

2018 SELC DISTRICT CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS



“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with
all your soul and with all your strength.”

Deuteronomy 6:5

“Therefore honor God with your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:20b

Held at:

Grace Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Ohio

April 26 – 29, 2018

The SELC Logo:

The initial view “registers” as a compass,
with a Cross “pointer” –
*Jesus proclaims: “I am the Way, the Truth, the
Life” (John 14:6)*

The bold SELC letters, read counter-clockwise, like the
true rotation of the earth, disorients the viewer and
suggests this is more than a compass.

The center circle is the globe,
with every continent being “touched “ by the “Christmas
Star”
and the “Star” leads to the focus on
the “empty” (no corpus) “Easter Cross of Victory”.



At the birth of Jesus the Angel proclaimed to the Shepherds:
*“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be for all people:
A Savior has been born to you: He is Christ, the LORD!” (Luke 2:10, 11)*

and Paul wrote:

*“Jesus, our Lord, was delivered over to death for our sins,
and was raised to life for our justification.”
(Romans 4:25)*

The globe is encircled by red – the color of Redeeming Love!

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His One-and-Only-Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish
but shall have eternal life.” (John 3:16)*

In each quadrant of the encircled globe, the three small circles,
like communication satellites, proclaim:

The Redeeming Love of Christ (red)
brings us the assurance of Heaven and Eternal Life (blue)
and empowers us to Live now the Life of Service and Mercy! (green)

SELC

Showing Everyone Life in Christ --- Showing Everyone the Love of Christ!

SELC DISTRICT

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

The 18th Regular District Convention

Thursday, April 26 – Sunday, April 29

2018

Convention Theme:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with
all your soul and with all your strength.”

Deuteronomy 6:5

“Therefore honor God with your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:20b

Showing Everyone Life in Christ...

Showing Everyone the Love of Christ

Grace Lutheran Church

13030 Madison Avenue

Lakewood, Ohio 44107-4931

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Grace Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Ohio
April 26 – 29, 2018

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2018 SELC DISTRICT CONVENTION SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 26TH

11:00am Board of Directors Meeting

12:00pm Lunch for Board of Directors and Committees sponsored by Thrivent

1:00pm President and Secretary Meet with All Chairpersons

1:30pm **REGISTRATION OPENS**

2:00pm Committee Meetings:
Credentials/Registration Committee
Resolutions Committee
Election Committee
Press Committee

5:00pm Dinner

7:00pm Worship Service with Holy Communion
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison
Celebrant: Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik
Liturgists: Rev. Dr. Wally Arp and Rev. Chris Cahill

8:30pm Fellowship t Hotel sponsored by LCEF
Executive Suite Room 974

FRIDAY, APRIL 27TH

8:00am Breakfast

9:00am Devotions (Topic: Hear)
Preacher: Rev. Charles St-Onge
Liturgist: Rev. Joel Elowsky

9:30am Convention Overview
Welcome: New Rostered Church Workers
Introduction: Officers, Delegates and Committees Delegates

10:00am Ratification of SELC District By-Laws

10:30am Break

10:45am Circuit Forums

12:00pm Lunch

12:45pm Convention Photo

1:00pm Call to Order
Credentials Report
District President's Report
Vice President's Report
Secretary Report and 2015 Proceedings

2:00pm Nominations and Election Overview
Call for Nominations
Circuit Visitor Election
Elect: 2019 LCMS Circuit Delegates and Laypersons
2021 SELC Elections Committee

2:30pm Circuit Visitors' Reports
Ratify Circuit Visitors' Election
Ratify 2019 LCMS Circuit Delegates

3:15pm Break

3:30pm Financial Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report and Audit Report
Stewardship Report
Lutheran Church Extension Fund
SELC 2019- 2021 Work Program

4:00pm Break

4:15pm LWML
Luther League
Ministerial Care Report
Education Executive/School Ministry
Lutheran Heritage Foundation

5:00pm Dinner

6:00pm Devotions (Topic: Smell)
Preacher: Rev. Daniel Berteau
Liturgist: Rev. Nathan Grewe

7:00pm Bowling at Mahall's
13200 Madison Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107
OR
Fellowship at Hotel sponsored by LCEF
Executive Suite Room 974 2018

SATURDAY, APRIL 28TH

8:00am Breakfast

9:00am Devotions (Topic: Touch)

Preacher: Rev. David Haara

Liturgist: Rev. Jacob Deal

9:30am Credentials Report

Lutheran Haven

Ratify Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees Appointments

Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees Elections

10:30am Break

10:45am Election of District President

11:00am President Harrison

11-Minute Video Presentation

12:00pm Lunch

1:00pm President Harrison

1:30pm Break

1:45pm Rev. Jamison Hardy, English District President

2:00pm Credentials Report

Election of District Vice-Presidents

SELC Board of Directors Elections

3:00pm Break

3:30pm SELC Mission Presentations

4:30pm Seminary Updates

5:00pm Dinner

6:00pm Scholarship Committee

Resolutions Committee

7:00pm Concert by Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus

8:00pm Worship Service: "In Memoriam" (Topic: Taste)

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Chris Cahill

Liturgist: Rev. Paul Hoyer

SUNDAY, APRIL 29TH

9:00am Worship Service with Holy Communion and Installation of Officers

Installation Officiant: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison

Preacher: Rev. Mark Larson (Topic: Heart)

Liturgist: Rev. George Hansell

11:00am Brunch

12:15pm Credentials Report

Resolution Committee

Unfinished Business

Convention Review

2:30pm Closing Devotion (Topic: See)

Preacher: Rev. Zach Zehnder

Liturgist: Rev. Kevin Duff

SELC Officers: "Old and New"

Lunches to Go

2018 SELC DISTRICT CONVENTION VOTING DELEGATES

EASTERN CIRCUIT

<u>Church</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Pastoral Delegate</u>	<u>Lay Delegate</u>
Zion	Clark	NJ	Rev. Nathan Grewe	Karen Dooley Joan Sitler (Alternate)
Concordia	Bethlehem	PA	Rev. Raymond Malec	John Lorenz
St. John	Bound Brook	NJ	Rev. Joseph Weatherell*	Jennifer Weatherell Henry Buer (Alternate)
St. Stephen	Dickson City	PA	Rev. Glen Triplett	None
St. John the Baptist	Emporia	VA	Rev. Stephen Bocklage	Anna F. Bocklage William Skroback (Alternate)
Peace	Galloway	NJ	Rev. Alan Mercer	Andrew Buchanan, Jr.
Holy Trinity	Garfield	NJ	<i>Vacant</i>	None
St. Paul	Greenwich	CT	<i>Vacant</i>	John Dubrocky
St. John's	Hazleton	PA	Rev. Joseph Leech	Karen Ann Kowalczyk Donald Roegge (Alternate)
Concordia	Macungie	PA	Rev. Wally Vinovskis	Joel Fastenua Robert Femovich (Alternate)
Redeemer	Manchester	NJ	Rev. Daniel Berteau	Donald W. Cousens
Ascension	Montreal	Canada	Rev. Charles St-Onge	Mark Blaauw
St. Paul	Raritan	NJ	Rev. Joseph Weatherell*	
Trinity	Stamford	CT	None	None
St. Athanasius	Vienna	VA	Rev. James Douthwaite	Gerald Charles Ecker Scott Killian (Alternate)
St. Paul	Westport	CT	Rev. Bradley Knorr	None
St. Matthew	Wilkes - Barre	PA	Rev. Peter Haenftling	Bill Courtney Robert Novak (Alternate)

CENTRAL CIRCUIT

<u>Church</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Pastoral Delegate</u>	<u>Lay Delegate</u>
John Huss	Arnold	PA	Rev. Jerome Panzigrau	Dara Ann Timko
Holy Cross	Johnstown	PA	Rev. Kenneth Kelly	None
Nativity	Kingsville	Canada	Vacant	Paul Meleg
Grace	Lakewood	OH	Rev. George Hansell, Jr.	Noel Bartlett Richard Zahawski (Alternate)
Christ the King	Lodi	OH	Rev. Chris Cahill	Rae Taranowski Pam Reece (Alternate)
Sts. Peter & Paul	Lorain	OH	None	None
St. John	Massillon	OH	Rev. John Telloni	Keith Kleve
Resurrection	Malvern	OH	Rev. Kevin McLeod	Thomas Moffet Dale Moyer (Alternate)
St. Matthew	Norton	OH	Rev. Curtis Stephens	Jim Putt John Bailey (Alternate)
Calvary	Parma	OH	Vacant	Lois Ballas Pam Young (Alternate)
Holy Trinity	Parma	OH	Rev. John Milligan	Millicent Kwitakowski
Holy Trinity	Pleasant City	OH	Vacant	Christine Miler
Sts. Peter & Paul	Sharon	PA	Rev. Jacob Deal	Matthew K. Berent Jonathan Baisch (Alternate)
St. Mark	Steubenville	OH	Rev. David McCloskey	David Krause Doug Koehnlein (Alternate)
St. Paul	Toronto	Canada	<i>Rev. Ladislav Kozak</i>	None
Concordia	Youngtown	OH	Vacant	Mark Miller Lillie Ekong (Alternate)

Credential Forms Pending

WESTERN CIRCUIT

<u>Church</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Pastoral Delegate</u>	<u>Lay Delegate</u>
Holy Cross	Alsip	IL	Rev. Chris Ongstad †	Thomas Griffin Donna Meilahn (Alternate)
Holy Trinity	Boyceville	WI	Vacant	None
Dr. Martin Luther	Chicago	IL	<i>Rev. Richard Ramirez</i>	None
Resurrection	Crown Point	IN	Rev. Gary Nagy	Ardyne Kirn
St. John	Cudahy	WI	Rev. Matthew Vesey	Peter Brandstrom Carson Lunde (Alternate)
St. John	Granite City	IL	Rev. William Hale	Jonathan Frech
Zion	Norridge	IL	Rev. Luther Bajus	Rhonda Dirr Nona Schipull (Alternate)
Pentecost	Racine	WI	Rev. Luke Jacob	Dan Geyer
St. Lucas	St. Louis	MO	Rev. Mark Larson	Dennis Lee
Jacob's Well	St. Louis	MO	Rev. David Corson	None
Holy Trinity	Streator	IL	Rev. John Gutz	Dr. Edna Bazik
St. Paul	Whiting	IN	Rev. John Henry	Terry Lynn Falk Karin Krchmery (Alternate)

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT

<u>Church</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Pastoral Delegate</u>	<u>Lay Delegate</u>
Holy Cross	Lake Mary	FL	Rev. Paul Hoyer	John Ever Rebekah Fana (Alternate)
theCross	Mount Dora	FL	Rev. Zach Zehnder	Jacob Baumann Mark Crossman (Alternate)
St. Luke's	Oviedo	FL	Rev. Dr. Wally Arp	Jeanne Wacker Susan Hanas (Alternate)
Faith	Rockledge	FL	Rev. Ron Meyr* Rev. Kevin Duff	Ken Baker Leslie Heuman (Alternate)
Hope	Melbourne	FL	Rev. Mark Moreno	Jerry Mueller
Family of Christ	Tampa	FL	Rev. David Haara	Vicki Portfolio

OTHER ADVISORY DELEGATES

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Type of Delegate</u>
Ballas, Rev. Kenneth	Parma	OH	Emeritus	Advisory
Bennett, Rev. Michael	Massillon	OH	Emeritus	Advisory/Guest
Breitbarth, Rev. Robert	Crown Point	IN	Emeritus	Advisory
Dzurovcik, Rev. Andrew	Clark	NJ	District President	Advisory
Ekong, Rev. Hosea	Youngstown	OH	Emeritus	Advisory
Hayas, Rev. Donald	Lakewood	OH	Emeritus	Advisory
Krueger, Rev. Carl	Cudahy	WI	Emeritus	Advisory
Roberts, Rev. Brian	St. Luke's	FL	Southern Circuit Visitor	Advisory
Schipull, Dr. Doug	Norridge	IL	Disaster Relief	Advisory
Soltis, Rev. Thomas	Parma	OH	Emeritus	Advisory

**MINUTES
THE 18TH REGULAR CONVENTION
OF
THE SELC DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD**

**Grace Lutheran Church
Lakewood, OH
April 26-29, 2018**

CONVENTION THEME:

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your strength.”
*Deuteronomy 6:5***

**“Therefore honor God with your body.”
*1 Corinthians 6:20b***

Thursday, April 26, 2018

CONVENTION OPENING WORSHIP was held at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary of Grace Lutheran Church, with Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS President, serving as the preacher. Overall theme of his homily: *“You are not your own; you were bought with a price.” “Love the Lord ...”* Participating in the Divine Service were Host Pastor, Rev. George Hansell; SELC District President, Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik, Officiant; 1st Vice-President Rev. Dr. Wally Arp; and 2nd Vice-President, Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill.

Friday, April 27, 2018

SESSION 1

1. **OPENING DEVOTION** was held at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. Topic: *“Hear.”* Preacher: Rev. Charles St-Onge; Liturgist: Rev. Joel Elowsky.
2. **CALL TO ORDER** was made by President Andrew Dzurovcik at 9:28 am.
3. **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT** was presented by Chairman Noel Bartlett, who reported the following – 72 possible votes; Delegates: 33 Pastors; 33 Lay; 6 Alternates present; and 7 non-voting Advisory Delegates present.
4. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt the Convention Agenda (*see Convention Workbook [CW], pp. 5-8*) – Carried. Rev. Ron Meyr was appointed to serve as Convention Expeditor.
5. **WELCOME TO NEW ROSTERED CHURCH WORKERS:** All newly-received pastors, those who accepted calls to district congregations from other districts, and first-call pastors who have begun to serve congregations in this district approached the front

table to sign the SELC District Constitution and Bylaws. Each pastor introduced to the assembly himself and the church which they are serving. President Dzurovcik welcomed these servants of the church into the district and commended them to the Lord in their respective ministries.

6. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Minutes of the 17th Regular Convention of the SELC District - Lutheran Church - Missouri held at Zion Lutheran Church, Clark, NJ., April 9-12, 2015. – Carried. (*See CW, pp. 18-34*)
7. **REVISED SELC DISTRICT BYLAWS** (*printed in the Convention Workbook [CW], pp. 114-134*) were presented for ratification by the convention, with John Zettlemoyer, Esq., SELC District Legal Counsel, leading the delegates through the revisions. Mr. Zettlemoyer indicated that the amendments were reviewed by the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters. Several changes were offered by the synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters to ensure that such proposed amendments would be in conformity with the Synod Handbook – Constitution and Bylaws. Mr. Zettlemoyer reported that specific recommendations were incorporated into the document as per CCM recommendations.
8. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to ratify the SELC District Bylaws as presented. – (2/3 vote required) – Carried unanimously by Voice Vote.
9. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** was presented (*See CW, pp. 38-47*) by President Andrew Dzurovcik, with First Vice-President Wally Arp presiding. **MOTION made and seconded** to receive the report. — Carried. Chair returned to President Dzurovcik.
10. **FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT** was Rev. Wally Arp (*See CW, pp. 48-49*). **MOTION made and seconded** to receive the report. – Carried.
11. **SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT** was presented by Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill (*See CW, pp. 50-54*). **MOTION made and seconded** to receive the report. – Carried.
12. **THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT:** As known by many in attendance, and sadly, Third Vice-President Chris Ongstad had passed away a few weeks before the convention after faithfully serving since the last convention, and prior to that, for many years as the District Secretary and Webmaster. Because so close to the beginning of this convention, no appointment was made to fill this office.
13. **REPORTS OF THE CIRCUIT VISITORS** were presented by the respective officers (*see all reports in the Convention WB*). A) Rev. James Douthwaite of the Eastern Circuit (*See CW, pp. 55-56*) : Pastor Douthwaite summarized this last term as “*a very eventful three years*”; B) Rev. Ken Ballas of the Central Circuit (*See CW, p. 57*) – Pastor Ballas encouraged the pastors present to “*preach and teach God's Word; love all of God's people.*” He continued by referencing the sad reality of closing congregations, although

there is no need to hang one's head in shame, but to thank God for the ministry in that place, with many congregants in heaven because of the ministry in that place, in the spirit of Jesus' words: "*Fear not, little flock, for it is God's pleasure to give you the kingdom*"; C) Rev. Luke Jacob of the Western Circuit (*See CW, pp. 58-59*) – Pastor Jacob added that there presently was one vacancy in the circuit due to Pastor Ongstad's recent death, with Rev. Steve Lange of Orland Park, IL serving as Vacancy Pastor at Holy Cross, Alsip, IL; D) Rev. Brian Roberts of the Southern Circuit. **MOTION made and seconded** to receive all the Circuit Visitors' Reports. – Carried.

14. **CIRCUIT FORUMS** were scheduled to meet in various rooms in the church in order to elect pastoral and lay delegates to the next triennial Convention of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Convention scheduled to be held in 2019 in Tampa, FL. The other order of business to be conducted was the election of the respective Circuit Visitors. The delegates were thus dismissed at this point by the President to take care of their circuit business in their assigned rooms.
15. **THE CONVENTION RE-CONVENED** at 11:30 a.m.
16. **ELECTION RESULTS** were announced by representative from the four circuits for the positions of Circuit Visitor and Pastoral and Lay Delegates to the next LC-MS Convention:
 - A) Central Circuit: Visitor: Rev. Curtis Stephens, Circuit Visitor; Delegates: Rev. John Telloni, Pastor
 - B) Eastern Circuit: Visitor: Rev. James Douthwaite; Delegates: Rev. James Douthwaite, Pastor, and Rev. Charles St.-Onge, Alternate Pastor; Dr. Joel Fastenau, Lay, and John Duburcky, Alternate
 - C) Western Circuit: Visitor: Rev. Carl Krueger; Delegates: Rev. Luke Jacob, Pastor, and Rev. John Henry, Alternate; Lay: Peter Bramstram, Rhonda Dirr, Alternate
 - D) Southern Circuit: Visitor: Rev. Brian Roberts; Delegates: Rev. David Haara, Pastor, and Rev. Zach Zehnder, Alternate; Lay: Ken Baker, Lay; and Rebekah Fauna, Alternate. (*Special Note: This slate elected by the circuits would be ratified later in the convention after the Central Circuit Forum, which did not complete its tasks in the time allotted, reports the rest of their election results.*)
17. **MISSION PRESENTATION #1** was hosted by Rev. Paul Hoyer, District Mission Executive, who introduced the reports of mission efforts in our district, and ministry to immigrants and other ethnic groups. (*Special Note: Pastor Hoyer's formal report is printed in the CW, pp. 92-93*). He introduced to the assembly Rev. Prince Rajamony, SELC District Missionary to the Tamil people in the United States, who then provided both oral remarks about the whole mission supplemented with a slide presentation. Pastor Prince further stated that he hoped to start seven Tamil congregations in this country. At the present he was serving congregations in Tampa, Phoenix, Chicago, and Clark, NJ, and he hoped to begin a mission in Richmond, VA. He concluded by giving thanks to Pastor Hoyer and his mentor, Rev. David Haara, for their vital assistance to him

in his mission here in the states and in India. Regarding his home country, he indicated that, during his 18-month stay in India, four mission starts were begun there with help from other indigenous missionaries.

18. **RECENT SEMINARY CALLS AND ASSIGNMENTS:** It was announced that the district in 2018 was receiving one vicar to serve St. Luke's, Oviedo, and two pastors, Ethan Spiral (SMP), to Holy Cross, Lake Mary; and Evan Scanlon, to St. Paul (SELC), and First (NE), Greenwich, CT, in a dual parish situation. Regarding assignments and calls from the two seminaries in the spring: Vicars: 42 vicars (FW), and 52 (STL); and Pastors: 32 (FW) and 62 (STL).
19. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE:** President Dzurovcik introduced Committee Chairman, Rev. Brian Roberts, in order to prepare the assembly for the elections of officers, which would take place intermittently during the business sessions. Pastor Roberts referred the delegates to the list of nominations for all offices. He reported on 3 individual declining nominations, and one recently nominated needed to be contacted by the committee. The balloting would begin with the President and then the Vice-Presidents, with no nominations from the floor at that point. One biography of a late nominee who accepted the nomination would soon be passed out by the committee.
20. **THE CONVENTION RECESSED** at 11:57 a.m. after the singing of "*We Thank Thee for Our Food*" as the meal prayer for the lunch to be served in the church basement/Fellowship Hall.
21. **GROUP PHOTO** was taken outside on the front lawn of Grace at 12:45 pm.
22. **CENTRAL CIRCUIT FORUM** resumed its session after the photo in order to complete its balloting for delegates to the LCMS Convention in 2019.
23. **THE CONVENTION BUSINESS SESSION** resumed at 1:34 p.m.
24. **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT** was presented as the afternoon business session began. The current total of delegates: 34 Pastors; 34 Lay Delegates; 7 non-voting Advisory Delegates. Possible votes: 68.
25. **ELECTION RESULTS:** From the Central Circuit, the full slate of Delegates to the LC-MS Convention is as follows: Rev. John Telloni, Pastor; Rev. George Hansell, Alternate Pastor; Matthew Berent, Lay Delegate; and Millicent Kwiatkowski, Alternate.
26. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to ratify all the Election Results from the Four Circuits as previously announced. – Carried.
27. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE:** On behalf of the Committee, Chairman Brian Roberts asked if there were any calls for Nomination for Offices other than for District President and Vice-President. There were none from the assembly. Rev.

Brian Roberts came forward to withdraw his name from the slate for the office of Vice-President.

28. **BALLOTING FOR DISTRICT PRESIDENT** took place. All of the candidates were introduced to the assembly. Rev. Roberts then offered a prayer to the Lord for guidance and wisdom by the gathered body. It was pointed out that a quorum existed in order to begin the voting process. With that information, the delegates began the balloting.
29. **MISSION PRESENTATION # 2:** Mission Executive Rev. Paul Hoyer introduced Rev. John Henry, pastor of St. Paul, Whiting, IN. Pastor Henry presented information about the Hispanic ministry taking place at St. Paul and at Dr. Martin Luther, Chicago, which he is supervising and carrying out. The segment was then concluded with a prayer led by Pastor Hoyer.
30. **LETTER OF GREETING:** Rev. Jacob Gaugert, Missionary and Theological Instructor in Togo, West Africa, formerly pastor of Dr. Martin Luther, Chicago, and a rostered member of the SELC District, sent a letter of greeting to the convention (*see Convention Proceedings, pp. 36-37*). The letter was read by President Dzurovcik.
31. **RESULT OF PRESIDENTIAL BALLOTING:** Nominations and Election Committee Chairman Roberts reported that a majority of the votes for District President were cast for Nominee Waldemar R. Vinovskis of Macungie, PA, and the Eastern Circuit. President-Elect Vinovskis came forward and responded to the election with a brief speech. He based his remarks on Matthew 28:19 (the Great Commission as the foundation for a missionary church) and John 21, particularly the words of the risen Lord Jesus, “*Feed My sheep ... lambs.*” He pointed out that his fervent hope is that the SELC and LC-MS continue to be a missionary church in these important times. He asked for the prayers of the district for future blessings, and that pastors and people care for one another under the Great Physician. President-Elect Vinovskis closed his remarks with prayer.

Former President Rev. Carl Krueger, EM, requested time to speak to the assembly. He began by thanking the Lord for the long and faithful service of outgoing President, Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik, not only during his three-term as President, but also for his service as Vice-President and in other capacities on behalf of the district, reaching back many years to his active Luther League leadership and service. He also lauded the faithful service rendered to the district by Hope Alfieri as the Administrative Assistant to her District President father for the past three years. He concluded with an appropriate spoken doxology to the Triune God for His blessings.
32. **FIRST BALLOTING FOR 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT** then followed. Chairman Roberts pointed out to the assembly that, since President-Elect Vinovskis is from the Eastern Circuit, all Vice-Presidential candidates from this circuit have been eliminated from the rest of the balloting. All candidates from the Central, Western, and Southern Circuits are eligible for the balloting for the next office to be filled, that of First Vice-President.
33. **LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND PRESENTATION** was provided by

Rev. David Thiele, Field Vice-President for the SELC and English Districts. (*See CW, pp. 140-145*). Additional comments: Rev. Thiele pointed out that 3.5 % of communicant members in the SELC District are investors in LCEF, and he hoped that there might be improvement in this area in the future. He reminded the assembly that LCEF developed a loan program for clergy and their families. Available free of charge is a program called "Mission Insight" which provides a demographic look at congregation's community that may be of great assistance to its ministry.

34. **RESULTS OF BALLOTING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT:** Chairman Roberts reported that Rev. WallyArp of the Southern Circuit received the majority of the votes cast and so become the First Vice-President-Elect.
35. **BALLOTING FOR 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT** then ensued. Candidates from the Central and Western Circuits now remained on the ballot, since Rev. Arp is from the Southern Circuit.
36. **MISSION PRESENTATION # 3** was led by Mission Executive Hoyer, who introduced Rev. Charles St-Onge of Ascension, Montreal. Pastor St.-Onge is a Missionary under the auspices of Synod's Office of International Missions, responsible for the Caribbean Team as the Area Facilitator. His second call is to Ascension, where there are now three pastors, besides him, serving the congregation, including Rev. Chun Lin Hu; a French-speaking pastor from the Lutheran Church Canada, and an Argentine Pastor, Antonio Jacobson, which makes this parish very diversified and active in a multi-ethnic section of the city. Pastor St.-Onge thanked the SELC for being a very mission-minded district. Pastor Hoyer closed this segment with prayer.
37. **SECOND BALLOT FOR 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT** had to take place because no candidate received a majority of the votes cast.
38. **MISSION PRESENTATION # 4** was introduced by Pastor Hoyer, who asked Rev. David Corson from Jacob's Well in St. Louis to come forward and address the assembly. This mission was birthed is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the synod. It is a home-based church. The mission has found space in a convent near Jefferson Barracks, only 647 square feet in area, located in an under-served section of the city. Pastor Corson and other volunteers are very involved in the neighborhood serving the physical needs of residents with home repair and improvement, and food distribution. This segment was closed with prayer by Paul Hoyer.
39. **3RD BALLOTING FOR 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT** needed to be taken due to no candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast.
40. **MISSION PRESENTATION # 4** was given by Rev. William Whitehead, an SMP Pastor called to serve Family of Christ West, a satellite of Family of Christ, Tampa. This is a congregation previously a congregation of the Florida-Georgia District called St. Matthew. The first worship service under the auspices of Family of Christ was held in

2014, with a total of 18 attendees. A preschool was also in operation but deteriorated. This parish was also involved with a school for autistic students with four classes; five AA groups; a Cub Scout Pack; a Girl Scout Troop, Line Dance group with more than 50 members; a Hispanic ministry, swimming class for ladies; a food program for the homeless. Rev. Hoyer concluded the presentation with prayer for this mission.

41. **THE CONVENTION** took a break at 3:03 pm.
42. **THE CONVENTION** resumed at 3:27 pm.
43. **4TH BALLOTING FOR 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT** took place due to the lack of a majority vote for any candidate.
44. **EDUCATION DIRECTOR'S PRESENTATION** was given by Mrs. Betty Hoyer, District Education Executive, which included an informative slide presentation about the status of parochial school education in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in 2017.
45. **RESULTS OF BALLOTING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT:** Nominations and Election Committee Chairman Roberts announced that Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill of the Central Circuit received a majority the votes cast and is therefore the new Second Vice-President.
46. **BALLOTING FOR 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT** began, with the slate of candidates from the Western Circuit.
47. **FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT** was given by Larry Schultz, who reviewed the report in the Convention Workbook (*See CW, 60-66*).
48. **TREASURER'S REPORT** was given by Robert Lange, who reviewed the report in the Convention Workbook (*See CW, pp. 67-86*). Mr. Lange further indicated that the financial books had been audited for 2015, and the audit for 2016 and 2017 were almost finished. The required final audit would soon be completed and presented to the synod.
49. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the reports of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. – Carried.
50. **RESULTS OF BALLOTING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT:** Chairman Roberts announced that Rev. Luke Jacob of the Western Circuit received a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot and thus is the new Third Vice-President.
51. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to close the nominations for District Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer. (Chairman Roberts had announced that there was only one nominee for each of these offices: Rev. John Telloni, Secretary; Larry Schultz, Financial Secretary; and Robert Lange, Treasurer.) – Carried.

52. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to elect the three candidates for Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer by acclamation. – Carried.
53. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for the above three offices. – Carried. At the conclusion of this vote, Pastor Paul Hoyer offered a prayer of blessing for the three re-elected officers for their service to the district.
54. **REPORT OF THE SELC DISTRICT LUTHERAN WOMEN’S MISSIONARY LEAGUE** was given by SELC - LWML President Sharon Roegge (*See CW, pp. 105-106*). Some salient points from her oral address: A “State of the LWML” was sent out to all pastors and Ladies’ Group Presidents in the district, which included status reports on synod and SELC LWML work. She indicated that the SELC - LWML may be coming to a crossroads at this time due to declining membership and activity. Mrs. Roegge offered a personal history regarding her LWML in previous congregations and districts and now in the SELC District. She encouraged attendance at the May 18-20 District LWML Convention at Zion, Norridge. No major actions regarding future directions will be undertaken at this time; however, discussion will ensue regarding future directions, whether there continues to be an SELC District LWML or that it be dissolved so that local LWML groups may choose to join the various geographical district groups. She closed by giving thanks to the Lord for blessing her involvement in LWML through the years and expressed that LWML continue to be a vibrant missionary arm of our church body.
55. **REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR** was presented by Rev. Thomas Soltis (*See CW, pp. 87-91*). Pastor Soltis offered his hearty thanks to the trained “Consecrated Stewards” Presenters in the district: Rev. John Gutz, Rev. Ron Meyr, Rev. David Haara, and Rev. Joseph Weatherall.
56. **PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED 2019-2021 WORK PROGRAM** was given by Larry Schultz and Robert Lange (*See CW, pp. 84-86*). Rev. Paul Hoyer also explained the proposed Mission Program in some detail. It was pointed out that the Work Program is a projection of the work that is necessary in the district, subject to annual review by the Board of Directors between conventions. The Reserve Fund is available to cover some expenses when not covered by congregational income.
57. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt the 2019-2021 Work Program. The motion was open for questions and comments and debate.
58. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to end debate. – Carried.
59. **PREVIOUS MOTION TO ADOPT THE 2019-2021 WORK PROGRAM** was brought up for a vote – Carried by Voice Vote.
60. **THE CONVENTION** recessed at 5:05 pm, with a table prayer offered by Rev. John Telloni.

61. **DINNER** with a “*Luau*” theme was served in Grace’s basement/Fellowship Hall.
62. **CLOSING DEVOTION** was held in the sanctuary at 6:00 p.m. Preacher: Rev. Daniel Bertau; Liturgist: Rev. Nathan Grewe. Topic: “*Smell.*”

Saturday, April 28, 2018

Session II

63. **OPENING DEVOTION** began in the sanctuary at Grace at 9:00 a.m. Preacher: Rev. David Haara; Liturgist: Rev. Jacob Deal. Topic: “*Touch*”
64. **THE CONVENTION BUSINESS SESSION** was called to order by President Dzurovcik at 9:36 a.m.
65. **REPORT OF THE LUTHERAN HAVEN** was provided by Mrs. Susan Hanas, President of the Haven Board of Trustees, with assistance from Haven staff member, Stephanie Gonzalez (*See CW for the full report by Linda Kirk, CEO, pp. 94-95*). After Mrs. Hanas expressed greetings on behalf of the residents and staff of the Haven community, a slide presentation told the story of the SELC District-owned ministry in Oviedo, Florida, and its progress to date. Mrs. Hanas reported that the Haven was given a 5-star rating for skilled care and assisted living, rated one of the best in the country. The Landings, a 48-unit independent apartment facility, was scheduled to open in November, 2018. The Fellowship Hall was in the process of being re-furbished. The Haven community survived two hurricanes during the last two years. A close relationship continues between the Haven and St. Luke’s next door. All were looking forward to an SMP Pastor who was coming soon to serve the Haven community.
66. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Lutheran Haven Report. – Carried.
67. **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Chairman Noel Bartlett provided the assembly Report # 3: 35 Pastors; 32 Lay Delegates; 3 Alternate Lay Delegates; 5 Advisory Delegates. Total Voting Delegates = 70. Total Registration: 109.
68. **GUEST PRESENTATION:** Rev. Robert Marshall brought greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. This ministry continues to publish Bible translations in different languages.
69. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE:** President Dzurovcik acknowledged Chairman Brian Roberts, who announced one new nomination for the Western Circuit Pastoral Representative to the Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees: Rev. John Gutz of Streator, IL, who had turned in his signed consent and promised to pass out a brief biography to the delegates later that day. Chairman Roberts indicated that Rev. Luke Jacob had withdrawn his nomination for this position after his being elected Third Vice-President.

70. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to close nominations for all remaining offices. – Carried.
71. **BALLOTING FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – CIRCUIT PASTORAL REPRESENTATIVES** was announced for action, with delegates casting their votes.
72. **REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL CARE DIRECTOR** was given by Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill. In addition to his printed report (*See CW, pp. 96-99*), the following information was made available:
 800-605-6621 – This is the employee assistance number on the back of the CHP Card, run by Signa (strictly confidential), which can refer to counseling for pastors and wives who are not covered by CHP.
 330-421-6806 - This is Director Cahill’s cell phone number. Pastors were told to feel free to call him regarding any concerns, or email: revcahill@gmail.com.
 Director Cahill reported that Dr. Bruce Hartung would soon retire, and thus the future of the ministerial health coalition would need to be determined. He was hopeful that district representatives will keep things going in the interim.
 He also attended the conference, “Speak Up,” in the fall of 2018 in Ft. Wayne, which was concerned with the mental health of pastors and families. It was reported that 20-25% in our churches will have diagnosable mental health issues, the solution of which could be counseling, prescription, or hospitalization – but it is hidden! If there were any concerns, Pastor Cahill would be happy to field any calls regarding any issue and help in any way.
73. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive Ministerial Care Report. – Carried.
74. **ELECTION RESULT FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS - PASTORAL REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE:** Chairman Roberts announced that Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik received the majority of votes cast and was the new Pastoral Representative-at-Large on the Board of Directors.
75. **BALLOTING FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS – LAY REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE** ensued, with delegates casting their votes.
76. **THE CONVENTION** recessed at 10:25 a.m.
77. **THE CONVENTION** re-convened at 10:52 a.m.
78. **ELECTION RESULT FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS - LAY REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE:** Nominations and Elections Committee Chairman Roberts announced that Millicent Kwiatkowski received a majority of the votes cast, thereby was re-elected to serve as Lay Representative-at-Large.
79. **BALLOTING FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS – PASTORAL AND LAY REPRESENTATIVES – MISSION FOCUS:** It was noted by Chairman Roberts that

there was only one candidate for each of these two positions: Pastoral Representative - Mission Focus - Rev. John Henry; and Lay Representative - Mission Focus - Matthew Berent.

80. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to authorize the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the above candidates for their respective offices. – Carried.
81. **BALLOTING FOR THE LUTHERAN HAVEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES – LAY REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE:** Chairman Roberts reported that there was only one nominee for this position, Ms. Ardyne Kirn, the incumbent.
82. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to authorize the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the above candidate, thus re-electing Ms. Kirn to that office. – Carried.
83. **BALLOTING FOR THE LUTHERAN HAVEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES – CIRCUIT PASTORAL REPRESENTATIVES** was undertaken by the voting delegates.
84. **REPORT OF THE LC-MS PRESIDENT, PART 1.** Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison was given the floor to address the assembly based on his report to the synod given to all delegates entitled, “Joyfully Lutheran.” The primary themes he desired to outline in his remarks, as he indicated in his introduction, are experiencing true joy in Christ and a challenge for all to get absorbed in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as witnesses to the truth of salvation.

President Harrison continued by reviewing the status of The Lutheran Church - Missouri as compared to other mainline denominations. Along with them, the LC-MS has been flatlining and declining in different areas in these postmodern times, due to several factors and certain ecclesiastical pathologies. Closer to home, he commended the SELC District as one of the performing districts in the synod, particularly in the areas of retention of members, per capita giving to synod, and mission-mindedness.

In terms of demographics, the LC-MS is 95% white in composition, with 70 different languages in use in the parishes. President Harrison believed that diversity will happen but will be slow in coming. Sadly, baby boomers are “leaving the scene.” A tremendous shift is happening for various reasons, one being the decline in the European birthrate. Every district, every congregation, regardless of size, is feeling this change. There was continued growth happening more 20-25 years ago and more, but the growth was slowing down in the last 10 years.

An interesting statistic: 44 LC-MS members were needed for every one conversion (higher than the Southern Baptists), but the birth rate was slowing down. 35% of new members in the LC-MS are adult converts, better than many other denominations. Other Protestant churches retain only 35% of their confirmands. This trend has been extant for many years, especially among GenXers and baby boomers. The sad consequence is that those leaving our churches are going “nowhere.” It has been discovered that the newest generation, millennials who are remaining in their congregations believe in our LC-MS public doctrine. LC-MS congregations do retain

70% of their adult converts. President Harrison encouraged the use of new evangelism resources from Concordia Publishing House for adults, not to save the LC-MS as a denomination, but because people need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What about declining congregations in the synod? The answer in this present age may very well be to plant new congregations in suburbs, cities, and rural areas. This may be fruitful since the LC-MS has been effective in the past in the retention of adult and faithful pastoral care and visitation.

President Dzurovcik declared an end for this segment of President Harrison's report and would appear later in the agenda.

85. **ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE LUTHERAN HAVEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES – CIRCUIT PASTORAL REPRESENTATIVES:** Chairman Roberts declared the following victors in the balloting: Rev. Daniel Bertau, Eastern Circuit; Rev. George Hansell, Central Circuit; and Rev. John Gutz, Western Circuit.
86. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to elect all present members of the Nominations and Elections Committee for the next convention. – Carried.
87. **THE CONVENTION** recessed for lunch at 11:58 a.m., with President Dzurovcik offering the table prayer.
88. **LUNCH** was served until 1:00 p.m.
89. **THE CONVENTION SESSION** re-convened at 1:02 p.m.
90. **OFFICIAL GREETINGS:** President Dzurovcik recognized Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy, President of the non-geographical English District, who came forward to extend greetings on behalf of his constituency. The English District consists of 163 congregations in 20 states and Ontario, Canada. It was pointed out that Rev. David Thiele has served as the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice-President for both non-geographical districts of the LC-MS, the English and SELC Districts. President Hardy asked the Lord's blessings on the deliberations during this weekend.
91. **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT # 4** was presented by Chairman Bartlett, who announced the following: 34 Pastors present; 32 Voting Lay Delegates; and 3 Voting Alternate Lay Delegates. Total possible votes: 69.
92. **RESOLUTION 2018 -02** was presented by Rev. Wally Vinovskis, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Encourage Outreach to the Lutheran Church - Canada." (*See Proceedings, p. 31; also Overture originally presented and printed in Convention Workbook, p. 149.*)
93. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018 -02. – Carried.
94. **REPORT OF THE LCMS PRESIDENT, PART 2:** President Dzurovcik called Rev.

Dr. Matthew Harrison back to the podium for a Question and Answer Period. At the conclusion, Pastor Paul Hoyer offered a prayer for the blessing of President and Synod. President Harrison pronounced the Aaronic benediction.

95. **SEMINARY PRESENTATION** was made jointly by representatives of the two synod seminaries, Rev. Mark Thompson of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. A 5-minute video was played for the delegates and guests, primarily reinforcing the partnership of the seminaries and our district pastors and congregations in the formation and sending of pastors to serve the church at large. It was announced that a guaranteed tuition is being offered as a result of larger endowment funds at both seminaries, but the hope remains that congregations and districts will continue to offer financial support to students. The endowments have doubled in recent years so that the seminaries can absorb 77% of any tuition burden. Finally, anticipating the upcoming call days, there were going to be 98 candidates from both seminaries this year, with 132 congregations calling candidates. Recruitment for ministry will present a challenge in the future. Both seminary representatives fielded questions from the assembly. (Note: Dr. Elowsky served an SELC parish in New Jersey and is rostered in the District.)
96. **REPORT OF THE STUDENT AID COMMITTEE** was presented by Chairman John Telloni (*See CW, pp. 100-102*). Other members of the committee are Rev. Kevin McLeod, Secretary, and Deacon James Hurst.
97. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Student Aid Committee Report as printed. – Carried.
98. **THE CONVENTION** recessed at 2:45 p.m.
99. **THE CONVENTION SESSION** re-convened at 3:04 p.m.
100. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE**: For the purpose of an official ratification by the convention, Chairman Roberts presented the names of those who serve on the Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees and who are appointed or elected by other entities associated with the Lutheran Haven. These officers constitute what is called the “Local Board,” which meets as needed between the official full Board of Trustees meetings during the course of the year.
101. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to ratify the appointments of Local Officers of the Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees: Susan Hanas (Duda Family Representative); Ferdinand S. Duda (St. Luke’s Representative); Rev. Wally Arp (St. Luke’s Senior Pastor); James Ingersoll (Florida-Georgia District Representative); . – Carried. (Note: *The SELC District President serves on the Board of Trustees by virtue of his office as President of the district.*)
102. **LCEF WINNER**: LCEF Vice-President Thiele announced the winner of the LCEF

contest open to all the previous day: Holy Trinity, Parma, OH. The prize was a Gift Card.

103. **CONCORDIA PLAN PRESENTATION:** Brian Evanson, who represented the Worker Benefits Program of the LC-MS, gave a brief presentation on retirement, health, and other benefits offered for ordained and commissioned church workers.
104. **RESOLUTION 2018 - 03** was presented by the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Draft Guidelines for the Supervision of Special Ministry Pastors." (*See Proceedings, p. 32; also the original Overture printed in CW, p. 150.*)
105. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018-03. – Carried.
106. **RESOLUTION 2018 -04** was presented by the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Encourage Support of Soldiers of the Cross." (*See Proceedings, p 33; also the original Overture printed in CW, p. 151.*)
107. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018-04. – Carried.
108. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to designate the offering from Opening Service on Thursday and the Sunday morning loose plate offering to Soldiers of the Cross. – Carried.
109. **RESOLUTION 2018 - 05** was presented by the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Encourage a Study of the Practice of Ordained Ministers Solemnizing Marriage." (*See Proceedings, p. 34; also the Original Overture printed in CW, p. 152.*)
110. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018-05. – Carried.
111. **RESOLUTION 2018 - 01** was presented by the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Rescind Resolution 03-02." (*See Proceedings, p. 30.*)
112. **MOTION MADE** to close debate. – Carried.
113. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018-01. – Carried.
114. **RESOLUTION 2018 - 06** was presented by the Resolutions Committee, entitled: "Resolution to Celebrate the Ministry of Pastor Andy Dzurovcik." (*See Proceedings, p. 35*)
115. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** and Carried with a standing ovation and the singing of the Common Doxology by the Assembly. Mention was also made with gratitude and affection of his dear bride, Susan, and their 43 years of marriage. President Andy came forward and added some appropriate remarks of thanks and appreciation for the opportunity to serve the Lord and His Church in the district into which he was

baptized and raised; as a member of the Luther League, as an officer, including his long stint as President. He also referred to his long and joyful service on behalf of the SELC District in various offices through the years, such as a member of the Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, as Vice-President, and as President since 2015.

116. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to destroy all ballots for the convention elections. – Carried.
117. **MISSION PRESENTATION # 5** was given by representatives of Concordia Lutheran Church, Youngstown, OH, Rev. Hosea and Lillie Ekong and Mark Miller. A project known as “Breakfast Box” a food distribution ministry, had been conducted by Victory, Youngstown, now dissolved, and once served by Pastor Ekong, and now has been taken over by Concordia. Pastor Ekong thanked the SELC District for a \$2,000.00 grant to continue this community ministry. Since then, they have attempted to improve the program. As long as resources are available, they are committed to continue the program. Lillie Ekong indicated that the program is more than food for the body but also food for the soul – it is about building relationships. This ministry has also been dealing with emergency preparedness, cooking helps, and other practical advice for everyday living
118. **FINAL MISSION PRESENTATION** was led by Rev. Paul Hoyer, Mission Executive, regarding future mission work in our district. He introduced a brief video regarding bi-vocational ministry, which may become more prominent in the future for synod clergy, and which will require a good leadership training program to be developed.
119. **THE CONVENTION** recessed at 4:51 p.m. for Dinner in the basement of Grace.
120. **THE CONVENTION** re-convened at 6:11 p.m. in the sanctuary.
121. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to ratify the Elections of the Circuit Visitors and the Pastoral and Lay Delegates to the 2019 LCMS Convention to be held in Tampa, Florida. – Carried. (*This was the final report from the Nominations and Elections Committee. The results of all the elections at the convention are printed in the Proceedings, p. 29.*)
122. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Reports of the Mission Executive (*See CW, pp. 92-93*), Education Executive, Stewardship Director (*See CW, pp. 87-91*), and the SELC District LWML President (*See CW, pp. 105-106*). – Carried.
123. **REPORT OF THE LUTHER LEAGUE** was given by Hope Alfieri (*See CW, pp. 103-104*). Mrs. Alfieri reported that the Luther League was the oldest continuing youth organization in our church body. She encouraged congregations to promote more involvement by their youth in the Luther League. The annual Luther League Convention was scheduled to be held on July 19-22, 2018, at St. Luke’s, Oviedo.
124. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Luther League Report. – Carried.

125. **REPORT OF THE LEGAL COUNSEL** was given by Mr. John Zettlemoyer, ESQ (*See CW, pp. 107-139*). His report was a summary of activities since the last convention in 2015. He indicated that he would entertain any legal questions and concerns from pastors and congregations about the contents of his report, either on the convention floor or in personal conversation.
126. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to receive the Legal Counsel's Report. – Carried.
127. **WORDS OF APPRECIATION** were made by President Dzurovcik to Mr. Zettlemoyer for all his varied and detailed work on the Bylaws in preparation for this convention.
128. **RESOLUTION 2018 - 07** was presented to offer the assembly's sincere and hearty thanks to the pastor and members of Grace Lutheran Church of Lakewood, OH, for hosting the 2018 SELC District Convention.
129. **MOTION MADE AND SECONDED** to adopt Resolution 2018 - 07. – Carried.
130. **HOST FOR THE 2021 DISTRICT CONVENTION:** An invitation to host the next triennial convention of the district was offered by St. Lucas Lutheran Church of St. Louis, MO. President Dzurovcik thanked the St. Lucas delegation in attendance and assured them that the Board of Directors would kindly take this bid under consideration and begin work to prepare for the convention with the hosting congregation.
131. **ADJOURNMENT:** President Dzurovcik stated that all the agenda items at this point were taken care of, and so announced that the 2018 SELC District Convention stood in adjournment in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Telloni", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Rev. John L. Telloni
SELC District Secretary

2018 ELECTION RESULTS SELC DISTRICT LC-MS CONVENTION

TO: All Members of the SELC District
FROM: Rev. Brian Roberts, Chairman of the Nominations and Elections Committee,
SELC District
DATE: April 28, 2018

Here are the results of the e 2018 SELC District Convention:

President: Rev. Waldemar Vinovskis, Concordia, Macungie, PA
1st Vice President: Rev. Dr. Wally Arp, St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL
2nd Vice President: Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill, Christ the King, Lodi, OH
3rd Vice President: Rev. Luke Jacob, Pentecost, Racine, WI
Secretary: Rev. John Telloni, St. John, Massillon, OH
Treasurer: Robert Lange
Financial Secretary: Larry Schultz
Eastern Circuit Visitor: Rev. James Douthwaite, St. Athanasius, Vienna, VA
Central Circuit Visitor: Rev. Curtis Stephens, St. Matthew, Norton, OH
Western Circuit Visitor: Rev. Dr. Carl Krueger, Emeritus
Southern Circuit Visitor: Rev. Brian Roberts, St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL
Board of Directors – Pastoral Representative: Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik, Emeritus
Board of Directors – Lay Representative: Millicent (Milly) Kwiatkowski
Board of Directors – Pastoral Representative – Mission Focus: Rev. John Henry, St. Paul,
Whiting, IN
Board of Directors – Lay Representative – Mission Focus: Matthew Berent

Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees:

Duda Family Representative: Susan Hanas
St. Luke's Lay Delegate: Ferdinand Duda
St. Luke's Senior Pastor: Rev. Wally Arp
SELC District Layperson Representative: Ardyne Kirn
Florida-George District Representative: James Ingersoll
Lutheran Haven – Pastoral Representatives:
Eastern Circuit: Rev. Daniel Berteau, Redeemer, Manchester, NJ
Central Circuit: Rev. George Hansell, Grace, Lakewood, NJ
Western Circuit: Rev. John Gutz, Holy Trinity, Streator, IL
Southern Circuit: Rev. Dr. Wally Arp, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Oviedo, FL

Nominations and Elections Committee for 2021 SELC District Convention:

Rev. Brian Roberts, St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL John Dobrucky, St. Paul, Greenwich, CT
Rev. Matthew Vesey, St. John, Cudahy, WI
Dan Geyer, Pentecost, Racine
Rev. David McCloskey, St. Mark,
Steubenville, OH
Thomas Maffett, Resurrection, Malvern, OH
Rev. Ray Malec, Concordia, Bethlehem, PA

2018-01 Resolution to Rescind Resolution 03-02

WHEREAS: in the Year of Our Lord 2003 the SELC District in convention passed Resolution 03-02 (TO ENCOURAGE AND PROVIDE FOR THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF SEMINARIES), which resolved that "in order to demonstrate our commitment as a district to the ministry of the seminaries, 10% of the SELC District's budgeted line item "Ministry of Love to The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod" be given directly to the support of the Synod's two seminaries, equally divided"; and

WHEREAS: the SELC District has faithfully fulfilled that commitment to both seminaries, as evidenced both in District financial reports since 2003 and in the succession of acknowledgment letters received by the District from the seminaries; and

WHEREAS: since 2003 monetary support for both seminaries throughout The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has grown substantially; and

WHEREAS: the SELC District continues its support, encouragement, and prayer for the work and ministries of the seminaries of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the SELC District in convention commend the work of the seminaries of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in preparing pastors for the work of the church at large, and thank them for preparing the pastors by whose ministries the SELC District has been blessed throughout the years; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the congregations and members of the SELC District be encouraged to consider supporting the students of the SELC District at one or both seminaries with their own financial gifts; and finally be it

RESOLVED: that Resolution 03-02 of the 2003 SELC District Convention be hereby rescinded.

2018-02 Resolution to Encourage Outreach to the Lutheran Church - Canada

WHEREAS: Québec, Canada is the only officially French-speaking state or province in North America and

WHEREAS: less than 5% of the population of the province consider themselves Protestant, and less than 11% consider themselves regular attenders of any sort of worship service; and

WHEREAS: the French-speaking population of Québec, which makes up 81% of the province, has often been referred to as “the least-reached people group in North America; and

WHEREAS: the SELC District of the LCMS has been involved in work in Quebec since 1929 through the congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church and

WHEREAS: The Lutheran Church – Canada, a full-communion partner of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod currently supports only one full-time missionary for the province of Québec and

WHEREAS: Ascension Lutheran Church’s building is also the location of l’Église luthérienne de l’Ascension, the only congregation of The Lutheran Church – Canada (The LCC) in Montréal, Québec’s largest city and Canada’s second largest city and

WHEREAS: neither Ascension Lutheran Church nor Église luthérienne de l’Ascension are able to support full-time ministry on their own but are both served by missionaries, one from The LCMS and one from The LCC and

WHEREAS: many church bodies are sending multiple missionaries and mission teams to cities across Québec to establish new congregations, and finding that the harvest is indeed plentiful as our Lord has promised; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the SELC in convention encourage the LCMS Office of International Mission and the Office of the President to reach out to their counterparts in The Lutheran Church – Canada to explore how they might work together to reach the more than 8.2 million immigrants and people of Quebec with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Works Cited

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Southern Baptist Convention. (2017, 10 20). *North American Mission Board*. Retrieved from Montreal: <https://www.namb.net/send-cities/montreal>.

2018-03 Resolution to Draft Guidelines for the Supervision of Special Ministry Pastors

WHEREAS: the Specific Ministry Pastor position was created by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at its 2007 Convention; and

WHEREAS: Specific Ministry Pastors are now serving congregations in a variety of contexts, including multi-staff parishes, sole pastorates, and ethnic, non-english speaking congregations; and

WHEREAS: Specific Ministry Pastors are to “serve under the supervision of his district president and another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor” (The Specific Ministry Pastor Committee of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2013) and

WHEREAS: the requirements for such supervision may be quite different, including but not limited to a multi-staff parish, distance supervision, and language barriers and

WHEREAS: pastors receiving calls to congregations at which a Specific Ministry Pastor is serving may not be familiar with the kind of supervision that is needed, and Circuit Visitors are also in need of guidance in this area, to assist their pastors in providing the supervision needed; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the SELC in convention encourage the Council of Presidents to draft guidelines for the supervision of Specific Ministry Pastors, taking into account the wide variety of abilities of pastors and the contexts in which they serve, and also to assist Circuit Visitors in supporting the pastors under their care and their district president; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the SELC in convention suggest these guidelines include a requirement that Specific Ministry Pastors who are serving in non-English speaking contexts be supervised whenever possible by another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor who also speaks the language in which the Specific Ministry Pastor is working, in order to facilitate better supervision; and be it finally

RESOLVED: that the SELC in convention suggest these guidelines include a requirement that pastors accepting calls to congregations at which a Specific Ministry Pastor is serving receive the written guidelines of the Council of Presidents as well as training and guidance in order to perform whatever supervisory roles they will be called upon to fulfill.

Work Cited

(The Specific Ministry Pastor Committee of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2013. *The Specific Ministry Pastor Program: A White Paper* (March 15, 2013). <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=1832> [accessed November 27, 2017])

2018-04 Resolution to Encourage Support of Soldiers of the Cross

WHEREAS: since 2004 the Soldiers of the Cross program has provided emergency support and pastoral care for LCMS church workers based on financial need; and

WHEREAS: this program has benefitted church workers affected by natural disasters, in situations where a congregation cannot afford to pay a church worker's full salary, or when a worker is in danger of losing health insurance coverage (*LCMS Soldiers-and-Veterans-of-the-Cross-Information-Sheet-Updated-12-15-2016*) and

WHEREAS: the SELC District has partnered with Soldiers of the Cross to provide assistance to pastors of the SELC; and

WHEREAS: Soldiers of the Cross has been extremely gracious and generous in their support of these SELC pastors in need; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the SELC District commend the work of the Soldiers of the Cross program; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the SELC District encourage prayerful and financial support of the Soldiers of the Cross program and publicize the availability of this program for pastors facing need; and be it finally

RESOLVED: that pastors facing emergency situations and Circuit Visitors that become aware of such situations be encouraged to contact Soldiers of the Cross and utilize whatever assistance they might be able to provide.

Work Cited

(*LCMS Soldiers-and-Veterans-of-the-Cross-Information-Sheet-Updated-12-15-2016*).
<https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=2507>, accessed 27 November 2017)

**2018-05 Resolution to Encourage a Study of
the Practice of Ordained Ministers Solemnizing Marriages**

WHEREAS: the Church, in order to prevent confusing it's authority with the State's authority, should not: (1) "Transfer the kingdoms of this world to itself"; (2) "Interfere with judgments about civil ordinances or contracts"; and (3) "dictate laws to civil authorities about the form of society" (Augsburg Confession, Article XXVII) and

WHEREAS: the practice of ordained ministers of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod solemnizing marriages on behalf of civil government might confuse the Church's authority with the State's authority and

WHEREAS: Scripture neither explicitly compels nor forbids representatives of His Church from acting as representatives of State authorities, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the SELC in convention encourage the Council of Presidents to commission a study on the scriptural and doctrinal principles that offer guidance regarding the appropriateness of ordained ministers of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod solemnizing marriages on behalf of civil governments.

2018-06 Resolution to Celebrate the Ministry of Pastor Andy Dzurovcik

Whereas Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik has a life time of history and shared blessings as a part of the SELC District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and all of its predecessors,

Baptized and Confirmed at St. Paul Lutheran in Whiting Indiana,

Whereas he has been a faithful Pastor while he,

Served in ministry at Holy Trinity Streator Illinois as a Vicar

Served as Pastor at Holy Trinity Pleasant City Ohio,

Served as Pastor at Holy Cross Alsip Illinois,

Served as Pastor at Zion Lutheran in Clark New Jersey,

Whereas he has also served the District in many ways,

As he has been a leader and inspiration for the Luther League for decades, (being a fair but stern judge in Kangaroo Court)

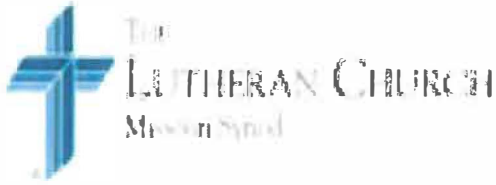
As a Vice President of the SELC District for 21 years,

As an advocate and active force in planting missions throughout the District,

And as District President for the past three years.

Be it therefore resolved that the 2018 Convention of the SELC District give him their thanks for a lifetime of service and in gratitude we rise in ovation and ultimately join with the saints in glory who have been blessed by his ministry and service and thank Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik by singing the Common Doxology.

LETTER OF GREETINGS FROM REV. JACOB GAUGERT
Missionary, Togo, West Africa



April 26, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at the 2018 SELC District Convention,

Greetings to you from Dapaong, Togo!

I pray that your days together are uplifting and fruitful as you address the challenges and opportunities that we face in the SELC district and the wider synod.

I and the other members of our LCMS francophone team have just returned from our annual spiritual retreat for our area of West and Central Africa. We had an encouraging week together – studying God's Word, discussing the goings on in our work and the partner churches, and attending worship services under the guidance of our Area chaplain, Rev. Jeffrey Ries. We were blessed to invite two special presenters this year: Rev. Tim Puls, a Doxology fellow, who addressed the topic of spiritual care of self, community, and family, and Rev. David Maffett, former LCMS World Mission missionary to Togo and former director of LBT Canada, who presented on African Traditional Religion and the worldview of the people we seek to serve here on the African content.

Our team is doing well. Now, after a few years here in the field, our working relationships and communication with African colleagues and leaders is more open and comfortable. Everyone is in good health. The security situation in the region has improved as the African countries are partnering together to reduce the risk of terrorist threats and attacks. We are joyful. We are blessed.

Our efforts at improving theological education of pastors and church leaders are moving in the right direction. Our academic year at CLET is continuing along well and we are looking at beginning local residential programs also in Guinea-Conakry and in Congo-Brazzaville this fall. We are also giving consideration to sending capable African leaders to accredited programs in Ivory Coast and in South Africa. As far as it concerns theological education in francophone Africa, these programs on the African continent are currently more cost effective and fruitful than sending all of our capable candidates to the US for accredited theological studies.

In all of this I thank you for your direct support to me and your support to the mission outreach opportunities in synod and district. In order for our LCMS-OIM missionary work in the world to work well in a cost effective manner, we need to have a balance of funding for direct missionary support, designated projects, and unrestricted funds 1333 S. Kirkwood Road • St. Louis, MO 63122-7295 • 314-965-9000 • www.lcms.org to have resources on hand in order to place them where they are needed when they are needed. This requires good communication and trust on the part of every congregation and member of synod. I am truly blessed by the trust that you place in me and our LCMS-OIM team, both in the field and stateside, as we strive to faithfully share our good, common confession of Jesus Christ in the world.

I look forward to seeing many of you again when I will be stateside later this year and into early 2019 for my first fundraising furlough since having accepted the call to LCMS-OIM almost five years ago. I have already published a general schedule for my travels. I ask that you please let me know if there are any worship services, church groups, and meetings going on in our SELC congregations when I am scheduled to be in a general geographic area. I would love to take the opportunity to fill up my weekdays to come and share with you what the Lord is doing in francophone Africa.

Again, may the Lord of the Church bless your time together as you meet in convention. May He continue to grant wisdom and sincerity to the pastors and gifted lay leaders of our SELC parishes as you work together and walk together these days. May the love of Christ to sinners shine through in all that you say and do – in your time together and as your return to your vocations and ministries after this weekend.

Please continue to remember the work of our Africa team in LCMS-OIM in your Sunday prayers at the Lord's Altar.

Peace in Christ,
Rev. Jacob W. Gaugert
B.P. 53
Dapaong
TOGO

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MEMORIAL SERMON
Closing Devotion, Saturday, April 28, 2018
Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill, Christ the King, Lodi, Ohio

Here are the names of people who have been Called Home to the Lord in the Triennium:

- Jamie Harvan – Director of Christian Education at Orland Park?
- Sharon Coe - Teacher and musician at St. Luke's, Oviedo
- Rev. Milan Babel - Charm and humor
- Rev. Samuel Mozolak - quiet, refined elegance in ministry
- Rev. Allen Vomhof - spoke before this convention in a previous year, regarding the grace and mercy of God in his battle against cancer, which is now over
- Michael Mueller - LCEF
- Rev. Bob Matej - godfather of Christ the King in Lodi, Family of Christ in Jackson Twp, Grace in Lakewood, and other congregations of our District
- Elizabeth Duda -
- Rev. Dr. Albert Marcis - taught many pastors how to be pastors, administrators, missionaries
- Vera Plvan - her gentleness and grace in caring for dozens of vicars and their families in Garfield
- Ronald Roby - taught us the wisdom of much listening before speaking
- Rev. Paul Grexa - a godfather to the Lutheran Haven, as he served as a representative to that board for many years· Ruth Janosik - another one who gave us tenderness and gentle humor as a sister in Christ
- Rev. Chris Ongstad - the "other" Chris, my brother from another mother, who served alongside us for many years on the Board of Directors
-

(Note: This sermon was preached on the Saturday evening of the Convention schedule – April 28, 2018 – and so this list does not include Rev. Luther Bajus, who was called home into heaven later that same night.)

Grace, mercy, and peace be from God our Heavenly Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ unto all of us this evening. Amen.

When I pointed out to my friend Pastor Hoyer that, after many Conventions in which our dear friend Pastor Luther Bajus has been the one to preach this memorial sermon, President Dzurovcik turned to me and to Paul for this service, Paul's comment was "well, we've reached that age."

The challenge of accepting the assignment to preach this particular sermon at the District Convention is compounded by the close and even tender relationships I have had with so many of these friends who have entered heaven in these last three years. It was further complicated by my memories of preaching at Grace Lutheran Church and its predecessors, Pentecost and Saints Peter and Paul, on only three previous occasions – at the funeral of Emmy Matej, the daughter of Pastor Bob and Carol Matej some years ago; at the funeral of Joannie Hays, the wife of Pastor Don Hayas; and most recently, at the funeral of Ruth Janosik, Pastor Hayas' second wife. My first inclination was to decline the assignment; but perhaps it was the Holy Spirit who reasoned "if not you, then who?" So, President Andy, thank you for this opportunity after all.

And in true Andy Dzurovcik fashion, you've assigned the Memorial Service the theme "Taste."

Not a word or theme that leaps quickly to the imagination when we think of those who have gone before us into glory. The description of heaven in Revelation is replete with colors, textures, sounds, hymns, praises, living creatures, angels and archangels and all the companies of heaven; the New Jerusalem sits on foundations of precious stones and is guarded by gates of pearl which are always open; and though we know that the saints who have passed from this life into glory are there forever without tears or grief or sorrow, we wonder just what it is exactly that they are doing in heaven? Adjusting their halos and tuning their harps for an eternal grand choir performance? Possibly not.

Isaiah invites us to think instead of a grand banquet hall, filled with laughter and noise and conversation and great food and drink. Our crucified and risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ paints the same picture as He parables the wedding feasts of the Son of God. There's the bridal party at the head table, and periodically the conversation stops as everyone toasts the happy couple – Christ and His bride, the church – with a great, spontaneous hymn of praise – and then we all go back to our joyous celebration of each other and the love that Christ has given us, that has brought us into this great company of saints and angels to begin with.

We've been doing that in several ways here already at this convention. We've already celebrated the Feast of Come in the Supper of Jesus solemnly but joyfully in worship, and we'll do the same again tomorrow. We'll do it here at Grace while the congregations we represent will also do it across our District, because the grace of Jesus in the Supper is not limited in time or place but is at once in many places, as the old hymn says – and also in heaven, where we shall one day eat the Supper anew with all who have gone before, including these friends and loved ones who have joined the heavenly banquet since our last convention.

Think also of the large meals we've been eating together downstairs here – a little less formal, a little more rowdy and noisy, but also more like family – and that's what I imagine heaven is like, too. And now into that heavenly banquet hall have come some who have graced our tables here in this life - sometimes in congregations, sometimes at conventions, sometimes at Board meetings, sometimes in homes:

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gifts of teachers like Jamie Harvan and Sharon Coe, who showed us the example of Jesus when He said "let the little children come to me, and forbid them not" and reminded us to care for the little ones and their families;

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gifts of pastors like Sam Mozolak and Milan Babel, who taught us by example that there can be both quiet elegance and grace-filled humor in the pastoral office;

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gifts of Pastor Bob Matej, who as mission exec was a godfather to congregations like Christ the King in Lodi, Family of Christ in Jackson Township, Grace in Lakewood, and other congregations of our District and their pastors; and the gift of Mike Mueller, who was another godfather to many of our congregations as he oversaw our Lutheran Church Extension Fund program to enable churches to have building loans;

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gift of Pastor Paul Grexa, my immediate neighbor in Norton, Ohio, who was also a godfather to the Lutheran Haven where he served on its Board of Trustees for many years;

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gifts of wonderful women like Betty Duda, who not only led our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in board room and on convention floor, but was so much more a dear friend and sister to so many of us; Vera Plvan, whose gentleness and grace overflowed in caring for dozens of vicars and their families in Garfield NJ (including my own family!) even while she was raising her own; and Ruth Janosik, long a quiet and yet vitally important tether of our Lakewood congregations to the SELC District heritage and ministry until in this last stage of her life she became the beloved wife of our friend, Pastor Don Hayas;

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gift of Ron Roby, our District legal counsel, who taught guys like Pastor Hoyer and me the wisdom of much listening before speaking

(not that I learned that lesson all that well);

At the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gift of our brother Pastor Chris Ongstad, who served as our District Secretary for many years – another quiet ministry, but vital to the continuous well-being of our district. As we served on the Board of Directors for many years together, he got into the habit of greeting me with "Hi, there, other Chris!" and when I heard the news of his death this past Holy Week I cried "O Lord, how can I be "other Chris" if there's no longer this Chris for me to be other to?"

And, of course, at the heavenly banquet tables of this life Jesus has given us the gift of Pastor Al Marcis, whom many of you knew as District President, leader, classmate, and friend. Pastor Marcis taught many pastors, including my friend Pastor Hoyer here, who was a Vicar under Pastor Marcis, how to be pastors, administrators, and missionaries, and he taught me that indirectly, too, I suppose. But whatever form of address you all have used for him over the years, I've always called him "Pastor Marcis," because it was from him that I learned the Catechism as a teenager.

These friends and saints so dear to us are now, by the grace of God and the mercy of His Son Jesus Christ, living the life of glory that was promised to them in their Baptisms. It is the life that is promised to us as well, and one day each of us shall join them in the heavenly banquet hall, to feast with our Lord Jesus and all the saints and angels in glory. Who knows if even I will greet you at the next convention, or whether I will be waiting for you in the banquet halls of heaven like our brother Pastor Al Vomhof, who initiated our previous convention in Clark, New Jersey, with a moving testimony of the presence of our Savior Jesus throughout his fight against cancer and now is with the Lord in eternal glory? We can only wait and see.

In the meantime, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

SERMON
DIVINE SERVICE, Sunday Morning, April 29, 2028
Rev. Mark Larson, St. Lucas, St. Louis, Missouri
Text: 1 John 4:7-11

We Love Him Because He First Loved us

Verse 8: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

Luther said that love was the greatest of all the virtues, "Patience, chasteness, moderation, etc. are fine virtues, too; but they are trivial when compared with love." Today we speak of the power of love to change our lives including our own.

The sermon text comes from the first Epistle of John. John wrote a number of books in the Bible, including the Gospel named after him, Revelation and three short letters. In all of John's writing, the concept of love is emphasized in a powerful way. He is sometimes called the Apostle of love. The teaching of love is central to the Christian faith, like no other religion.

Today, we'll see an example of the transforming power of love in a true story between a daughter and a father. We see it even more greatly in the actions of God toward man. Then, thirdly, we will note how this love of God transforms our lives in love to God and our fellow man.

I. First, I would like to begin with this true story about how the love of a daughter greatly affected the life of her father.

Gordon Wilson went with his daughter Marie to a parade in on a clear fall day in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. They and about 200 hundred other people were waiting to see the regalia of a parade commemorating those who died in World Wars I and II.

Mr. Wilson tells what happened next. "Just as we took our position against a brick wall, I asked Marie." Are you all right? Can you see? She said. Yes. "Then bang! A terrorist had placed a bomb just on the other side of the wall behind us. At once the wall collapsed and fell on top of us. We were thrown forward, and I finished up lying on top of whoever was in front of me, in 4 to 6 feet of rubble. Five or six people around us were already dead. My shoulder and arm were injured.

Mr. Wilson continues the story in an interview with the BBC.

Then Marie took my hand. "Is that you, Dad?" she asked. "Yes, Marie," I said. And I thought, "Thank God, Marie's alright." Then there was deathly silence around us, followed by screaming -- raw, naked terror. I asked Marie, "Are you all right?" She said, "Yes" -- then she screamed. I couldn't understand why she was screaming when she told me she was all right. Five or six times I asked her if she was all right, and each time she assured me she was -- all the while holding my hand. I asked her one more time, "Marie, are you all right?" This time, "Daddy, I love you very much," was the answer.

Those were her last words -- words that changed his life. Later that evening a BBC radio reporter asked to interview him. He said, "Marie's words of love prompted me to agree to it. I told him everything that happened that morning, and about my daughter. Then he asked, "How do you feel about the guys who planted the bomb?" "I bear them no grudge. Bitter talk is not going to bring Marie Wilson back to life. I shall pray, tonight and every night, that God would forgive them. "And I did -- and still do."

The last words that were spoken by Marie Wilson changed the life of her father, "Daddy, I love you" Gordon Wilson knew that if he hated, if he held bitterness and anger in his heart even toward those who killed his daughter, that he would belie and betray the last words that his daughter spoke to him, "Daddy, I love you very much.

Gordon Wilson then went on to reach out in love and forgiveness to the terrorists, the people who had planted the bomb. He met with them several times in the hope that he could convince them to leave behind their activities. Some thought the love shown by Gordon Wilson in response to this

bombing was the turning point toward peace in Northern Ireland. At the time Mr. Wilson described their response as a brick wall. He could see no change. But he was changed. He had experienced love. He would not turn away from that way of love.

II. The example of Gordon Wilson's daughter had a huge impact on his life. How much more does the love of God in Christ have an impact on our lives?

Marie Wilson, no doubt, loved her father in light of all the good things that he had done for her. Her father he had probably provided for her daily needs. She had felt the gentle push of her father on the swings at the playground. She felt the strength of his arms as he had lifted her from the ground when she had fallen off her bicycle. She had seen his committed love for her. That made the last words that fell from her lips be, "Daddy, I love you. "

How much more noble and pure is the love of Christ for sinners? The Triune God had loved us with a tender, perfect love. Unfortunately, the love of God hit a brick wall. This brick wall is our sin.

You are likely familiar with 1:8 of this book, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

We had not done anything to earn the love of Christ that He should spend His entire being to save us. We had been the most terrible of sinners. We had turned our back on God every chance we had. We were, in fact, so swallowed up by sin, that we had no thought of God and no ability to please Him. We had a faithful Father in God, but we were rebellious and unthankful children.

At every point of loving guidance from our Father, we rebel and shake our fist in defiance. How long do we think that God would put up with such behavior? That is how each of us acts, when we turn our backs on God. Like rebellious children, we say, "Don't bother me, God! I'll do my own thing. Don't tell me what to do.

Our Father sets boundaries and rules for our own safety. But like bratty children, we constantly push the limits; we try to get away with as much as we can. Are we like children, whose parents tell them to be home at 10:00, but stay out to 10:15, then 10:30, then 11:00? How far do we think we can push God. How long do we think His patience will last, before finally, His anger and punishment will be poured out? God's love kept hitting a brick wall.

Nonetheless, God loved us. In fact, in this letter, John points out today in the second half of verse 8, "God is Love." That is His very nature. Love is what God is. God simply has a kindly disposition toward us, even though we do not deserve it. This passage of the Bible even defines for us what love is. Verse 4:10: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins."

We feel badly when a beautiful bouquet of flowers withers and dies. Gordon Wilson felt overwhelming grief as he felt the hand of his daughter grow cold in death as he waited to be rescued from the pile of rubble.

But what greater grief the Father in heaven felt as he saw the life draining from the cheeks of His beloved Son on the cross. This is what an atoning sacrifice is. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle clearly lays out the necessary parameters for an atoning sacrifice. John demands as an article of faith that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. In verse 2, "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" Conversely, in verse 3 those who deny this, are the spirit of the antichrist. Strong words from the sweet, apostle of love. The Son of God became man; he took upon himself our real human flesh so that he could be the sacrifice for our equally real sins.

Marie Wilson felt the weight of a collapsing brick wall upon her body at that bomb blast. Jesus felt a greater brick wall collapsing upon His body as He was dying on the cross. He felt the weight of sin. The crushing weight of every sin was laid upon Christ as died on the cross. Brick by jagged brick falls upon the sinless body of Christ. It grows deeper and deeper, higher and higher, until every bit of life in squeezed out of the Son of God.

Did you ever ask yourself why? Why would Christ do such a thing for you? The answer we see very clearly. It is for no other reason than His great love for you, so that He might redeem you from all of

your sins. This is the greatest love of which could ever be conceived. God died for those who hated him and loathed him. God loved the ones who drove Him to the cross. This shows the difference between how people love and how God loves.

As Luther said, "The love of man is generated by what it likes. The love of God does not find but creates that in which it delights. This beautiful thing that God created was created by the blood of His Son.

The last part of verse 4:10 says: In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins."

III. God is love. However, we cannot argue that we are taking this text of Scripture seriously, unless we acknowledged God's expectation of his people. It is summed up quite well in verse 11, "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Isn't that nice. "Love one another." Doesn't that make you feel all warm inside. We look around this room and see all these lovely people. I only know a few of you, but many of you have known others in this room for decades. "Love one another."

I am very sorry to tell you that God's command to love one another is not the sweet kiss on the cheek from your mother tucking you in at bedtime. No, it is the cruelest, bitter law that sets an utterly unattainable standard. Our inability to love others as a race has caused suffering, pain and genocide. Because of rank disobedience to God's command to love others, we are standing in warm blood of our brothers up to our knees.

When we consider our own lives, we are no better.

Let's get real! If your thoughts have strayed off to scramble eggs at breakfast already, turn them back to what God has to say to you today. Clear your head and settle your mind to answer this question: Who has hurt you the most? Picture that person in your mind, it could be an ex-spouse, an ex-boss, an estranged relative. It could be someone else in the church. Do you see this person in your mind's eye?

Ask yourself, "Did this person do something worse than what the terrorists did to Mr. Gordon?" He was able to forgive. Ask yourself, "Did this person do something worse than you did to Jesus by being the cause for him to be crucified for your sins?"

I'm pretty sure the answer is no. Therefore, replace the anger, or hurt and hatred that is in your heart right now with love. When you do, it's like taking a heavy stone out of chest. You will be free.

This love has a transforming power in our lives. Love has the power to change us. It alone has the most powerful impact in our lives. One simple little phrase changed Gordon Wilson life, "Daddy, I love you very much." From then on Mr. Wilson would always honor the memory of his daughter by giving forgiveness even to his enemies.

The words of Jesus as he was being crushed under the weight of sin, "Father, forgive them. For they know not what they do". Don't these words have a similar, no an even greater impact upon us. There is no anger, no hatred, no disappointment in these words. Only love.

If ever a man had good reason to be angry and bitter, Gordon Wilson did. His daughter was killed in an act of violence. He had been nearly crushed by a brick wall but the power of love raised him up, probably higher than he had been before.

This is what the love of Christ can do for you. When we have witnessed the cross of Jesus, when we have heard His Words of love and forgiveness, is it possible for us to live in bitterness and anger any longer? It is possible for us to even forgive our enemies and to show kindness to them.

When we have experienced the love of Christ is it possible for us to live for ourselves anymore? Isn't the response to the kindness that Jesus has showed that we in turn love God.

This is what 1 John 4:19 says, "We love, because He first loved us." It is love alone that has the power to do this. Gordon Wilson picked himself up from disaster and later went to plead with the terrorist organization to stop their activities. At first, they did not seem to respond. Mr. Wilson described it like hitting a brick wall. Did it ever change them; I don't know. But I do know that love alone has the power to change the human heart.

What about you? Christ stands before you today. You have seen Him crucified. You have seen Him resurrected back to life. Does the love of Christ hit a brick wall in you?

It has the power to break down every wall, especially the wall of sin. The love of Christ stands before you today. Does your heart belong to Him? His love moves us to say, "I love you, Lord, because you first loved me." "Oh how, I love Jesus . . ."

SERMON
CLOSING DEVOTION
Sunday Afternoon, April 29, 2018
Rev. Zach Zehnder, The Cross, Mt. Dora, Florida

Looking Up

The word “up” is one of the most interesting words in the English language. It is a two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other two-letter word.

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, we say we wake UP? At a meeting, we bring a topic UP. We speak UP for things we care about, we put UP officers for election and it is UP to the secretary to write UP the minutes. Kids just want to stay UP late. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, and work UP an appetite. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP with make UP is special.

UP can be confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night.

If you don't wake UP on time you have to make UP a story in order to get a make-UP test at school. After a fight a couple has to make UP, and there's a certain type of make-UP that gets me pretty fired UP.

We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP! To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look the word UP UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4th of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, try building UP a list of all the ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more. When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it gets the earth wet and often messes things UP. When it doesn't rain for a while, things dry UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now my time is UP, so it is time to shut UP about up!

My sermon title today, which you probably already understand why, is called “Looking Up.”

I remember all of us last year looking up. Do you remember it? August 21st last year...the great solar eclipse. Everybody was excited about it. All over the media. I was too cheap to buy the glasses and so I worked hard to build my own eclipse viewer. A used up box of Lucky Charms, some white paper, aluminum foil, and a couple of holes later I was good to go. Kids got let out of school early. And then the eclipse came. And I used my viewer and I thought it was the lamest thing I had ever seen in my whole life. How many of you thought it was super lame?

I sent out a couple of texts, marked myself safe on Facebook during the Eclipse, and then I got other texts back from some of my friends, even some coworkers here that thought it was absolutely amazing!

I thought it was lame, some loved it. How many of you thought it was lame? How many of you thought it was amazing?

And I started thinking...did I miss out on something. We were all looking up. Some through glasses. Some through cereal boxes. But how could I have been present but completely missed out?

I want to tell you there are people in our world today that are present, they are looking around,

but they are simply missing out on what God has for you. There are some people like us saying this God is so awesome and others saying I don't see a God at all. Our prayers need to be that God would open up the eyes of those all around us. I don't want anyone missing out on what I'm seeing because what I'm seeing in God is pretty fantastic!

I want to share with you quickly this morning 3 things we see when we look up.

1) When we look up we see future hope.

From the external, on the outside, it looked bad. It looked over. He was left for dead. Pierced, beaten, nailed to a cross. Buried in a tomb with a massive stone. By the looks of it, it was done. It was over. There was no way.

The women were going to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body but while they were going, they looked to each other and asked, "who will roll the stone away?" This stone that we are talking about is the stone set in front of the door of the cave where they laid the body of Jesus. It weighed around 250 pounds. It was much too large for these women to move. It's a valid question. Now if it'd had been some men, they wouldn't have made a plan. At least these women are making a plan.

They are on their way, somebody's got to move this stone, and so they start talking about it. Let's start figuring out how this is going to go down. They are going to anoint the body of Jesus, they've got the oil and spices. But who's going to roll the stone? They have an obstacle in the way that is bigger than them.

As they were looking at each other they had worries and concerns. We are going to anoint the body of Jesus but I don't even know how we are going to get in there. That stone is too heavy. It's too large. We can't do it on our own. There are things in this world we can't do on our own strength. And so what do we do? We look up.

4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

It is when they got to the tomb that everything changed. You see, if you find yourself at the Doctor's office it means that things are bad. If you find yourself at the tomb it means you are dead. That all hope is lost. The tomb means that there is nothing more I can do. It is when we find ourselves in the "there is nothing more I can do place" that God does His best "All things are possible" work!

Even at the tomb there is hope. God does his best work when things look ridiculous, bleak, dead, or on life support.

Some of you are sitting in here today and your situation has brought you to the place where there is no more hope. There is nowhere else to turn. There is nowhere else to go. Mary had to go the tomb to get hope. It's at the tomb she saw that all hope wasn't lost. In the place of death, by looking up, she found life.

Some of you just need to be reminded that God has good plans for you. In fact, it says in Jeremiah 29:11 which many of the Christians in here have memorized, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. God's got good plans for you. He's not worried when he sees you worried. He's got it all figured out. His plans are good. This amazing verse was written in the middle of a very bad chapter. The Israelites had just been taken captive by their enemies, the rivals, the Babylonians. All hope, on the outside was lost, but God reminded them, I have good plans for you. You maybe can't see it right now because all you are looking at is the Babylonians and your current circumstances, but come on, look up to me, and you can have hope again!

Our God specializes in making a way when there is no way. He's also very good under pressure.

And so when things look horrible to us and we think there is no way, God is not worried, he's not concerned, he's not biting his nails watching CNN, or pacing back and forth by what he reads on Facebook. He's good under pressure and can bring deliverance from any situation. No matter what is coming after you or facing you in this world God's already taken care of it.

And I'm not just talking right now about a stone being rolled away. I'm talking about death defeated. I'm talking about sin conquered. I'm talking about the devil dethroned.

When they looked at each other, they were worried about what they wouldn't be able to do. But when they looked up, they saw that it and so much more had already been done.

We were studying through the life and faith of Abraham at our church and I noticed many times there was a looking up in his story. God had him look up to count the stars that would one day be his offspring.

But did you notice that even Hagar and Ishmael, after they'd been cast aside by Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac and were wandering in the desert. Their life is on the line. They've got no one to care for them. They've been forgotten by the people in this world. All alone in a desert with nothing to eat, nothing to drink. The ladies said who will roll the stone away. And when they got to the tomb, it had already been done. Hagar cried out, "I don't want my boy to die, but who will save him." God steps in and says I've heard your cry Hagar. Don't be afraid. And what does God do.

Then God opened Hagar's eyes.

In other words, through God's incredible grace and power, she looked up. And what did she see?

A well of water. And she gave the boy a drink and God was with the boy as he grew up.

When Ishmael was good and dead with no way out, she looked up and what did she see? The second thing we see when we look up:

2) When we look up we see present-day help.

I don't just see like the women at the tomb that I have hope for my future. I see that I have help for my today.

God, my boy is thirsty, he's going to die. I need help. And boom, right there, is a well of water. I don't know if the well of water was there before and she just didn't see it or if it just showed up as a result of a miracle of God. Either way it comes from Him.

Too many people are looking to something else or someone else for your help. And they may be temporarily satisfied, but no one satisfies you like Jesus Christ. Drugs, alcohol, pain pills, sex, a bad relationship, material things, success, achievement...what is it you look to for help? And yet you are still needing help today.

King David, who had just about anything you could want in this world says it this way...Psalm 121:1-2: I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

That's the one who I want helping me. The one with some resources. We try to get help in this world with people that don't even have the resources to help. Do you know what I'm talking about? Like we try to get help for our marriage and we get marital advice from someone who's been divorced 3 times. Aw girl, you don't need him. We try to get a little financial help from a friend and at the end of it, it feels like all they want is for me to get under them so I'm looking up at them in the latest network marketing scheme. I want to go to the one who has resources.

Let me tell you this good news:

Just like God provided a well of water for Ishmael that day, he's a well of water for you today. Jesus says it this way in John 4:14 to the Samaritan woman at the well: 4 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Jesus says, drink from my cup, and you will never thirst again. Let me fill you, let me satisfy you. Look up and you'll be good forever. And here's the amazing thing about this...in Ishmael and the Samaritan woman I see a similarity. Both of them were outcasts, both of them were forgotten, and disposed of. Ishmael by Abraham and Sarah, the Samaritan was on her 6th husband. It shows us that God doesn't just help the ones who are chosen, promised, and highly favored in this world, but he helps the ones that are forgotten, marginalized, and outcasts.

God takes care of us. He takes care of Ishmael and we'll see in the next chapter Genesis 22, he'll take care of Isaac. He was the long awaited promised child of Abraham. They waited a quarter of a century after God promised he would have his own son. And then what appears to be the most ridiculous, confusing request comes from God to Abraham...I want you to offer up your son to me.

Abraham and Isaac went on a journey on the third day early in the morning. Isaac said, we've got the fire, we've got the wood, but who will provide the lamb for the sacrifice? See in the OT, you had to sacrifice bulls, goats, rams, lambs, and doves, and pigeons. There was no forgiveness without the shedding of blood and Isaac knew this and so he said, dad, we've got the fire, we've got the wood, but where is the lamb? One of the most disturbing stories in the Bible that God would even let it get to this point, when he couldn't take it anymore, the Bible says at that point the angel of the Lord intervened and said don't lay a hand on the boy. And the next verse, check this out...what did Abraham do:

13 Abraham looked up

And there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. The third thing we see:

We know that the ram and the burnt offerings were meant to pay for the sins of the world. And so not only when we look up do we have future hope, not only do we have present help, but when we look up we see past healing. That's what the ram would signify, right? That all our past sins are paid for, atoned for, done.

But we know that Jesus is not just a well of water that springs forth in us today, he is the sacrificial lamb, He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was pierced for our transgression. He was crushed for our iniquities. He was the lamb that was laid on the altar in place of Isaac to spare Isaac's life. Even though he was sinless, he paid the sinner's price by shedding his blood. but this lamb wouldn't just pay for past sins, he would pay for past, present, and future sins when we he went up on the cross.

So when we look up we have future hope, we have present help, and we have forgiveness of sins past, present, and future.

He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the well of water that when we drink from Him we will never thirst again. And He is the risen Savior that has rolled the stone away so that you and I could live forever with Him.

Hope, Help, and Healing.

Some of you are at the end of your rope, and you need hope. You don't want to throw in the towel but you are close. See that the immovable stone has been rolled away. No barrier is too big for our God.

Some of you are just going through a rough stretch. And you don't have all the answers. And you need help. See the well of water named Jesus right in front of you that you can drink of today.

Some of you honestly are struggling with sin and burdened with guilt and shame. See that Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away all of your sin.

Look up and see Him.

But then I started thinking, you know what, maybe there are people with such a lack of hope, that are in such need of help, that are so beaten down by their sin that they don't even have the strength to look up.

One of the amazing things I learned in the story of Abraham and Isaac is that after he provided the ram, Abraham built an altar, and he called it "Jehovah-Jireh," which means, "the Lord will provide." But the literal translation, check this out, means "The Lord will see to it."

The Lord has seen to you. The Lord has seen to me.

And I felt like God put it on my heart to tell you that you are not saved because of your great vision. You are saved because God sees you.

He's done it all. When you don't have the strength to look up God opens your eyes for you. When you are so caught up in this world and with sin and you can't look up only God can open up your eyes. How does he open up eyes? By revealing Himself to you. Through the Word. Through the Gospel. Through the Sacraments.

Whether you are the women and need hope, Hagar and Ishmael and need help, or Isaac who needs someone to come in his place, God sees you. He loves you.

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