisting Minister.

The Council of Presidents of the Synod and the Presidents and Bishops of LCMS Partner Churches participated in the service and the distribution of the Sacrament. A choir made up of singers from Milwaukee area LCMS congregations, conducted by Rev. Stephen Rosebrock, Kantor of Mount Olive Lutheran Church and Christian Day School, participated in the service, with Dr. James Freese, Professor of Music at Concordia University Wisconsin, serving as organist and Cantor Phillip Magness of Immanuel Lutheran church of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, serving as pianist.

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, preaching on the convention theme and Matthew 16:13–20, recalled Martin Luther’s refusal to “repent” time and again, his statement of consequence for him and his day but also for ours: “I am neither able nor willing to repent.” President Harrison noted that this was Luther’s moment, and it was also the moment of the birth of our church. Now, as then, the future of our Lutheran Church does not depend on us, but “Upon This Rock,” the doctrine of the Word of God.

[The full text of the sermon is printed elsewhere in these 2016 Convention Proceedings.]

Session 1

Sunday a.m. July 10, 2016

Matins

Rev. Christopher S. Esget, Sixth Vice-President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (East-Southeast Region) served as preacher, with Chaplain William Weedon serving as liturgist for the Order of Matins. Cantor Phillip Magness and several instrumentalists assisted with the service.

Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel

President Matthew C. Harrison called the assembly to order and called on Rev. Dr. Daniel Harmelink, Executive Director of Concordia Historical Institute, to present the historic gavel traditionally used by the chair to call the convention officially to order. In presenting the gavel, Dr. Harmelink spoke of the unique history and inscriptions on the gavel, which is ordinarily kept on display at the Institute’s Lutheran History Museum in the LCMS International Center.

Electronic Voting System

President Harrison introduced Rev. Greg Walton, President of the Florida-Georgia District and chairman of Floor Committee #19, Registration, Credentials, and Elections, to introduce the electronic voting system and to present the

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1 initial registration report. He reported that 1,136 voting delegates had registered for the convention. Present and
2 registered for the opening of the convention were:

3		
4	Voting delegates	1,106
5	Advisory delegates	157
6	Advisory representatives	197
7	Special guests and others	73
8		

9 A motion was introduced and carried to adopt the report (Yes: 1,037; No: 14) and the chair declared the presence of
10 a quorum. He then introduced the Council of Presidents, the Commissions on Handbook and Constitutional Matters,
11 the Board of Directors, executive directors and staff, special international guests, Parliamentarian Chris Dickey,
12 Secretary of the Synod Raymond Hartwig and Assistant Secretary Marvin Temme, the convention timekeepers, and
13 his convention assistants.

14 15 *Adoption of Standing Rules*

16
17 First Vice-President Herbert Mueller assumed the chair and called attention to the proposed Special Standing Rules
18 for the convention, printed on pages 329–331 in the Sunday issue of *Today's Business*. After a motion to adopt the
19 Standing Rules was introduced, and after discussion, a motion was introduced to amend Standing Rule #15 by
20 adding a second-last sentence to the existing rule: "To ensure transparency and provide for greater harmony and
21 unity in the convention, the queue will be made visible to the convention floor." After discussion of the proposed
22 amendment, it was adopted (Yes: 796; No: 241). A motion was then introduced to amend Standing Rule #2 by
23 deleting the word "normally" in the first line. After discussion, a motion was introduced and carried to end debate
24 (Yes: 993; No: 62), following which the proposed amendment failed (Yes: 95; No: 959). This was immediately
25 followed by the introduction of a motion to end debate on the main motion. The motion carried (Yes: 914; No: 145),
26 following which the motion to adopt the Standing Rules as amended was also carried (Yes: 1013; No: 52).

27
28 Vice-President Mueller called attention to the convention schedule as published on pages 332–333 of *Today's*
29 *Business*, noting changes from the tentative schedule previously published. A motion to adopt the schedule was
30 introduced and discussed. A motion was introduced to "amend the schedule by moving all voting on resolutions
31 related to Floor Committee #12 to no later than the end of business on Wednesday." After clarification and
32 discussion, a motion to end debate was carried (Yes: 971; No: 83) and the motion to amend was carried (Yes: 527;
33 No: 518). Discussion continued on the main motion to adopt the now-amended convention schedule until a motion
34 was introduced which ended debate (Yes: 971; No: 84). The convention schedule was adopted as amended: (Yes:
35 974; No: 80).

36
37 The convention schedule having been adopted, Vice-President Mueller declared the convention in session "in the
38 name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" using the historic gavel.

39 40 *President's Report (Part 3)*

41
42 After offering numerous examples of atrocities and cultural decline past and present, President Harrison recalled that
43 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail." This we believe because
44 we also believe Jesus' words of forgiveness and promise. Even as Jesus and the apostles were bold, we too must go
45 on the offensive and be bold. He recalled statistics from recent studies related to decline in numbers in the church
46 due to societal changes, especially birth rate. But he also reminded the convention that our Synod and its
47 congregations are greatly blessed, second to no other church body in message and capacity to make a difference
48 worldwide.

49
50 He identified a number of outstanding issues to be addressed by the convention: lay deacon ministry; ecclesiastical
51 supervision; Bylaw 3.8.3 and the Board for International Mission; and movement toward a confederacy of districts
52 and the role of ecclesiastical supervision. He stated that one purpose of the Synod presidency is to keep districts
53 together as one Synod, and encouraged that we together boldly confess our faith so loudly that the nations may hear.
54 He advocated the reelection of the current vice-presidents, speaking of their good working relationship and the
55 support that he has received. He spoke similarly of the current Board of Directors. He also spoke of the difficulties
56 and challenges faced by his family and benefits received.

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2 [The complete text of Part 3 of the President's Report is printed in these 2016 Convention Proceedings.]
3

4 *Welcome and Greetings from South Wisconsin District*
5

6 South Wisconsin District President John Wille welcomed delegates back to Milwaukee after 45 years since the
7 convention last met in his city. Calling President Harrison's and Vice-President Mueller's wives to the podium he
8 presented flowers to recognize the support they have provided to their husbands.
9

10 *Convention Essay: "Upon this Rock: Repent, Confess, Rejoice"*
11

12 Dr. Larry Rast, President of Concordia Theological Seminary of Fort Wayne, Indiana, presented the first convention
13 essay. He noted the adverse effect of Luther's death in 1546 for the early Lutherans, followed by the concord that
14 was restored in 1580. Similarly, when early Lutherans came to the new world, there was immediate adversity, but
15 again a small remnant remained to form the Synod, which today has been greatly blessed. Several times in his essay
16 he marveled that it is a miracle that confessional Lutheranism exists today in any form, also noting that it does so
17 purely by God's grace, built upon the Rock. Difficulties are not new, and against all odds Lutherans have in the past
18 survived and even thrived, remaining distinctive in their theology and confessional identity. While we may pine for
19 easier times, faithful confessional Lutherans have always thrived in difficult times, some of which is evidenced at
20 this convention as the Synod receives new confessional Lutheran partners.
21

22 [The full text of the essay appears elsewhere in these 2016 Convention Proceedings.]
23

24 *International Mission (Floor Committee #2)*
25

26 President Harrison introduced Minnesota North District President Donald Fondow, Chairman of Floor Committee
27 #2, who introduced the work of his committee, advocating that now is the time to expand mission efforts in spite of
28 all that would discourage us in our day. This time of crisis requires movement forward.
29

30 Res. 2-01 "To Thank God for Faithful Service of LCMS Missionaries" (*Today's Business*, p. 49) was read and
31 formally introduced by the committee. During discussion, a motion was introduced to strike the final resolve. The
32 motion failed (Yes: 178; No: 820) and discussion continued. When the chair advocated ending debate, he was
33 supported by a show of hands. Res. 2-01 was adopted: Yes: 928; No: 96).
34

35 Res. 2-02 "To Thank God for Increase in Number of LCMS Career Missionaries and Invite Further Increase and
36 Support for Synod's Mission Work" (*Today's Business*, p. 49) was introduced and discussed. After a motion to end
37 debate was carried (Yes: 916; No: 100), the resolution was adopted as presented (Yes: 949; No: 66).
38

39 *National Mission (Floor Committee #1)*
40

41 Floor Committee #1 Chairman Mark Miller, President of the Central Illinois District, introduced his committee and
42 its work. The committee then introduced Res. 1-01 (*Today's Business*, p. 43), "To Expand Evangelism and
43 Encourage Use of *Every One His Witness*." After discussion, a motion to end debate was carried (Yes: 863; No:
44 171) and the resolution was then adopted: (Yes:778; No: 247).
45

46 Res. 1-02, "To Encourage Church Planting Throughout the Synod and Supporting the 'Mission Field: USA'
47 Initiative" (*Today's Business*, p. 44) was introduced. During discussion, a motion was introduced to amend by the
48 resolution by striking the fourth whereas paragraph: "WHEREAS, The LCMS needs to locate churches where the
49 greatest populations of people are located." The committee agreed to drop the paragraph. As discussion continued
50 on the main motion, the chair noted that the Orders of the Day would soon need to be called. He put to the assembly
51 the question whether it would be willing to close debate. The assembly agreed (Yes: 866; No: 157) and Res. 1-02
52 was then adopted as changed by the committee (Yes: 767; No: 261).
53
54
55

Session 2
Sunday p.m. July 10, 2016

President Matthew Harrison called the convention to order and the session was begun with a service of Midday Prayer.

Midday Prayer

Fifth Vice-President Nabil Nour provided the homily emphasizing the importance of love, God's love first toward us and then ours toward one another. Chaplain Peter Bender served as liturgist, and Cantor Phillip Magness served as organist. The youth choir from Trinity Lutheran Church of Lisle, Illinois, directed by James Marriott, and trumpet instrumentalists Matthew Janssen and Matthew Wolf provided special music.

Registration, Credentials, and Elections (Committee #19)

Committee #19 Chairman Greg Walton described the process leading to the election of the President of the Synod, noting the three candidates and the numbers of votes received, declaring Matthew Harrison elected. President Harrison invited his family to the podium and introduced them to the assembly.

Election of First Vice-President

Registration, Credentials, and Elections Committee Chairman Greg Walton provided an update of the convention registration report, now standing at

Voting delegates	1,111
Advisory delegates	157
Advisory representatives	171

He explained that the earlier number of advisory representatives was a miscalculation. His report was approved by decision of the chair without objection from the assembly. Chairman Walton then prepared the assembly for the election of the First Vice-President by providing a review of the process used to arrive at the five candidates on the ballot. President Harrison then called on the chaplain for a word of prayer before proceeding with the election.

The results of the first (and only) ballot in the election of the First Vice-President were as follows:

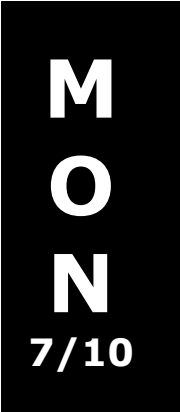
Carl C. Fickenscher, II	52
Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.	677
Scott R. Murray	158
Daniel Preus	86
John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	58

Herbert C. Mueller, Jr. was declared elected First Vice-President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Election of Second thru Sixth Vice-Presidents

Balloting continued for the remaining vice-president positions, with the results as follows:

Central Region Vice-President	Luther C. Brunette	138
	Charles J. Neugebauer	43
	Daniel Preus	601 (declared elected)
	Ronald D. Rall	59
	Scott K. Seidler	201



1	East-Southeast Region Vice-President	Victor J. Belton	365	417	
2		Jon T. Diefenthaler	119	78	
3		Christopher S. Esget	469	567 (declared elected)	
4		Robert E. Hartwell	48		
5		Jeffrey Eric Skopak	38		
6					
7	Great Lakes Region Vice-President	Greg S. Griffith	67		
8		C. William Hoesman	186		
9		Randolph H. Raasch	97		
10		Keith A. Speaks	54		
11		John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	642 (declared elected)		
12					
13	Great Plains Region Vice-President	Nabil S. Nour	627 (declared elected)		
14		Thomas J. Pfothhauer	72		
15		Clint K. Poppe	86		
16		Luke R. Schnake	71		
17		Russell L. Sommerfeld	192		
18					
19	West-Southwest Region Vice-President	Ronald D. Burcham	131		
20		Jonathan J. Coyne	42		
21		Scott R. Murray	614 (declared elected)		
22		Timothy D. Runtsch	176		
23		William H. Tucker	93		
24					

25 *Multi-Ballot Election to Determine Ranking of Vice-Presidents Two thru Six*

26					
27	For 2nd Vice-President	Christopher S. Esget	124		
28		Scott R. Murray	270	432	557* (elected 2nd Vice-President)
29		Nabil S. Nour	220	224	246
30		Daniel Preus	221	183	
31		John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	225	229	254
32					
33	For 3rd Vice-President	Christopher S. Esget	135		
34		Nabil S. Nour	350	479	563* (elected 3rd Vice-President)
35		Daniel Preus	215	155	
36		John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	350	421	503
37					
38	For 4th Vice-President	Christopher S. Esget	214		
39		Daniel Preus	248		
40		John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.	581* (elected 4th Vice-President)		
41					
42	For 5th Vice-President	Christopher S. Esget	476		
43		Daniel Preus (5th)	570* (elected 5th Vice-President)		
44					
45	For 6th Vice-President	Christopher S. Esget	(6th Vice-President)		
46					

47 *Floor Nominations for Secretary of the Synod*

48

49 Committee for Convention Nominations (#20) Chairman Ronald Garwood called attention to the slate of candidates

50 for the Office of Secretary provided by his committee. President Harrison opened the floor for nominations

51 following an explanation of the nominations process. Motions were introduced to nominate Rev. John P. Gierke of

52 Conway, Arkansas and Rev. Dan P. Gilbert of Hillside, Illinois. By separate votes, John P. Gierke (Yes: 619; No:

53 398) and Dan P. Gilbert (Yes: 594; No: 433) were added to the slate of candidates for the Office of Secretary.

54 Nominations were declared closed.

55

1 *Omnibus Resolution A*

2
3 After a correction was noted (adding Ov. 7-07), a motion was introduced to adopt Omnibus Resolution A (*Today's*
4 *Business*, pp. 342–345). During the discussion that followed, a motion was introduced to amend the resolution by
5 striking Overtures 11-30 and 11-32. This motion failed (Yes: 492; No: 505). A motion was then introduced to add
6 Res. 12-01A to the omnibus resolution, this resolution to be referred to the Council of Presidents for further study.
7 After a brief recess was called by the chair to consider these intended actions, the Secretary of the Synod reported
8 that all three of these actions were out of order. Overture 7-07 was discovered to be a resolution and not an overture,
9 so that it and the attempted addition of Res. 12-01A were both out of order since the omnibus resolution is for
10 overtures and not resolutions. It was also learned that Overtures 11-30 and 11-32 had already been removed from
11 consideration by Floor Committee 11, leaving Omnibus Resolution A without change except for the removal of
12 Overtures 11-30 and 11-32. After further discussion, a motion to end debate was carried (Yes: 900; No: 126), and
13 Omnibus Resolution A was adopted (Yes: 923; No: 97).

14
15 *Routes to Ministry (Floor Committee #13)*

16
17 Herbert Mueller having assumed the chair of the convention, he called on Floor Committee Chairman Roger
18 Paavola to introduce the work of his committee and to call on committee member Russ Sommerfeld to provide an
19 introduction for the resolutions related to the report of the 2013 Resolution 4-06A Task Force addressing the matter
20 of licensed lay deacons, the text of this presentation to be published in the Monday edition of *Today's Business*.
21 Chairman Mueller encouraged careful reading of these materials in preparation for consideration of Resolutions 13-
22 01A and 13-02A later in the convention.

23
24 *Reformation (Floor Committee #15)*

25
26 The chair, now assumed by Vice-President Daniel Preus, called on Floor Committee #15 Chairman Peter Lange for
27 his committee's report. He called the assembly's attention to Res. 15-01 "To Give Thanks for Gospel Focus of 'The
28 Wittenberg Project'" and called on Wittenberg Society Chairman Michael Kumm to provide a history of the project.
29 Res. 15-01 was then formally introduced and, after discussion, a motion to end debate was introduced and carried
30 (Yes: 984; No: 37). Res. 15-01 was adopted as presented (Yes: 973; No: 37).

31
32 Res. 15-02A "To Encourage Use of Two-Hour Luther Documentary" (*Today's Business*, p. 377) was introduced and
33 a video showing some of the documentary was aired. After discussion, a motion to end debate was carried (Yes:
34 1005; No: 36) and Res. 15-02A was adopted (Yes: 997; No: 23).

35
36 Res. 15-03 "To Commend Use of Resources Provided for Reformation 2017 500th Anniversary" (*Today's Business*,
37 p. 187) was introduced by the committee and adopted without discussion (Yes: 988; No: 20).

38
39 Res. 15-04A "To Honor 500th Anniversary of the Reformation by Growing in the Word and Showing Christ to the
40 World" (*Today's Business*, p. 378) was introduced by the committee and, after discussion, adopted (Yes: 996; No:
41 33).

42
43 Res. p. 386, Res. 15-06 "To Encourage Study of Augsburg Confession in Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary
44 of the Reformation" (*Today's Business*, p. 386) was introduced by the committee and, after brief discussion, adopted
45 (Yes: 989; No: 32).

46
47 Having no further business to bring to the convention, the floor committee was excused with thanks.

48
49 *Mercy (Floor Committee #3)*

50
51 Chairman Lee Hagan introduced the work of his committee with words of scripture and a video discussing the need
52 for mercy every day in many ways. He then introduced Res. 3-01 "To Commend and Encourage Work of LCMS
53 Disaster Response" (*Today's Business*, p. 57) which, after discussion, was adopted by show of hands.

54

1
2 Chairman Hagan introduced LCMS National Housing Support Corporation Executive Director Nicole Ridley to
3 describe the work of her organization. He then introduced on behalf of his committee Res. 3-02 “To Commend
4 Work of LCMS National Housing Support Corporation” (*Today’s Business*, p. 58) which, after discussion, was
5 adopted by voice vote.
6

7 Chairman Hagan also introduced Res. 3-05A “To Give Thanks to God and Encourage Support for the Ministries of
8 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran Services in America, and Lutheran World Relief” (*Today’s
9 Business*, p 350), read in part by representatives of the three social service agencies. Extensive discussion followed
10 the formal introduction of the resolution. Noting that the Orders of the Day called for the evening devotion, the chair
11 was supported in ending debate (Yes: 855; No: 104). Res. 3-05A was adopted (Yes: 748; No: 227).
12

13 *Evening Prayer*

14
15 Chaplain William Weedon, organist Phillip Magness, and soloist Jennifer Barnickel-Fitch led the assembly in
16 evening prayer.

