People of Hope

It’s Time

103rd Michigan District Convention

June 26-28, 2022

Report from Pastor James Bruner and Delegate Steve Kern

**Sunday, June 26, 2022**

Opening Service Chapel of the Holy Trinity

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, Preaching

Worshiping together was uplifting and inspiring both in the chapel and in the overflow section. Many were moved to tears as they praised God and sang, *This is the Feast.* Rev. Dr. Harrison referenced the convention text and theme as he further shared that while many are grieved by various trials every day, every one of your trials are made exactly by Christ to fit your shoulders. He reminded us that the Book of Concord says that God determines in advance those specific afflictions by which he conforms us to the image of His Son. Therefore, all things work together for the good for those who are called according to His purpose. Hope is something that is present but unseen, it is certain, and we have it. Hope is Christ. Luther said, “The power of the Gospel resides on the lips of the smallest child that speaks it as it was on the lips of Jesus.” People of Hope – It’s Time to live certain, joyous, free under the cross.

**Monday, June 27, 2022**

Service of Invocation Chapel of the Holy Trinity

Rev. Brian West, Senior Pastor, Holy Cross Jenison, Preaching

Rev. West emphasized that “repetition” is the mother of learning. After the resurrection, Jesus just keeps showing up over and over again. In John 21, when Jesus confronted Peter with, “Do you love me?,” He questioned Peter three times. Peter needed that repetition to learn what he was taught for the last three years. We come to church on a regular basis to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament over and over to remember and relearn that the harvest is in God’s hand and we simply need to “Go” and share and let that resurrected Savior just show up.

After adoption of the Agenda and the Standing Rules, we received greetings and welcome from Concordia University, Ann Arbor.

**Tuesday, June 28, 2022**

Memorial Service Chapel of the Holy Trinity

Rev. Kenneth Wise, Trinity, Clinton Township

There were 85 servants who have passed since the last convention. They were remembered in this service as they passed to glory as simple children of God receiving God’s Grace. We are all undeserving of entering heaven, but only by the Grace of God is anyone able to enter. In Christ, we have been clothed in the white robes, forgiven, and made righteous before our heavenly Father.

This service remembered two servants from our congregation: Mrs. Kay Keinath, and Mr. Gary Marxhausen.

**Committee on New and Revised Constitutions**

Rev. Theodore Voll moved to accept the new and revised constitutions from 56 congregations throughout the District. **Moved to accept – Seconded – Approved by Hand Vote.**

**Reception** **and Recognition**

The convention received and recognized those new congregations, Ministers of Religion Ordained and Commissioned who have joined the Synod in the past triennium +1 Covid year. Those in attendance were asked to stand and be recognized.

**District President’s Address**

Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier addressed the convention pointing out many societal stresses that afflict the country. Covid, racial unrest, violence against police, the economy, sexual identity and the LGBTQ+ agenda, hate for those with different opinions are all symptoms of societal hopelessness. He asked, “Are we going to be People of Hope?” He urged all to pray that the Holy Spirit would work in every congregation to overcome these and other stresses on us and those around us.

**Elections**

**Moved to receive the list of Candidates for Office – Seconded – Voice Vote Approved**

**District President**

On the third ballot with a 52.01% majority, Rev. David Davis of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Haslett was chosen as the new District President. Other candidates, in order of support were: Rev Dean Davenport, Livonia; Rev. Jeremy Swem, Grand Rapids; Rev. Robert Kasper, Assistant to the President, Ann Arbor; Rev. Michael Roth, St. Joseph.

**Vice President – Metro East Region**

Rev. Darryl Andrzejewski, Pastor Historic Trinity, Detroit by a 52.55% vote.

**Vice President – Metro West Region**

Rev. Dean Davenport, Pastor, Christ Our Savior, Livonia by a 82.59% vote.

**Vice President – North and East Region**

Rev. Erik Cloeter, Pastor Messiah, Clio by a 50.45% vote.

**Vice President – West Region**

Rev. Craig Bickel, Pastor Immanuel, Grand Rapids by a 50.11% vote.

**Vice President Rankings:**

1st Vice President – Rev. Dean Davenport

2nd Vice President – Rev. Darryl Andrzewski

3rd Vice President – Rev. Craig Bickel

4th Vice President – Rev. Eric Cloeter

**District Secretary**

Rev. Douglas Adams, Pastor Trinity, Berrien Springs, by acclamation voice vote.

**Board of Directors**

**Ordained Minister Metro West Region**

Pastor Joel Sarrault, St. John’s, Adrian

**Commissioned Minister**

Daniel Burk, Principal/CEO, St. Matthews, Westland

**Layperson**

Robert Brooks, Jr., Outer Drive Faith, Detroit

**Ordained Minister North and East Region**

Rev. Dennis Matyas, Pastor St. Paul, Frankenlust

**Commissioned Minister**

Jennifer Krause, Teacher, St. Michael’s, Richville

**Layperson**

John Nutzmann, Messiah, Clio

**Church Extension Fund Board of Trustees**

**Rostered**

Rev. David P.E. Maier, Past Pres. Of District, Ann Arbor

Rev. Ryan Peterson, VP of Administration, CUAA, Ann Arbor

**Layperson**

Kurt Kuck, Peace, Saginaw

Laura Davis, Bethany, Detroit

Rebecca Holnagel, St. Luke, Hasslett

**Nominating Committee – 2025 Michigan District Convention**

**Ordained Minister Metro East Region**

Eric Majeski, Pastor, Grace, Romeo

**Commissioned**

David Kusch, Teacher, Lutheran High Northwest, Rochester Hills

**Layperson**

Joseph Paladino, Historic Trinity, Detroit

**Ordained Minister Metro West Region**

Andrew Gruenhagen, Pastor, St. Michael, Wayne

**Commissioned**

Abigail Rynearson, Teacher, St. Matthew, Westland

**Layperson**

Philip Krauss II, Christ Our Savior, Livonia

**Ordained North and East Region**

Rev. Michael Boyer, Pastor, Immanuel, Sebewaing

**Commissioned**

Patrick Winningham, Teacher, Valley Lutheran High School, Saginaw

**Layperson**

John Nutzmann, Messiah, Clio

**Ordained Minister West Region**

Rev. Ryan Winningham, Pastor, Zion, Holland

**Commissioned**

Sarah Roth, Candidate, St. Mark, Battle Creek

**Layperson**

Jennifer Haberling, Immanuel, Grand Rapids

**The Michigan District Mission Presentation**

Our heritage is based on Mission Work. The District wants to emphasize a continuance of that desire to bring the Gospel to many, even our own communities. Mission work is not International anymore. We must bring the Gospel to many, even in our own communities. We heard presentations on the following mission work being done in the Michigan District: A2E; Benton Harbor Lutheran Outreach; The Luke Clinic; St. Paul Pontiac; Hispanic Trinity Utica Online Church; Troy Online Church; The Vine Church Plant; and Creator’s Praise Church Plant. The Michigan District is offering a $5,000 grant to starting new ministries.

**Recognized Service Organizations Report**

We heard from a number of RSO’s about the work they are doing within the District. Church Extension Fund told of the many places where they funded building projects, including St. Paul Frankenlust and their $3 million expansion, Valley Lutheran High School and their $6 million expansion, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Birmingham, Michigan and their $8.3 million building, along with loan to Our Savior, Lansing, and Concordia University Ann Arbor. They are looking to have a CEF representative in each congregation. (Currently, St. Paul does not have one.)

Lutherans for Life received a standing ovation when they announced the recent Supreme Court decision related to the overturning of Roe v Wade. We also heard from Camp Restore in Detroit, the Hymnal Project, and Travis Grulke, Superintendant of Michigan District Lutheran Schools who encouraged members to ask their teachers what we can pray about for them.

Mr. Ray Zavada gave the final report for the “Here We Stand” initiative. A total of $10,359,729.86 was collected which surpassed the goal set for the campaign. There was a 51.9% participation rate among congregations of the District. The campaign focused on four areas of funding: Professional Church Worker Scholarships, Innovative Missional Ministries, Endowments for Ministries, and International Ministries. The only one of the four that did not meet its goal of $3 million was the Professional Church Worker Scholarships. The other three areas all surpassed their goals. This campaign will still receive contributions for as long as donors wish to give to it.

**Essayist**

Rev Dr. John Nunes was the Tuesday morning Essayist. He talked about the reasons for hopefulness. He asked why did God choose the eastern Mediterranean for Jesus to be present in? All the events leading up to and including Jesus ministry and beyond occurred in the Middle East. It was the crossroads of business and culture from the east to the west. This made it a great place for the Word to spread. Because of increasing diversity in the church and our efforts to reach out to people in urban centers, he felt God is up to something, and it will be good. God does things to His purpose – God Wins! That is why we are People of Hope. So step forward, act, and speak.

**Further RSO Reports**

We also heard from Camp Concordia, Concordia Plan Services, MOST ministries, Wellspring Lutheran Services, Lutheran High Schools, our Seminaries, the Commission for Church Worker Care, Urban Ministries, Campus Ministries, Lutheran Special Education Ministries, the LWML, and the Lutheran Layman’s League.

**CUW and CUAA**

We received a report from Dr. William Cario, Interim President of CUWAA. He stated that they are working to make clear our Lutheran identity on the campuses. Statistically on the combined campuses, 36 % of the students identify as Lutheran and 89% identify as Christian. For all the Concordia colleges, 296 out of 808 church worker candidates are at CUWAA, 40% of all teacher education candidates are Lutheran, and 51% of all pre-seminarian students are at CUWAA.

**Lutheran Bible Translators**

One of the many ministries of Lutheran Bible Translators is to bring God’s Word to all, and they have found an innovative way to do that. They are recording the singing of the Bible. It is a program called Living Water and you can experience God’s Word through music. If you would like to hear what they are doing, go to **lbt.org/livingwater** where you can sample the book of Mark sung to music. (ESV) We encourage everyone to hear this.

**Resolutions:**

Inside the parenthesis is the source of the resolution. BOD refers to the Board of Directors.

1-01a A Culture of Bible Reading (BOD)

Encouraging each District congregation to encourage and enable its members to read their Bible every day and through the entire Bible annually.

**Passed with 97.81% Approval**

1-02 Navigating Future Challenges to the Church’s In-Person and Online Worship as a Response to the Pandemic (BOD)

Encouraging congregations to continue to use and further develop online ministry, while encouraging the people to attend the weekly in-person worship services. It also resolved that the Michigan District identify or develop resources that will provide a biblical framework to guide pastors and congregations in their decision-making regarding in-person and online worship.

**Passed with 90.49% Approval**

1-03 To Encourage Circuits and Congregations and Their Members to Work Together to Extend and Advance the Gospel Through New Ministry Endeavors (BOD)

This resolution seeks to encourage new ministries through shared ministries between congregations and circuits. Where one congregation may not be able to sustain a ministry, a partnership of congregations can sustain these.

**Passed with 92.29% Approval**

1-04a To Recognize Worship as Formative to the Missio Dei (St. John’s, Taylor)

This resolution came from an Overture titled “To Recognize the Historic Liturgy as Essential to the Missio Dei.” The Floor Committee in its wisdom completely reworded the Overture so that the final resolution bore no resemblance to the original Overture. The original Overture sought to recognize the historic liturgy and its importance in the instruction of the faith, and that while a variety of outreach methods may be appropriate to address felt needs of prospective believers, they should not displace the historic liturgy as normative in the life of faith. The changed resolution sought to justify alternative forms of worship and not have congregations look down on those who use these forms.

**Passed with 62.29% Approval**

1-05a To Encourage the Use of the Resource Heart Issues are Hard Issues (BOD)

Michigan District rejects racism as antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that the Michigan District be encouraged and challenged to work toward racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and community. Congregations are encouraged to utilize Bible Studies and sermon series related to rejecting racism and seeking and saving those who have been lost.

**Passed with 88.2% Approval**

1-06 To Focus on Spiritual Formation (BOD)

This resolution encourages and challenges each congregation to provide Bible studies on spiritual formation involving memorization, fasting, prayer, confession, meditation, solitude, Sabbath rest, tithing, and so on. District is to provide tools, studies, resources, and programs that will promote the practice of spiritual formation.

**Passed with 95.98% Approval**

1-07a To Encourage the use of *The Great Sending* (BOD)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-08a To Commend the Concordia Market Resource Sharing Site (BOD)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-09 Christian Education (BOD)

Congregations in the District should seek to expand and enhance educational ministry opportunities in the training of children by supporting and strengthening existing Lutheran schools and early childhood centers, developing school associations, instituting technology-aided one-room schools, and by providing online resources to home school parents or public school parents.

**Passed with 97.42% Approval**

1-10 To Encourage Congregations to Raise up New Commissioned and Ordained Church Workers (BOD)

Congregations are encouraged to identify and raise up at least two students to be trained as commissioned ministers and at least one student to be trained as an ordained pastor in the next three years. Congregations are also encouraged to help provide funding to assist students with education costs.

**Passed with 85.06% Approval**

1-11 To Encourage Development of Additional Qualified Lay and Ordained Servant Leaders for the Care and Growth of Christ’s Church (St. Marks, Brooklyn and BOD)

This resolution seeks to expand and develop more and more capable, well-trained, and qualified deacons. The Council of Presidents would continue to grant licensure for select deacons for Word and Sacrament Ministry as recommended by the immediate district president. The respective district president will direct the deacon with the support of the congregation to enter into one of our seminaries’ Specific Ministry Pastor or Alternate Route programs to study toward ordination. Synod would also be required to restore the opportunity for deacons, licensed or credentialed, who have served for two or more years and are 50 years of age or older to seek ordination through colloquy and gain status as an SMP.

**Defeated with only 28.2% in favor.**

1-12 To Encourage Collaboration Between Concordia University Ann Arbor and the Michigan District – LCMS (?BOD?)

This Resolution came from a phantom Overture which no delegate had. It encourages the staff (theology department of CUAA) and Board of Directors of the Michigan District to work together to come up with best practices and curriculum design for training church workers.

**Passed with the singing of the Common Doxology**

1-13 To Encourage and Support Existing Learning-In-Ministry, Non-Residential, Distance programs Leading to Ordination (St. Matthew, Walled Lake and Wixom and BOD)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-14 To Commend the Asynchronous Deacon and Ministry Assistant Training Through the Michigan School of Missional Formation and to Encourage Greater Enrollment in Order to Train Additional Qualified Deacons and Ministry Assistants (BOD)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-15 To Create a Third Pathway for General Pastoral Colloquy for Members of LCMS Congregations Who Have Graduated With an Accredited Masters of Divinity Degree from a NON-LCMS Seminary. (BOD)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-16 To Petition to Declare Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) Eligible as Convention Voting Delegates (Circuit #5)

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

1-17 That the Michigan District Respond to the Reversal of Roe vs. Wade with Gospel Understanding and Care (Floor Committee #1)

That we celebrate in humility and embrace this chance to show the love and mercy of God. We encourage churches and schools to step forward and meet the needs of expectant mothers and their babies. That we also continue to support ministries such as Luke Clinic, Flint Mission Networks Mercy House and Wellspring Lutheran Services’ Child and Family Services.

**Passed with 98.59% Approval**

2-01 To Strengthen the Advisory Delegate Participation at District Conventions (BOD)

This resolution enables advisory delegates to be polled during convention voting and the results of the poll to be shared prior to the vote of the voting delegates.

**Passed with 79.85% Approval**

2-02a To Adjust Michigan District Circuits (BOD & St. Barnabas Lutheran, Sault Ste. Marie)

This resolution realigns 22 Circuits in the Michigan District and renames and corrects the spelling of several districts.

**Passed with 79.4% Approval**

2-03 To Affirm Church Extension Fund as the preferred Provider of Ministry Loans, and to Encourage Continued Investment with CEF (BOD)

To celebrate the 120th Anniversary of CEF and to encourage members to both invest and take loans for ministry from CEF.

**Passed with 94.76% Approval**

2-04 To Amend the Bylaws of the Michigan District (BOD)

Resolution to make changes to the Bylaws of the Michigan District to bring them in alignment with changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod from the 2019 Synodical Convention.

**Passed with 91.75% Approval**

2-05a Regarding the Future of Our Concordia Universities (BOD)

This was a highly contemptuous resolution which insinuated that Synodical leadership did not do everything they could or allow members and congregations of the Synod to have an opportunity to have a voice before the closures of Selma, Portland and Bronxville. It further insinuated that Synodical leadership did not explore all possible avenues to assist these universities to remain open. The resolution sought to restrict Synod from closing the remaining universities before all avenues are explored. It also insinuated that Synod leadership was not transparent with what was happening in these universities.

President Matthew Harrison was recognized from the floor and he responded to these insinuations saying that “this resolution is a canned resolution making its rounds at District conventions and is a blatant breaking of the 8th Commandment.” He went on to outline everything Synod did to help these universities stay open and that transparency did exist.

**Defeated with 62.13% Opposed** (The floor committee later sought forgiveness for bringing this to the floor.)

2-06a The CUS/CUE Proposed Governance Model (BOD)

This resolution is in response to the proposed governance model resulting from Resolution 7-03 of the 2019 Synodical Convention. It asks that the governance model be suspended until concerns from various District BOD’s, Concordia Boards of Regents, and the Council of Presidents are addressed.

**Passed with76.77% Approval**

2-07 To Rescind Resolution 5-08 of the 2013 Synodical Convention Regarding Prior Approval (BOD)

This is an attempt by Concordia Boards of Regents to have total and complete control over the choosing of Concordia Presidents without approval of the Synod.

**Did not come to the Floor for a Vote**

2-08 CUW/CUAA Board of Regents Representation (2021 all Pastors Conference)

This resolution seeks to place the President of the Michigan District or his representative on the Board of Regents for CUW/CUAA as a voting member and specifically given a vote in the choosing of a CUW/CUAA president.

**Passed with 83.54% Approval**

2-09 Change Electoral Circuit Requirement (BOD)

This resolution seeks to allow smaller circuits to have direct representation at a Synod convention. It changes the number of congregations represented by a pair of delegates from 7 to 5 and the aggregate confirmed membership from 1500 to 1000.

**Passed with 93.56% Approval**

2-10 To Commend *The Hymnal Project* (BOD)

To commend the artists and participants who worked on the Hymnal Project to provide online worship needs in video, song, and lyric resources.

**Passed as Part of Omnibus C**

2-11 To Commend Lutheran Bible Translators for the Living Water Project (BOD)

Giving thanks for the work of Lutheran Bible Translators.

**Passed as Part of Omnibus C**

2-12 Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Luther’s Large and Small Catechism and Encouraging its Use (St. Paul, Millington and BOD)

To encourage the use of Luther’s Small and Large Catechism in both our churches and homes by heads of households in teaching the doctrines of the Bible. Also to begin planning a celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the writing of the catechism in 2029 in thanks and praise to God for what is called the layman’s Bible.

**Did not come to the floor for a vote.**

2-13 To Thank God for Lutheran Special Education Ministries as it Celebrates 150 Years of Service to the Church (BOD)

**Was Passed as part of Omnibus C**

2-14 To Initiate a Student Debt Assistance Program for LCMS Commissioned Minister – Teacher (BOD)

This resolution seeks to establish a committee to look into student loan forgiveness programs for current and future Lutheran educators and request a special designated offering during National Lutheran Schools Weeks of 2024-2026 for funding students.

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote.**

2-15 To Defend and Uphold Biblical Teachings (Circuit #5)

This resolution encourages our District congregations to abstain from every teaching of men that violates their Christian conscience which is bound to God’s Word alone.

**Did not come to the Floor for a vote**

2-16 To Thank God for the Ministry of Patricia Maier (BOD)

This resolution acknowledges the gift Patricia Maier has been to the Michigan District.

**Passed with the rising and singing of the Common Doxology**

2-17 To Thank God for the Ministry of David P. E. Maier (BOD)

This resolution acknowledges the gift President David P.E. Maier has been to the Michigan District.

**Passed with the rising and singing of the Common Doxology**

Omnibus A This Omnibus presents Overtures that have already been decided by previous conventions and are referred to various Boards, Offices, Individuals, and Commissions for the results. Overture 2-14 is one of these looking to Affirm the Inspiration and Authority of All Scripture, including Mark 16:9-20. (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dearborn)

**Omnibus A Passed.**

**Concluding Information**

The convention had a total of 467 Voting Delegates. Of those, 237 delegates were Pastors and 230 were lay members. There were a total of 232 Advisory delegates present. Advisory delegates were given a chance at this convention to vote in an advisory capacity prior to the official vote of voting delegates. The vote of the Advisory group was presented prior to the official vote. There were a total of 864 people attending the convention as delegates or visitors.

A total of 34 Resolutions were presented in the Convention Workbook. Of those, 27 resolutions came from Overtures by the Board of Directors, 3 resolutions came from congregations within the District, 2 came from Circuit #5 in Midland, 1 came from the All Pastor’s Conference, and 1 came from an Overture no one had in their possession.