

## **EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2018**

Pinnacle Lutheran Church, Henrietta, New York

### **REGULAR MEETING**

**Directors Present:** Vice Chair Claire Carlson; Bradley Dreier; Mark Erbelding; Melissa Fultz; Jacqui Green; Maureen “Becky” Grunder; Secretary Karl W. Haeussler; Terry Miller; Pastor John Pingel; Pastor Carl Prostka; Pastor Daniel Strussenberg; Terry Miller; and, President Chris Wicher.

**Directors Absent:** Cyndi Alviani; Pastor Fred Hoover; and Chair Gordon Tresch, ESQ.

**Special guest:** Jim Brese.

**Meeting Called to Order.** After the Secretary had made certain that a quorum had been established, the meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:01 p.m. (As Board of Director Chair Gordon Tresch was absent due to the death of his brother-in-law, Vice Chair Claire Carlson served as Chair for this regular meeting of the Eastern District Board of Directors.)

**Opening Devotion.** The opening devotion was led by Pastor Daniel Strussenberg. It featured verses from Jeremiah 14, Micah 7, Matthew 11 and 1 Peter 5 while exhorting us to serve with our Spirit-given gifts while rejoicing that the Lord is with us and supporting us.

**Approval of the Agenda.** The Chair added a Review of Resolution for the District Convention at 4:00 on Friday. The President also added a Skype interview at 10:00 Saturday morning with Pastor Victor Belton of Concordia Bronxville who will present a special approach to Missions: The Center of Contextual Leadership. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Agenda as amended. It was approved unanimously. (The President passed around a packet of information from Pastor Belton.)

**Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from the October 2017 Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors was present for approval. The Secretary thanked Mark Erbelding for taking the minutes of this meeting. The Chair presented the copy given to the Board members with proposed corrections marked in red. A motion was made and seconded to approve these minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

The minutes from the Special Conference Call of the Board of Directors from November 21, 2017 was presented for approval. One occasion of the Eastern District misspelled Easter was noted. A motion was made and second to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair asked the Secretary if the final copy of the approved minutes from the Special Conference Call of the Pioneer Owners from June 20, 2017 were given to Mary Ellen of the District Office to post. The Secretary assured the Chair that this had been done.

**Member Sharing.** During the time of member sharing a sympathy card for Gordie was passed around to be signed.

### **President's Report.**

\* The President reviewed the Professional Church Workers Conference held November 8 - 10 at the Sheraton and Convention Center in Niagara Falls, New York. He noted that it takes many, many people to pull off such an event. He noted that he and many others were pleased with the Convention Center including the qualities of the facilities, the closeness to the hotel, and the lower off season price. He shared that the date needs to be selected well ahead of time for schools and teachers to schedule this on their academic calendars. He also commented that while it is challenging to find speakers who appeal to both Pastors and educators, he believes that the Committee was successful. The online registration went well with around 200 people registered: 53 Pastors; 19 Commissioned Ministers; 66 educators with the remainder being District staff and various guests. The vast majority of the evaluations were very positive.

\* District Treasurer search. The President will provide the members with the biographies of the two candidates as soon as possible. He believes that either one would serve the District quite well even though they offer different approaches to the position. The Board will make this decision at the regular May meeting.

\* District Convention (June 15 - 16, 2018) update. The President highlighted the following:

+ The Committee was really hoping that this Convention would have been held in Corning, New York which is much more centrally located in the Eastern District. Unfortunately, the cost of housing was excessive. This is the primary reason why it is being held, once again, at Daemen College in Amherst, New York.

+ The Synodical guest will be Regional Vice President Christopher Esget. (The President then distributed a draft of the Convention Schedule.) He will give his presentation from Synod on Friday, June 15 at 1:00 and 5:00 P.M.. The Convention Essayist will speak on Saturday at 8:45 A.M. and 1:00 P.M..

+ Friday afternoon at 2:15, Chair Gordon Tresch and Rick Porter will present all the changes to the Constitution and Bylaws that we are proposing. The biggest change is that the vast majority of nominations are being moved from the Nominating Committee to the congregations themselves. In line with this, the Nominating Committee is being reduced from 12 to 3 members.

+ Saturday morning at 9:15, Chair Gordon Tresch will make the presentation from the District Board of Directors.

+ January 30 is the due date for nominations for delegates and alternates and it is a hard deadline. At present, only 16 congregations have sent in nominations. If your congregation has not sent in her nominations yet then “be a bug a boo”!

+ The official Convention Workbook will be sent out April 18<sup>th</sup>.

\* Strategic Plan for District. A strategic plan for the District will be presented at the Convention. Discussions will be held beforehand with congregations and leaders.

\* Circuit update. The District has both Electoral Circuits and Visitation Circuits. Visitation Circuits are those in which Pastors meet together and provide support and encouragement for one another. They can be configured however we want - as long as the congregations are congruent geographically. Electoral Circuits, however, meet primarily to elect delegates to the Synodical Convention, and need to meet strict requirements: 8-20 congregations with at least 1,500 communicant members. At this moment, only 7 of our Visitation Circuits would qualify. We will most likely have the same Electoral Circuits which means we will have to appeal to Synod for two exceptions. The President will present this to the upcoming Vice President and Circuit Visitor Retreat. The Board will make the final decision at the regular May meeting.

\* More and more congregations are sharing a Pastor with many other dual arrangements not noted in the list provided. It is refreshing to see congregations in need demonstrating greater flexibility and creativity.

\* Both St. John Lutheran in Allegany, New York and St. Paul Lutheran in Ellicottville, New York have left the Synod. They were both being served by Pastor Daniel Buringruud who left the Synod and was accepted by the ELCA. Both congregations have now followed suite with both citing that they desire to be fully open and accepting of the LGBT community.

\* A constitution for St. Peter Lutheran in Northridge, New York was recommended for approval. A motion was made and seconded to approve it. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair called for a break at 2:42 p.m.

The Board of Directors then moved to adjourn its meeting at 2:53 and to reconvene as the Pioneer Owners for The Annual Meeting of the Pioneer Owners.

The Chair called the members back to meet as the District Board of Directors at 3:38 p.m. The Chair requested a prayer from our chaplain, Pastor Daniel Strussenberg, for a death that had just occurred in her and Pastor John Pingel’s congregation.

**District Budget.** Jim Brese joined the Board in a conference call filling in for District Treasurer Barbara Sigafos who was also dealing with a death in her family.

\* Toward the close of 2017, the District had a deficit of \$32,945.08. An additional \$20,000 was received leaving an anticipated year end deficit of approximately \$12,000.00 which will be absorbed by the District.

\* The District is receiving fewer and fewer dollars in Convention Assessment Revenue which is creating a significant issue as costs for venues continues to increase. The President noted, and Jim agreed, that the District will most likely be able to conduct only one more Church Workers Conference and Convention as they are presently done. This will also affect District training programs. Jim recommended talking with other Districts who are facing similar issues.

\* The President passed out a list of congregations that have not paid their Convention assessments. He shared that each of these congregations has a story, a reason why they are struggling financially. The question was raised as to should a letter be sent to these congregations by the Chair? After a brief discussion there was a consensus to table this issue until the regular May meeting. Jim observed that most of these same congregations are not giving to the District budget either.

\* The auditors were recently at the District Office beginning the process of conducting the annual audit.

\* Barb recommends that we no longer oversee the District subscription to the Lutheran Witness. The President has given her permission to do this. The congregations that have been participating will be notified.

\* The District Budget for 2018 was presented. This is a balanced budget. Overall, since congregational giving is down \$16,250.00 this means changes were made since the presentation of the preliminary budget at the last regular meeting. Some of these were as follows: education is down \$11,000 (there is no teacher conference scheduled for 2018); the aforementioned discontinuation of Lutheran Witness eliminated \$8,000; discipleship is down \$4,000; and, there is no compensation increases to the District staff. As there were no other questions or discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the 2018 Eastern District Budget as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The Board decided by consensus to have Jim approve a group who will look at significant changes for future budgets along with the ways in which District goes about its business.

**Conflict of Interest Forms.** Each Board member was given a Conflict of Interest Form to sign. Each was signed and was returned to the Chair.

**Deacon to Pastor Update.** There are 15 Deacons serving in the District. Four of them have no involvement with Word and Sacrament ministry and have been re-certified as

District Deacons. Nine of them are committed to the Pastor transition and have been re-certified for 2018. (Seven of these nine are going the Specific Ministry Pastor route and will only be able to serve in their assigned location. Two of these nine are on track to be pastors through colloquy and will be able to serve anywhere.) We are moving for exemptions for the remaining two who are both in their 70's. We are hopeful that they will be granted exemptions from Synod.

**Program 2018 and Beyond.** This asks two primary questions. 1) Why should congregations have an external focus? 2) Why should we care for one another? This then examines how we in the District can help congregations to do these tasks.

**Eastern District, LCMS Conference/Convention Sequence (2018 - 2021).** We will be looking for stronger and blessed congregations within our District to organize and host specific programs and ministries for the District.

### **Bylaw Changes.**

\* The following Bylaw change was presented moving nominations for most District positions to the congregations themselves and reducing the District Nominating Committee from 12 to 3 members.

- 3.3.2.3. Six months before the convention the Secretary shall send to each member congregation a form requesting them to nominate:
- a. Two ordained ministers for the position of District President;
  - b. Two ordained ministers from their region for Regional Vice President;
  - c. Two laypersons from their section of their region for Regional Director.
  - d. Two ordained ministers for the position of Secretary.
  - e. Two commissioned ministers for the commissioned minister director position.
  - f. Three candidates from their region, one ordained minister, one commissioned minister and one layperson, for member of the District Nominating Committee.
  - g. At every other regular convention of the district, one member to the Committee for Convention Nominations for the convention of Synod.

\* The following new Bylaw was also presented.

- 3.1.1.1 The pastors of such congregations as hold voting membership in the Synod and the lay delegates elected by these congregations shall be voting

delegates. Delegates shall return the proper credentials provided by the district secretary and signed by two of the congregation's officers, either by mailing them to the district office at a date determined by the district or by presenting them to the Committee on Credentials upon arrival at the convention, before they are permitted to take part in the convention.

A motion was made and seconded to approve both of these Bylaw changes. The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Memorials for District Convention.**

\* So far, no memorials have been received from congregations.

\* The following memorial was presented.

Overture 1: To Overrule Board of Directors' May 2017 Resolution 12-14, re Bylaw 7.1.2

WHEREAS, The 2016 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in its Resolution 12-14 [*“Regarding the Right of an Accuser to Appeal When a District President or President of the Synod Fails to Act or Declines to Suspend”*] and according to Bylaw 7.1.2, deferred its rightful and legislative authority regarding the development of ecclesiastical supervision bylaws with respect to and inclusion of the President of the Synod, the decision given to Synod's Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 12-14, in accordance with Bylaw 7.1.2, set forth a specific path and timeline for consideration, negotiation, and counsel to be conducted with the Council of Presidents, with any proposed amendments to the bylaws to be reviewed by the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Commission on Handbook; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 12-14 states that the Commission on Constitutional Matters in Op. 16-2791 *“has indicated portions of the expulsion processes of Synod's Bylaws are presently in an unconstitutional state with respect to Const. Art. XI B 1–3 and Const. Art. XIII 2”*; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors, acting under Bylaw 7.1.2 and at the express direction of the 2016 Resolution 12-14, in May 2017 adopted changes to the Bylaws of the Synod regarding ecclesiastical supervision; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of Synod defines clearly, precisely, and fully the supervisory role of the President of Synod, wherein the President of Synod has *“the supervision regarding the doctrine and the administration of a. All officers of the Synod; b. All such as are employed by the Synod; c. The individual district of the Synod; d. All district presidents” (XI.B.1)*; and

WHEREAS, The President of Synod, as ecclesiastical supervisor, is limited in the exercise of said power, assuming “*only such rights as have been expressly conferred*” (XI A.1) [“*The officers of the Synod must assume only such rights as have been expressly conferred upon them by the Synod, and in everything pertaining to their rights and the performance of their duties, they are responsible to the Synod.*”], which are expressly conferred to be “*the power to advise, admonish, and reprove....conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod*” (XI.B.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod’s Constitution expressly confers upon the District Presidents the duty to “*exercise supervision over*” their district’s ministers and to “*visit and...hold investigations in the congregations*” (XII.7), including the District Presidents being empowered “*to suspend from membership*” their district’s ministers (XII.8); and

WHEREAS, Prior to the year 2016 and CCM Op. 16-2791, numerous CCM opinions [to wit Ag.1970, Op.15-2750, 13-2669, 10-2581, 03-2354, and 03-2338, A and C] interpreted the President of Synod’s scope of ecclesiastical supervision do not include supervision over individual workers and congregations expressed in Article XII.7,8; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That Synod in convention, as the ultimate legislative body of Synod [Bylaw 1.4.1: “*The delegate convention of the Synod is the legislative assembly that ultimately legislates policy, program, and financial direction to carry on the Synod’s work on behalf of and in support of the member congregations. It reserves to itself the right to give direction to all officers and agencies of the Synod. Consequently, all officers and agencies, unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws, shall be accountable to the Synod for all their actions, and any concerns regarding the decisions of such officers or agencies may be brought to the attention of the Synod in convention for appropriate action. This provision does not apply to specific member appeals to the Concordia Plans, which has its own appeal process for such cases.*”] considers the following to be steps to the resolution of this matter; and be it further

RESOLVED, That changes, subsequent to 2016 Convention Resolution 12-14, made under Bylaw 2.14 “Expulsion of Congregations or Individuals from Membership in the Synod,” under

Bylaw 2.15 “Expulsion of a District President or Officer from Membership in the Synod”, under Bylaw 2.16 “Expulsion of a President of Synod from Membership in the Synod”, and under Bylaw 2.17 “Expulsion of Individuals from Membership in the Synod as a Result of Sexual Misconduct or Criminal Behavior”, as a result of 2016 Convention Resolution 12-14, as adopted by the Board of Directors (May 2017) be overruled and of no effect; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Bylaws 2.14, 2.15, 2.16 and 2.17 be returned to and replaced by the same corresponding Bylaws as set forth in the 2013 Synod Handbook; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a Blue Ribbon Task Force of seven members, with four members appointed by the 35 District Presidents, three of whom shall be District Presidents, and three members appointed by the President of Synod, be authorized and formed to conduct a thorough study of the ecclesiastical supervision matter, including Articles III, VI, VII (studies of Articles VI and VII were previously resolved by the 2010 Convention), XI, XII, and XIII, and make recommendations to the 2022 Synod Convention, including any necessary revisions of constitutional provisions, with the purpose of evangelically resolving the current difficulty and division among us; and be it further

RESOLVED, That all relevant CCM opinions such as 16-2791, 16-2793, 16-2794, 16-2797, 17-2822, 17-2828 and 17-2836 be placed in abeyance until the 2022 Convention and any necessary action at the 2022 convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Synod in convention affirm the powers provided to the Synod President “*to advise, admonish and reprove...conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod*” do not include direct supervisory responsibilities of individual members of Synod, since such individuals are under the ecclesiastical supervision of District Presidents; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the convention pray for peace and harmony in the Synod as it moves forward in mission and ministry; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Eastern District in its 99<sup>th</sup> convention memorialize the Synod in convention to adopt this resolution To Overrule and Replace Board of Directors’ May 2017 Resolution 12-14, re Bylaw 7.1.2.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The discussion that ensued was strongly in support of the memorial. The Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The following memorial was presented.

OVERTURE 2, To Return 2016 Synod Convention Resolution 02-01-15A (To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724) For Action By the 2019 Synod Convention

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 14-2724 states in part, “Congregations may not send funds to mission societies and non-Synod entities for work in foreign areas without taking into consideration policies developed and determined for this purpose by the Board of International Mission as the only sending agency;” and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 14-2724 incorrectly restricts the mission outreach of congregations and others to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, The above resolution appears in the 2016 LCMS Convention Workbook as Overture 2-04; and

WHEREAS, Three other LCMS districts, three district boards of directors, one circuit, and seventeen LCMS congregations also adopted this resolution; and

WHEREAS, Two other overtures (2-07, 2-09) were submitted to the 2016 LCMS Convention that also requested that CCM Opinion 14-2724 be overruled; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) regarding the CCM says in part: “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod. Overtures to a convention that seek to overrule an opinion of the commission shall support the proposed action with substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. All such overtures shall be considered by the floor committee to which they have been assigned and shall be included in a specific report to the convention with recommendations for appropriate action.”; and

WHEREAS, No such report was given to the 2016 Convention of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, No disposition of these overtures is recorded in the 2016 Synod Convention Proceedings; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the resolution in question be submitted as an overture to the 2019 Synod Convention by the adoption of this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the President of Synod be directed to assure that the provisions of Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) are followed with respect to this resolution and any other resolution that becomes an overture to the Synod asking for a CCM opinion to be overruled; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Eastern District in its 99<sup>th</sup> convention memorialize the 2019 Synod Convention to adopt this resolution and to overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724, to be thereby declared null and void and of no effect.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The following memorial was presented.

Overture 3: To Amend the Synod Constitution to Grant a Lay Vote/Voice to Every Congregation

WHEREAS, "Article V Membership, A. Voting Members" of the Synod's Constitution deals with voting members of Synod and states: "All organized congregations that have

joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate; and

WHEREAS, The term "or parish" is used for the first time in the Constitution and only in this place has it been interpreted to mean "multiple congregations" served by the same pastor(s); and

WHEREAS, The use of the term "parish" has led to confusion and the denial of voting rights to certain congregations; and

WHEREAS, Allowing every congregation an independent voice at the district convention and the election of Synod President does not change the one layman and one pastor representation at the Synod Convention; and

WHEREAS, At the last Synod Convention a majority voted to amend the Constitution to address this inconsistency, but a two-thirds (2/3) majority (66.67 %) needed to amend this inconsistency failed by three (3) votes (Yes 635; No 321) or 66.42%; and

WHEREAS, Further discussion has taken place in the Synod over the past triennium; therefore be it

RESOLVED, The 99<sup>th</sup> district convention of the Eastern District memorialize The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod at its 2019 Convention to

1. Give all organized congregations that hold membership in the Synod the opportunity to vote for Synod President and to be represented by a lay delegate and a pastoral delegate at district conventions (Bylaw 3.I.2.1 c — allows representation at circuit forums and regional caucuses)
2. Retain a single vote for a pastor who represents more than one congregation
3. Amend Article V A of the Synod Constitution as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the district of the Synod, every congregation ~~or parish~~ is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate, and no individual shall cast more than one vote. At the meetings of the Synod, a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.

and finally be it;

RESOLVED, That the Commission on Handbook update the Handbook to remove all references to dual or multi congregations/parishes or parish(es) as a qualifier in all representative or voting matters.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The following memorial was presented.

Overture 4: To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod

WHEREAS, A principle of Biblical stewardship is to be accountable with the resources with which one has been entrusted, as expressed in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14 ff.); and

WHEREAS, Much is required of those to whom God has entrusted his gifts. As Jesus said, “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more” (Luke 12:48b, ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach “it is required of stewards that they be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has historically recognized its responsibility of accountability and faithfulness in the handling of the finances entrusted to it by its members, as is witnessed in Bylaw 1.5.4, “The Synod and each of its agencies shall fully disclose their financial books and records to any member congregation of the Synod;” and

WHEREAS, The Synod in previous conventions has expressed that such accountability and faithfulness be found additionally in regular reporting of such financial disclosure by adopting 2010 Convention Resolution 4-03, “To Broadly Communicate the Statement of Financial Position of LCMS,” which reads in its totality:

“Whereas, It is helpful to understand the Synod’s financial position and communicate it to the members of the congregations of Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That each November, the Vice-President–Finance—Treasurer of the Synod use widely available means, (i.e., The Lutheran Witness, Reporter, the LCMS Website) to state the financial position of the Synod in a format easily understood by persons unfamiliar with financial terminology.” (2010 Convention Proceedings, p. 120); and

WHEREAS, The members of the Synod expressed even further the need for full transparency in all areas of financial disclosure by adopting 2016 Convention Resolution 9-04A, “To Improve Disclosures Related to Financial Gifts from God’s Stewards for Special Appeals,” which stated in part:

“...Whereas, Monies for special appeals requested by corporate Synod (e.g.,

following natural disasters) are reported only in part in Synod publications (e.g., Reporter and The Lutheran Witness) and sometimes only annually; and ...

Whereas, Donors and members of the Synod are interested in the impact of funds raised for special appeals and will appreciate improved disclosure of results; therefore be it

Resolved, That the financial offices of corporate Synod continue to recognize the desire of donors and members of the Synod to improve processes of reporting and work to provide clear, timely, and transparent accounting for all funding and special appeals, so that the Body of Christ may experience the joy of Gospel-centered mission and ministry beyond the local context or community.” (2016 Convention Proceedings, p. 189); and

WHEREAS, It was reported to the 2013 Convention of the Synod by the Board of Directors in its Report on the Disposition of Funding the Mission Recommendations (R6-03-01) that “the decline in the Synod’s annual unrestricted revenue continues...The board believes that congregations will respond through better, open, and honest communication about the great things God is able to accomplish for His kingdom when we work together. Numerous conventions have passed resolutions calling on congregations to maintain and increase unrestricted support for district and Synod ministries, yet the unrestricted support passed through our districts to the Synod has continued to decline at the average rate of \$1 million each year.” (2013 Convention Workbook 2013, pp. 114-115); and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod, in reporting to the Synod about offerings received, stated, “This sharing from God’s bounty continues to decline. Although the amount of decline in the past three years has not been as severe as the average decline of the previous 20 years, it is still trending negatively. In the face of continued declining unrestricted revenues, the ability of Synod, Inc. to respond quickly and nimbly to mission and ministry opportunities and challenges laid before us by our Lord also declines, as does our ability to “fill in the gap” when restricted revenues, needed to fund much of our mission and ministry activities, fall short of their goals. The financial challenges facing our beloved Synod persist. I believe that these challenges are of our own making, a product of how we distribute the resources provided by our loving Father.” (2016 Convention Workbook, pp. 61-62) (underlining added for emphasis); and

WHEREAS, There have been few tangible reports about the financial struggles of the Synod, such as the need to trim \$4 million dollars from the budget of the Synod (ref. July 7, 2017 Reporter, <https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/international-national-mission> and the May 19-20, 2017 Synod Board of Directors Minutes <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=4769>), these reports are less than sufficient to keep the members of the Synod regularly informed about the financial condition of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, It has been widely reported, albeit not in the official channels of the Synod communications, that the Synod has only minimal days of operating capital in its cash reserves, which would seemingly place the Synod in a precarious financial position (ref. Paragraph 45, Financial Reports of the February 17-18, 2017 LCMS Board of Directors Minutes <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=4659>), which stated that without funds held on behalf of the two seminaries, Synod had only 5 days of cash available); and

WHEREAS, In the face of such challenging financial times, transparency and regularity in reporting of the financial situation of the Synod is of utmost importance to the members and constituency of the Synod who have a vested interest in the financial viability of the Synod and who merit clear, concise, and timely reports; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod recommended in his report to the Synod in 2016 that the Synod have “Uniform Financial Reporting,” (2016 Today’s Business, p. 28); therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Synod in convention direct the Chief Financial Officer to report quarterly in the Synod’s official publications about the financial position of the Synod in a format easily understood by persons unfamiliar with financial terminology, such reporting to include, but not limited to income and expenses, budget versus spending, cash reserves and cash position, etc.; and be it further

RESOLVED, That these quarterly reports include information about the regular Synod budget and the reporting on special appeals as stipulated in 2016 Resolution 9-04A; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod be shrewd managers with the resources God has given it; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod give thanks to God for the resources He has entrusted to us, recognizing “That the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1, ESV); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Eastern District in its 99<sup>th</sup> convention memorialize the 2019 Synod Convention to adopt this resolution.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The following memorial was presented.

Overture 5: To Provide Regional Support for Our Concordia Universities and Colleges

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been blessed by our Concordia colleges and universities (CUS) for more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, All CUS schools have renewed their commitment to Lutheran Higher Education by signing the Lutheran Identity Statement; and

WHEREAS, Our CUS colleges and universities continue to provide the highest quality of education and faith development in the midst of a highly competitive higher education market; and

WHEREAS, All members of the boards of regents of each school are to be members of LCMS congregations; and

WHEREAS, For election purposes, the Synod is divided into five geographic regions; and

WHEREAS, Each Concordia is located in a unique part of the United States and faces legal challenges, cultural opportunities and economic diversity which may differ from other Concordias; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we give thanks to God for the blessings we have received through our CUS colleges and universities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Bylaws of the Synod be amended to restrict Board of Regents' members elected by the District or Synod in their respective conventions be limited to LCMS members who reside in the region of the college or university; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Eastern District in its 99<sup>th</sup> convention memorialize the 2019 Synod Convention to adopt this resolution.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The motion passed unanimously.

\* The following motion was presented.

Overture 6: To Modify the Governance of the Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System

WHEREAS, Higher education is in a time of significant change, including but not limited to demographic shifts in prospective student populations, increasing market competition from non-profit and for-profit providers of education, ongoing innovations in technology and academic program delivery models, increasing accountability to public and private entities, and growing financial complexities; and

WHEREAS, Christian colleges and universities face the additional challenge to be faithful to their confession in an increasingly secular culture; and

WHEREAS, To survive and thrive in today's highly competitive, complex, and secular environment Christian institutions of higher education require informed and talented boards of regents, with a common commitment to education in the context of the Christian Gospel, an understanding of and passion for the unique missions of the institutions they govern, a multiplicity of skill sets to support the specific needs of the institutions they govern, and the capacity to support these institutions with their time, talent, treasure, and other resources; and

WHEREAS, The colleges and universities of the Concordia University System desire to preserve and extend their identity as Lutheran institutions of higher education which offer quality, affordable education; and

WHEREAS, The governance model of the Concordia University System, established in 1992, is in need of modification to meet the current and future challenges of Lutheran higher education; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in convention give thanks to God for the treasures it has in its nine colleges and universities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the governance paradigm of the individual colleges and universities of the Concordia University System be changed to the extent that

- Each college or university will determine the number of regents it chooses to appoint to its Board of Regents;
- Each Board of Regents will be responsible for appointing its own members from within a pool of candidates consisting of the members (i.e. congregation members in good standing and ministers of religion ordained and commissioned) of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod;
- Each Board of Regents will include among its members:
  - o the President of the geographic LCMS District in which the college or university is located
  - o a regent appointed by the LCMS President
  - o a regent appointed by the LCMS Board of Directors
  - o a minimum of two regents who are members in good standing on the LCMS roster of ministers of religion-ordained
  - o a minimum of two regents who are members in good standing on the LCMS roster of religion-commissioned; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Eastern District in its 99<sup>th</sup> convention memorialize the 2019 Synod

Convention to adopt this resolution.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this memorial. The motion passed unanimously.

**Closing Prayer and Adjournment.** The Chair asked if there was any other business. As there was nothing brought forward, a closing prayer was given by Pastor Daniel Strussenberg. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

## **EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2018**

Jefferson Room of the Holiday Inn, Henrietta, New York

### **REGULAR MEETING**

**Directors Present:** Vice Chair Claire Carlson; Bradley Dreier; Mark Erbelding; Melissa Fultz; Jacqui Green; Maureen “Becky” Grunder; Secretary Karl W. Haeussler; Terry Miller; Pastor John Pingel; Pastor Carl Prostka; Pastor Daniel Strussenberg; Terry Miller; and, President Chris Wicher.

**Directors Absent:** Cyndi Alviani; Pastor Fred Hoover; and Chair Gordon Tresch, ESQ.

**Meeting Called to Order.** After the Secretary had made certain that a quorum had been established, the meeting was called to order by the Chair at 8:35 a.m. (As Board of Director Chair Gordon Tresch was absent due to the death of his brother-in-law, Vice Chair Claire Carlson served as Chair for this regular meeting of the Eastern District Board of Directors.)

**Opening Devotion.** The opening devotion was led by Jacqui Green featured the theme of “If it is to be, it is up to me.” Beginning with James 1:5 she presented a Bible passage for each of the ten words of the theme. Overall, God not only gives us the opportunities to witness, He enables us to do it. All around us people are weary and burdened, may the light of the comfort of the Lord shine through each of us!

**District President Housing Allowance.** A motion was made and seconded for a Housing Allowance of \$24,000 for the District President. The motion was approved unanimously. The Secretary signed a form declaring this motion had been approved by the Board of Directors and returned it to the President.

**Year End Review for the District President.** Prior to this meeting, the Chair, the Vice Chair and Mark Erbelding met with the President for his yearly review. The following was shared.

\* The President is very appreciative of the support given to him by the Board of Directors. (The members of the Board expressed their appreciation for him as well.)

\* The President addressed the question: where does the District need the most help? Congregations, for the most part, are not reaching out into the communities around them. Gone are the days when the people would come to our congregations. Reaching out into the community is how we grow our congregations. This is our mission. To assist congregations in establishing and maintaining this mind set, the upcoming District Convention will feature a theme of “breaking out of our silos.” Each congregation will be encouraged to have at least six community outreach events and/or ministry programs a year. (Each Board members was asked to share just one such event or ministry program undertaking by their home congregation.) Smaller congregations can join with other nearby smaller congregations in this endeavor.

**Center for Contextual Leadership (C4CL).** A Skype Interview was held with the Director of the Center for Contextual Leadership at Concordia College New York, Pastor Victor J. Belton.

The following points were highlighted in the presentation.

\* One focus of C4CL is to place church workers and lay leaders in place where there are few or even no pastors. So far, they have six young men and women in the program and are hoping to have at least 15 in the near future. They are also looking for teachers who can be trained to serve as administrators in such congregations and schools. After a student graduates from this program, a five-year commitment will be made to the congregation or ministry to which they are assigned. During the program the student is required to maintain a 3.0 average. (Examples of the situations of various students and where they are preparing to serve were shared.)

\* Another focus is a program of professional mentoring and coaching to train lay leaders to be more effective and mission minded - to take their leadership to another level. They are also taught how to reach out into the community and develop community networks. The coaching is tailored to the specific situation of the congregations. Online training is available.

\* The Atlantic District has already been looking for ways to utilizing this program.

\* All of the above is one reason why Concordia New York received a great review in U.S. News and World Report.

\* The Chair asked how we can help? Pastor Belton asked us to publicize and promote this program to our young people. Students can enter this program tuition free, but this does not cover room and board. He will be sending the President fliers and other information about this program. Pastor Belton also asked for our prayers as they continue this work in progress. As he said, “We are building an airplane in the air.”

\* The President concluded by extending our thanks to Pastor Belton and to extend our greeting to President Nunes. Pastor Belton concluded our time together by giving the Eastern District Board of Directors a special blessing.

**Unfinished Business.**

\* We need to encourage Rick Porter to get Pioneer refocused on updating their governance policies.

\* Our next regular meeting will be Friday, May 4 and Saturday, May 5 in the Philadelphia region. We will receive details as they become available.

\* Pastor Ron Bright will be invited to our next regular meeting in May to give feedback on the Pioneer Board as he is the President's representative and our Board will make appointments to the Pioneer Board prior to September 1.

**Meeting Evaluation.** The consensus was that this meeting went very well and was very productive.

**Closing Prayer and Adjournment.** A closing prayer was given by Jacqui Green. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.