



Convention Proceedings

of the 100th Regular
Convention

of the Eastern District, LCMS
First Trinity, Tonawanda, NY
June 17/18, 2022



Eastern District
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

**Minutes of the 100th Regular Convention
of the Eastern District, LCMS**
First Trinity, Tonawanda, NY
June 17/18, 2022

“To the Ends of the Earth”
Acts 1:8

Opening Worship

The 100th regular convention of the Eastern District, LCMS opened with worship at First Trinity, Tonawanda, NY led by Rev. Jason Christ and the Rev. Dr. Charles Whited-Convention Chaplain. The Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher, District President, preached on the convention theme “To the Ends of the Earth.” (Acts 1:8). Jesus gave a heavy task to the disciples, of witnessing to the ends of the earth, but that task came with his promise of the Holy Spirit, who would work powerfully in them to bring the Gospel where He chooses. In so doing, we discover that “the ends of the earth” is often very close, as close as neighbor, friend and family who need the love of God proclaimed in the Good News of Jesus Christ, bringing us to a resilient faith and keeping us in relationship with Jesus, His Word and our fellow believers in the church.

Session 1 – Friday a.m., June 17, 2022

Opening Gavel:

Following an orientation for the delegates, President Wicher called the assembly to order at 11:15 am. The Chair called on Rev. Sean Walters, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, for the opening report:.

Credentials:

Voting pastors:	65
Voting lay delegates	73

President Wicher presented the Standing Rules of the convention as noted on page 166 of the convention workbook supplement. Motion to adopt the standing rules. Motioned carried [Yes: 137; No: 0]

A quorum being present and the standing rules adopted, President Wicher declared the 100th convention of the Eastern District, LCMS to be in session “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Introductions were made: Secretary, Brian Smith, Parliamentarians Gordon Tresch, and Rev. Eric Ash, new workers (named in the workbook), retired pastors, commissioned ministers and Pastor Art Zogar from Liberia (formerly at Christ Assembly in Philadelphia). President Wicher also noted that Bread of Life (Rome, NY) is the newest congregation of the Eastern District.

Several slight changes have been made to the schedule. Motion to adopt the revised schedule as Orders of the Day. Motion carried. [Yes: 137; No: 1]. Motion to accept Appointments to District Committees as noted in the convention workbook. Motion carried. [Yes: 134; No: 0]

Lunch break

Report of the District President:

The Chair called upon Rochester Region Vice President, Rev. Carl Prostka, who introduced the District President, who has served 4 terms, totaling 13 years due to COVID-19. Chaplain Whited led us in prayer in anticipation of the final report of the Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher to the convention.

President’s Report

President Wicher gave his Convention Report. The text of his Report is found in the “2022 Eastern District Convention Proceedings” booklet.

Nominations and Election of the President of the Eastern District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The Chair called upon Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Ron Bright, to present the ballot for District President. The three pastors with the highest number of nominations were placed on the ballot as per regulations: Rev. John Pingel, Rev. Daniel Hahn, Rev. Charles Whited. Motion to close the ballot for District President. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Chair called upon Credentials Committee Chair, Rev. Sean Walters, for a report on the delegates.

Voting pastoral delegates	69
Voting lay delegates	73

A simple majority is required for the election. Chaplain Charles Whited led the convention in prayer and we proceeded to vote. The first vote was not a majority; therefore, Charles Whited is removed from the ballot. With a majority of 85 votes, the Rev. John Pingel was elected President of the Eastern District, LCMS.

Greetings:

Rick Porter, District Vice President for LCEF brought greetings to the convention, beginning with a video from the LCEF President, Bart Day. LCEF partners with congregations to support their ministries, providing loans and related services, expanding church work and providing ministry clarity. [Page 82 of the convention workbook provides details on the work of LCEF] In addition to the support of congregations, a portion of LCEF earnings are contributed back to Synod and Districts to support mission and ministries.

Resolution 1 – Circuit Realignment:

The Chair called upon Jon Allen of the District Board of Directors to read the Resolution. Motion to skip the reading of all names in the first resolved. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The Resolution was read. Motion to adopt the Resolution to realign circuits of the Eastern District, LCMS. Motion carried [Yes: 134 ; No: 4]

Elections:

Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Ron Bright, presented the slate of nominations [page 172 in the Supplement] for Regional Vice Presidents, District Secretary, Nominating Committee. At his own request, the name of Ken Craig is removed from the Vice President and Secretary slates. The name of Michael Launhart is added to Lay Board of Directors, Section 4. Motion to close the slate of nominations. Motion carried unanimous by voice vote.

Eastern District Regional Vice Presidents. Election results were as follows:

Buffalo Region – Rev. Charles Whited (majority vote)
Rochester Region – Rev. Larry Stojkovic (by voice affirmation)
Pittsburgh Region – Rev. Dan Hahn (majority vote)
Philadelphia Region – Rev. Fred Hoover (by voice affirmation)

District Secretary – Rev. Brian Smith (majority vote)

Commissioned Minister Representative to the Board of Directors: Cyndi Alviani (majority vote)

Partnership story:

The Chair invited the Rev. Domenick Lettieri, who reported on the wonderful opportunity to serve two congregations in partnership: Redeemer in Colden N.Y. and St. Martin's in N. Boston, NY. The opportunity for the larger congregation (Redeemer) to come alongside a smaller congregation (St. Martin) has proven to be a wonderful blessing.

Circuit Caucuses:

With the convention's vote approving Resolution 1, caucuses were held for the newly aligned circuits. The purpose of the caucuses was to elect Circuit Visitors for the next triennium and for Commissioned Ministers and Emeritus Pastors to select Advisory Delegates to the 2023 Synod Convention. Election results:

Circuit Visitors

1. Buffalo North – Rev. Jeff Nickel
2. Buffalo South – Rev. Nycholas Greig
3. Lakeshore / Cattaraugus – Rev. Tom Lutz
4. Niagara – Rev. J. David Duke
5. Niagara South – Rev. Ben Bahr
6. Rochester East – Rev. Bill Dorrow
7. Rochester South – Rev. Bob Weidmayer
8. Rochester West – Rev. Mark Brown
9. Pittsburgh North – Rev. Scott Kuntz
10. Pittsburgh South – Rev. Ed Grimenstein
11. Susquehanna / Philadelphia – Rev. Steven Geske

2023 Synod Convention Representatives

1. Retired Representative – Rev. Paul Cwynar
2. Commissioned Minister – Kathy Fretthold

Break for workshops

VP Ranking:

The Chair called on Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Ron Breight, to introduce the vote on ranking the Vice Presidents, allowing the role of District President to be filled, should he be unable to serve. An election was duly held with the following results by rank:

1. Rev. Dan Hahn – Pittsburgh Region
2. Rev. Charles Whited – Buffalo Region
3. Rev. Fred Hoover – Philadelphia Region
4. Rev. Larry Stojkovic – Rochester Region

2025 Nominating Committee:

The nominees for the 2025 Convention Nominating Committee are noted on page 172 of the convention Workbook. Following the regulation requiring no two representatives from the same region, the election results were as follows:

Nominating Committee

Ordained Member – Rev. Domenick Lettieri (majority vote)
Commissioned Minister – Pat Voorman (by voice affirmation)
Lay Member – Amy Betts (by voice affirmation)

Greetings:

The Chair called on Mark Erbeling, outgoing Chairman of the District Board of Directors. Mark welcomed convention attendees on behalf of the Board. Much was accomplished in this time of global conflict, pandemic and strife, all with the help and focus of our District President. Like the church in the time of the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918, there is “nothing new under the sun” for the work of the church. As St. Paul encourages us, “We do not lose heart...” (2 Cor. 4)

The Chair called on Dee Grzyb, newly-elected President of the Eastern District, LWML, who recently succeeded Susan Bell. Dee expressed appreciation for the support and comfort of the district pastors, especially as LWML

celebrates 80 years of service and sets a national mission goal of more than \$2million with District mission budget of \$30,000. The first grant of \$5,000 will be sent next week. We pray God’s blessings on President Wicher and the ministry of the District “to the ends of the earth.”

The Chair called on Steve Klafehn representative of Lutheran Laymen’s League. The NY State Fair Booth is the biggest regular project, sharing bibles and resources, followed by the June Men’s Retreat. LLL support churches with outreach materials, and hosts a float in the Rose Bowl Parade. Jason Fox, Lutheran Hour Ministries Director of Connections, shared a video, explaining the Ministry of LHM in bringing Christ to the nations and the nations to the church.

Acceptance by the newly elected District President:

The Rev. John Pingel, newly-elected President of the Eastern District, LCMS addressed the convention. The text of President-elect Rev. John Pingel’s acceptance is found in the official “2022 Eastern District Convention Proceedings” booklet.

The Chair invited Bruce Winsborough of Concordia Plans Ministries, which serves over 6,000 congregations, schools and ministries. Bruce shared CPM’s gratitude and honor in serving and supporting the congregations and workers of our Eastern District

Prayer and Dismissal:

The Chair called upon Chaplain Charles Whited to close the day with prayer. Convention is in recess until Saturday 8 am

The evening banquet was hosted at the Buffalo Niagara Marriott. Rev. Dr. Tony Cook was the Guest Speaker. The Servant of Christ Award was granted to “Angel Tear Ministry” of Concordia Lutheran Ministries of Cabot, PA. and received by Keith Frndak, President and CEO of Concordia Lutheran Ministries. Special Recognitions were made.

Session 2 - Saturday, June 18, 2022

President Wicher called the convention to order at 8:01am and called on Rev. Ben Bahr to open our session with prayer. The Chair invited Pastor Bahr to share his experience as a Chaplain with the Air National Guard, where he ministers to more than 700 and recently baptized an adult and child who came through the ministry.

Elections:

The Chair called on Credentials Committee Chair, Rev. Sean Walters, to report on delegates:

Voting pastors: 61
Voting Lay: 67

The 11 new Circuit Visitors were ratified by voice affirmation. Representatives to the 2023 Synod Convention were also recognized. The slate for the Lay Board of Directors was accepted and closed by voice affirmation. The Chair called upon Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Ron Breight, for the election of the 8 Lay Directors for the Eastern District Board of Directors. Election results were as follows:

Section 1 – Carl Fretthold (by majority vote)
Section 2 – OPEN
Section 3 – Jon Allen (Section 3 & 4 combined affirmation by voice)
Section 4 – Michael Launhardt (Section 3 & 4 combined affirmation by voice)
Section 5 - OPEN
Section 6 – Tracey Harris (by majority vote)
Section 7 – Susan Bell (Section 7 & 8 combined affirmation by voice)

Section 8 – Kevin Durland (Section 7 & 8 combined affirmation by voice)

Motion to dismiss the elections committee with thanks. Motion carried by voice vote.

Partnership story:

The Chair called upon Pastor Art Zogar (Liberia) to address the convention. Pastor Zogar shared his appreciation for the District's partnership with New Hope Lutheran Church and the Republic of Liberia. After 27 years in the U.S. Pastor Zogar returned to Liberia where they began a Bible Study group and helped established the vibrant church and school ministry of New Hope, serving 250 students and feeding children 5 days a week. Pastor Zogar appealed to the convention to share resources (Bibles, Catechisms, Lutheranism 101 books, etc) with the ministry in Liberia.

Greetings:

The Chair called upon Philadelphia Region Vice President, Rev. Fred Hoover, to introduce our guests:

Roger Dow brought greetings from our Concordia Seminaries and emphasized the critical need for the training of called workers. This year 47 calls went unfilled due to lack of workers. Roger asked for (1) Prayers, (2) Encouragement of young people to consider church work vocations and (3) Consideration by congregations to support the seminaries in training and returning workers to congregations.

Kathy Fretthold, Eastern District Director of Education, supports the ministries of our day schools and preschools, supporting our educators and school leaders. The new District website has many resources for churches, schools & educators. Kathy focuses on school ministries and accreditations.

Rev. Bob Marshall delivered greetings from the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, which transmits, publishes and distributes Bible-based books, language-based, throughout the world and for local churches as well. LHF is also seeking books (e.g., pastoral libraries) that can be sent along. The display includes a wish-list, and they invite congregations to share resources to proclaim and explain Jesus to the ends of the earth.

Report of the President of Synod – Part 1:

Rev. Fred Hoover introduced the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. President Harrison congratulated Pastors Pingel and Wicher on their transitions. There's much going on in the LCMS, with demographic challenges, secularization, the decline of attendance & the rise of the "Nones" (no church background or connection), but there's good stuff! In the face of COVID, local people know how to handle local challenges and opposition to worship. Church workers are dedicating their lives in service to Christ, and we support Soldiers of the cross, DOXOLOGY retreats and others for commissioned ministers and others who serve. The governance of our Concordia University System is facing challenges, even as declining enrollments and financial struggles led to the closure of beloved institutions of higher education in our synod: Portland, Selma, and Bronxville. Challenges also face our schools in the area of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; in truth, we have the strongest anti-racist teaching in the world as we proclaim "For God so loved *the world* that he gave his one and only son to die so that whoever believes should not perish but have everlasting life." This is the view of Jesus Christ we need to set forth in our churches and schools. Concordia St. Paul offers a \$6,000 package for church workers and no-tuition package for pre-seminary students. A new model of governance recommends left-hand kingdom decisions belong to the school, which means there is support and accreditation available to our schools, but also the freedom to separate from Synod Governance. There are great things happening at our schools and our seminaries are doing well but need students. At present there are 475 calling congregations in the Synod but smaller seminary classes. At present, 27% of our school workers are rostered (commissioned ministers of the LCMS), so please encourage young people to consider church worker vocations. While the Specific Ministry Pastor program is a significant blessing to the church, we encourage young men, especially those under 40 to consider attending the seminary. Though not completely tuition-free, costs are covered for student needs. Across the ocean, there are more Lutherans worshipping in Madagascar than all Lutherans combined in the United States; the Lutheran Church has requested our professors to come and teach them about the Lutheran Confessions as they don't currently subscribe to all. The Lutheran Church in Finland faces increasing pressure in the face of government opposition, which has ejected them from buildings, but they moved into 7th Day Adventists churches to continue worshipping and began

splitting and growing. Their Bishop said “The more they attack us, the more we grow.” We will soon declare fellowship with the Lutheran Church of South Sudan, and we’re in continual talks with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Ukraine is a sad situation; with the Lutheran Bishop terribly treated by Government; today, they ask for helmets & flack jackets to visit parishioners. To date, about \$3 million has been sent by the LCMS to Ukrainian relief efforts. LWML provides millions of dollars for missions and outreach that impacts the world; their influence is their superpower – and we can be proud of who we are in a world that struggles to answer the question “What is a woman?” We are not an *affirming* crowd; we are a *forgiving* crowd. Missionary recruitment is down to 100, with a goal of 140-150 worldwide. We have a limited staff of 12, taking care of more than 300 missionary families in the field, often in places where care is lacking. Our goal is to increase staffing and help missionaries connect with local churches so they can become “our missionary.” Dominican Seminary has produced over 200 pastors and 160 Deaconesses for Central & South America. Taiwan Joint Seminary has separated from the LCMS after a move toward universalism and secularism. There are 15 seminaries sharing the Gospel in Africa. The fall of Roe v. Wade will result not in the elimination of abortion, a move to abortion as a state matter. In the face of pro-life position, some have said “You only care for those in the womb”, the LCMS has given \$250,000,000 - \$500,000,000 in aid people in need. Through our 1 John 3 Life Match, we’ve fed more than 4 million Haitians and rebuilt 6,000 homes in New Orleans. *Everyone His Witness*, is an evangelism booklet about being strategic, praying and listening to others. Rural and Small Town Ministries seek to support strong suburban churches to reach cities and rural areas. Child Protection efforts began more than 30 years ago with a zero-tolerance policy for sexual misconduct. The Synod is in the best financial shape in its history right now, as a result of shocking, generous giving and good stewardship of budgets. Churches should work with our experts to give people an opportunity to engage in such generous giving to missions and ministries. Our LCMS Youth Ministry has discovered that what causes youth to stay is the longevity of the pastor & intentional and strategic connections with (5) adults in the church. Engage with them and involve them in meaningful service! We’ve learned that church-planting grants have not typically been successful; pastors often do well gathering people for the ministry, but not sustaining. Mother-daughter church plants are most likely to succeed. Lay leadership, men trained to lead worship in the pastor’s absence, is encouraged. President Harrison then entertained questions from delegates.

Break for workshops

Report of the President of Synod – Part 2:

The Chair called the convention to order at 11:31am, welcoming back Pastor Harrison, who used his remaining time to entertain further questions from delegates. In closing, he shared his joy in travelling and meeting the people of the LCMS.

Convention Chaplain Charles Whited led us in a prayer for lunch, followed by an introduction of the Buffalo Suzuki Strings, who provided music during the lunch break.

Break for lunch

Partnership Story:

The Chair called on Pastor David Duke, Niagara County congregations in partnership. He spoke of the pastor’s perspective of moving between the realms of one congregation to another, each with its own history and traditions. It can be challenging to meet the changing needs of congregations as they weigh against each other. Telecare can be a useful tool in ministering in partnerships, but there’s a great need for pastors to take regular time off. Expecting a transition from two independent congregations into one centralized ministry, he discovered this is not the case, for a variety of reasons, but partnerships are important for keeping this ministry.

Convention Business-Overtures:

The Chair called on Jon Allen, Lay Director for the Board to read Resolution 2, submitted by the Eastern District Board of Directors. Move to waive the reading of number and strikeout sections. Motion carried by majority voice vote. Motion to adopt by the Board of Directors. Motion carried by 2/3 majority vote. [Yes: 81; No: 1]

Convention Evaluation:

The Chair called on Lyle Heggemeier to lead in the evaluation process. This evaluation will go to assist future convention planning committees.

The Chair noted this is the 175th anniversary of the LCMS and the 100th regular convention of the Eastern District. The Eastern District is the oldest district in the LCMS, formed in 1854 (1 of 4 original organized Districts) after the synod formed in 1847. First Trinity-Tonawanda, our host, is one of the organizing congregations of synod and is 183 years old.

Greetings:

The Chair called on Nycholas Greig, pastor of Trinity, West Seneca (NY) to bring greetings from Friends of Pioneer. The sale of Pioneer has led to a rebirth with the rise of *Pioneer on the Lake*. We're starting off with a firm foundation; delegate packets include information about the vision and program of POTL. The goal is to provide a ministry experience of Christian renewal for individuals and family. Please, (1) Support POTL by signing up for camp this summer of Family camps. (2) Consider a donation – we're currently debt free, but need support for startup costs and operations. We're glad to be back and working with congregations again. Friends of Pioneer is a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS and is partnered with Concordia Lutheran Ministries of Cabot, PA, also an RSO of Synod.

The Chair called on Susan Knowles to bring greetings from Ambassadors of Reconciliation. She talked about feet; "how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who says to Zion 'Your God reigns!'" (Isaiah 52:7) Congregations bring good news, and AOR encourages and equips beautiful feet to offer the hope of the Gospel in the midst of suffering of conflict with biblical peacemaking: free daily devotions by email, bible studies (e.g. "Go and Be Reconciled"), and webinars. Our Eastern District Reconcilers are trained by AOR to assist congregations with coaching, mediation or even governance. You and your beautiful feet offer hope and good news by the power of the Holy Spirit to the ends of the earth, and AOR exists to support and partner with you.

The Chair called on Jeff Duncan to bring greetings from Lutherans for Life. Since 1978, LFL has upheld the value of life affirmed by the resurrected Christ. We educate congregations on life issues with a Gospel perspective: equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel motivators for life. Lutheran for Life also offers help, healing and forgiveness for those who bear a burden of guilt with a 24-hour Life Issues Hotline to provide after-abortion care and relationship, information and referrals for those facing unplanned pregnancy. Life Teams are also developed in congregations to affirm life and participate in motivating others for life by the Gospel. A variety of resources, including our quarterly publication-Life Date-are available to congregations.

The Chair called on Credentials Committee Chair, Rev. Sean Walters for the final Credentials report.

Voting pastors:	39
Voting Lay delegates	45

President Wicher took opportunity to give special thanks to his wife Beverly for her unfailing dedication and support during his tenure.

Motion to dismiss the credentials committee with thanks. Motion carried by voice vote.

Adjournment:

The 100th Regular Convention of the Eastern District, LCMS was adjourned at 1:52pm.

The convention concluded with worship in the sanctuary and the Installation of Officers, and an Acknowledgement of Departed Called Workers.

Respectfully submitted
Rev. Brian K. Smith, Secretary

Eastern District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
2022 – 2025 Triennium Elected Officers

President

Rev. John Pingel

Vice Presidents

1st Vice President - Rev. Dr. Daniel Hahn (Pittsburgh Region)

2nd Vice President - Rev. Dr. Charles Whited (Buffalo Region)

3rd Vice President - Rev. Fredrick Hoover (Philadelphia Region)

4th Vice President - Rev. Larry Stojkovic (Rochester Region)

Secretary

Rev. Brian Smith

Board of Directors – Lay Members

Section 1 – Carl Fretthold

Section 2 - Open

Section 3 – Jon Allen

Section 4 - Michael Launhardt

Section 5 - Open

Section 6 – Tracy Harris

Section 7 – Susan Bell

Section 8 – Kevin Durland

Board of Directors – Commissioned Ministers Representative

DCE Cyndi Alviani

Treasurer (Board of Directors Appointed)

Barbara Williams

Circuit Visitors

Buffalo North - Rev. Jeffrey Nickel

Buffalo South – Rev. Nycholas Greig

Lakeshore-Cattaraugus – Rev. Thomas Lutz

Niagara – Rev. J. David Duke

Niagara South – Rev. Benjamin Bahr

Rochester East – Rev. William Dorow

Rochester South – Rev. Robert Weidmayer

Rochester West – Rev. Mark Brown

Pittsburgh North – Rev. Scott Kuntz

Pittsburgh South – Rev. Edward Grimenstein

Philadelphia-Susquehanna - Rev. Steven Geske

2025 Nominating Committee

Pastor – Rev. Domenick Lettieri (Buffalo Region)

Commissioned Minister - Pat Voorman (Pittsburgh Region)

Lay - Amy Betts (Philadelphia Region)

Commissioned Ministers' Representative to the 2023 LCMS Convention

Kathleen Fretthold

Emeritus Pastors' Representative to the 2023 LCMS Convention

Rev. Paul Cwynar

ELECTIONS AND VOTING RESULTS, 100th Convention of the Eastern District, LC--MS

1. **Motion to adopt the schedule?**
Yes - 137
No - 1
2. **Motion to Accept Appointments**
Yes - 132
No - 2
3. **Motion to Adopt the Standing Rules**
Yes - 136
No - 1
4. **Election: District President**
 - 1) Pastor John Pingel -52
 - 2) Pastor Dan Hahn - 47
 - 3) Pastor Chuck Whited - 35
5. **Election: District President**
 - 1) Pastor John Pingel - 85
 - 2) Pastor Dan Hahn -53
6. **Circuit Realignment Vote**
 - 1) In favor - 134
 - 2) Opposed - 4
7. **Election: Regional Vice President - Buffalo**
 - 1) Pastor Ernie Green - 36
 - 2) Pastor Dennis Krueger - 18
 - 3) Pastor Chuck Whited - 80
8. **Election: Regional Vice President - Rochester**
 - 1) Pastor Larry Stojkovic - voice vote carried
9. **Election: Regional Vice President -Pittsburgh**
 - 1) Pastor Dan Hahn - 105
 - 2) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 29
10. **Election: Regional Vice President - Philadelphia**
 - 1) Pastor Fred Hoover - voice vote carried
11. **Election: District Secretary**
 - 1) Pastor Brian Smith - 66
 - 2) Pastor David Duke - 15
 - 3) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 32
 - 4) Pastor Jeff Nickel - 22
12. **Election: District Secretary**
 - 1) Pastor Brian Smith - 86
 - 2) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 33
 - 3) Pastor Jeff Nickel - 15
13. **Election: Commissioned Minister Rep**
 - 1) Cyndi Alviani - 59
 - 2) Sharon McGuan - 33
 - 3) Herb Meissner - 31
14. **Election: Commissioned Minister Rep**
 - 1) Cyndi Alviani - 74
 - 2) Sharon McGuan - 51
15. **1st Vice President**
 - 1) Rev. Charles Whited - 46
 - 2) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 6
 - 3) Rev. Dan Hahn - 45
 - 4) Rev. Fred Hoover - 15
16. **1st Vice President**
 - 1) Rev Charles Whited - 54
 - 2) Rev. Dan Hahn - 52
 - 3) Rev. Fred Hoover - 16
17. **1st Vice President**
 - 1) Rev. Charles Whited - 56
 - 2) Rev. Dan Hahn - 64
18. **2nd Vice President**
 - 1) Rev. Charles Whited - 76
 - 2) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 10
 - 3) Rev. Fred Hoover - 35
19. **3rd Vice President**
 - 1) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 39
 - 2) Rev. Fred Hoover - 82
20. **Election: Nominating Committee - Ordained**
 - 1) Pastor Domenick Letieri - 74
 - 2) Pastor Galen Purpura - 41
21. **Election: Nominating Committee - Com Min**
 - 1) Pat Voorman - voice vote carried
22. **Election: Nominating Committee - Lay**
 - 1) Amy Betts - voice vote carried
23. **Lay Director, Section #1**
 - 1) Jim Carr - 20
 - 2) Jeffrey Radt - 7
 - 3) Carl Fretthold - 33
 - 4) David Werth - 31
24. **Lay Director, Section #1**
 - 1) Jim Carr - 30
 - 2) Carl Fretthold - 40
 - 3) David Werth - 40
25. **Lay Director, Section #1**
 - 1) Carl Fretthold - 63
 - 2) David Werth - 50
26. **Lay Director, Section #2**
 - 1) OPEN
27. **Lay Director, Section #3**
 - 1) Jon Allen - voice vote carried
28. **Lay Director, Section #4**
 - 1) Michael Launhardt - voice vote carried
29. **Lay Director, Section #5**
 - 1) OPEN
30. **Lay Director, Section #6**
 - 1) Paul Hoffman - 52
 - 2) Tracey Harris - 55
31. **Lay Director, Section #7**
 - 1) Susan Bell - voice vote carried
32. **Lay Director, Section #8**
 - 1) Kevin Durland - voice vote carried
33. **Resolution #2 - Make Regulations Changes**
 - 1) In Favor - 81
 - 2) Opposed - 1

34. Motion to adopt the schedule?

Yes - 137

No - 1

35. Motion to Accept Appointments

Yes - 132

No - 2

36. Motion to Adopt the Standing Rules

Yes - 136

No - 1

37. Election: District President

4) Pastor John Pingel -52

5) Pastor Dan Hahn - 47

6) Pastor Chuck Whited - 35

38. Election: District President

3) Pastor John Pingel - 85

4) Pastor Dan Hahn -53

39. Circuit Realignment Vote

3) In favor - 134

4) Opposed - 4

40. Election: Regional Vice President - Buffalo

4) Pastor Ernie Green - 36

5) Pastor Dennis Krueger - 18

6) Pastor Chuck Whited - 80

41. Election: Regional Vice President - Rochester

2) Pastor Larry Stojkovic - voice vote carried

42. Election: Regional Vice President -Pittsburgh

3) Pastor Dan Hahn - 105

4) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 29

43. Election: Regional Vice President - Philadelphia

2) Pastor Fred Hoover - voice vote carried

44. Election: District Secretary

5) Pastor Brian Smith - 66

6) Pastor David Duke - 15

7) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 32

8) Pastor Jeff Nickel - 22

45. Election: District Secretary

4) Pastor Brian Smith - 86

5) Pastor Ed Grimenstein - 33

6) Pastor Jeff Nickel - 15

46. Election: Commissioned Minister Rep

4) Cyndi Alviani - 59

5) Sharon McGuan - 33

6) Herb Meissner - 31

47. Election: Commissioned Minister Rep

3) Cyndi Alviani - 74

4) Sharon McGuan - 51

48. 1st Vice President

5) Rev. Charles Whited - 46

6) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 6

7) Rev. Dan Hahn - 45

8) Rev. Fred Hoover - 15

49. 1st Vice President

4) Rev Charles Whited - 54

5) Rev. Dan Hahn - 52

6) Rev. Fred Hoover - 16

50. 1st Vice President

3) Rev. Charles Whited - 56

4) Rev. Dan Hahn - 64

51. 2nd Vice President

4) Rev. Charles Whited - 76

5) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 10

6) Rev. Fred Hoover - 35

52. 3rd Vice President

3) Rev. Larry Stojkovic - 39

4) Rev. Fred Hoover - 82

53. Election: Nominating Committee - Ordained

3) Pastor Domenick Letieri - 74

4) Pastor Galen Purpura - 41

54. Election: Nominating Committee - Com Min

2) Pat Voorman - voice vote carried

55. Election: Nominating Committee - Lay

2) Amy Betts - voice vote carried

56. Lay Director, Section #1

5) Jim Carr - 20

6) Jeffrey Radt - 7

7) Carl Fretthold - 33

8) David Werth - 31

57. Lay Director, Section #1

4) Jim Carr - 30

5) Carl Fretthold - 40

6) David Werth - 40

58. Lay Director, Section #1

3) Carl Fretthold - 63

4) David Werth - 50

59. Lay Director, Section #2

2) OPEN

60. Lay Director, Section #3

2) Jon Allen - voice vote carried

61. Lay Director, Section #4

2) Michael Launhardt - voice vote carried

62. Lay Director, Section #5

2) OPEN

63. Lay Director, Section #6

3) Paul Hoffman - 52

4) Tracey Harris - 55

64. Lay Director, Section #7

2) Susan Bell - voice vote carried

65. Lay Director, Section #8

2) Kevin Durland - voice vote carried

66. Resolution #2 - Make Regulations Changes

3) In Favor - 81

4) Opposed - 1

2022 Eastern District 100th Convention
Acceptance Address
President-Elect Rev. John Pingel

Well, all I can say is that THE LORD certainly has a sense of humor because not in a MILLION years would I have imagined myself up here, doing this.

I stand before you with humility, a fellow sinner, redeemed by the precious blood of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I'm old enough to remember when Gerald Ford assumed the United States presidency (President Richard Nixon had resigned). He addressed a joint session of congress. He started out by saying to them: "I AM NOT A LINCOLN; I AM ONLY A FORD." The chamber erupted in laughter and applause.

I have no "SYNODICAL PEDIGREE." I'm from no long line of pastors.

My maternal grandfather was a longshoreman on the Brooklyn waterfront.

My father drove a truck for 40 years in the NYC area.

He, as HIS father and mother, were born on the lower east side of MANHATTAN, in what was called "KLEINDEUTCHLAND—"Little Germany." Which was the first ethnic community on Manhattan Island.

My great grandfather--a jeweler--- was a immigrant from the area of HAMBURG (GERMANY, not NY—you've got to clarify when you live in the Buffalo area!)

Later on, when they made some money, they moved to the BUSHWICK area of Brooklyn, attended St. Mark's Lutheran Church, which I believe had the tallest steeple in Brooklyn.

WE TAKE UP A LOT OF REAL ESTATE IN LUTHERAN CEMETERY in MIDDLE VILLAGE, QUEENS (Carl Prostka would know where that's at).

There are no pastors in my family tree. Making me something of an enigma.

AND YET-----MY LUTHERAN ROOTS GO VERY DEEP. THE PINGELS—the branch of the family tree to which I belong-hail from SCHWERIN---just to the East of Hamburg... (GERMANY, not Western New York!)

We track back all the way to the Reformation. My wife also,---in the Nuremburg area, we visited her *ancestral church*, dating back to the 12th century. (Lutheran since the time of the Reformation.)

SO IM GOING TO DO THE NON POLITICALLY CORRECT THING, and I'm say I am--- unabashedly ---- PROUD to be LUTHERAN!

We are in so many ways UNIQUE—in a good way. We bring some great things to the table. Faithfulness to the Scriptures. We're Creedal. We're Confessional.Law and Gospel. A deep and abiding appreciation for the Sacraments (as God's MEANS OF GRACE.) A sense of CONTINUITY with THE CHURCH across 20 centuries!

I'm PROUD to be LUTHERAN.....

And I'm proud to be MISSOURI SYNOD LUTHERAN.

Now: WE may differ in our APPROACH. to things.

But we are VERY GOOD at "KEEPING MAIN THING THE MAIN THING." (Which is increasingly important.) "WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED."

The words of St. Paul:

"For we preach Christ Crucified—a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles—but to those whoa re called, both Jews and Greeks—the power of God and the wisdom of God."

AND SO, I thank you for the honor you have bestowed upon me.

You know, I get up in the morning and my basic philosophy is “Let’s get something done.”

Along with that I ask , in advance, for your forgiveness,

I’m far from perfect.....But let’s get something done. I’ve always had it on my heart to reach the lost for Christ. Lets do it. Let’s get something done, for the kingdom.

I know we’re all hungry, so:

-I thank you for your vote of confidence.

-My family for their support, (and putting up with me!!!!)

-The two congregations I’ve had the privilege of serving. (Two is enough!) TWO IS PLENTY!

-And of course, “*THE REVEREND DOCTOR*” Chris Wicher for being a *tremendous mentor*.

.....He’s leaving me some GIGANTIC SHOES TO FILL!....And let me tell you, he’s got BIG FEET!!

SIZE 17!!!

But I’ll do the best I can....

All I can say is: To God be the glory.

Voting Pastors in Attendance

Eric Ash	Timothy Klahn
John Babbitts	Alex Knowles
Benjamin Bahr	Keith Knupp
Robert Bartz	Dennis Krueger
Alan Bauch	Scott Kuntz
Jake Bellinghausen	Domenick Lettieri
Benjamin Berteau	Thomas Lutz
Christian Bode	Charles Madison
Michael Borgstede	Joseph Mazikas
William Boymah	Richard Mokry
Benjamin Braun	Donald Muller
Steven Braun	Jeffrey Nickel
Ronald Breight	David Oester
Mark Brown	Richard Pape
James Burch	John Pingel
Kenneth Craig	Galen Purpura
Paul Cwynar	Peter Richert
Michael Dobler	Peter Saie
David Duke	Kurt Schultz
James Eckert	Phillip Schultz
Cory Eckstrom	Brian Smith
Samuel Fink	Bryan Spang
Javier Florez	Adam Thompson
Robert Foote	Sean Walters
Steven Geske	William Waterman
Ernest Green	Robert Weidmayer
Timothy Green	Denton White
Berton Greenway	Charles Whited
Nycholas Greig	Richard Wolf
Edward Grimenstein	Donn Woolweber
Travis Grubs	James Zang
Daniel Hahn	Rako Zech
Timmothy Heath, Jr.	John Zimmerman
Benjamin Hertel	Kenneth Zitsch
Frederick Hoover	
R. Blaine Jorg	

Voting Lay Delegates in Attendance

Jon Allen
Mark Andrews
Jennifer Barnes
John Bayer
Susan Bell
Kinsley Black
David Blackmon
John Brown
Michael Campese
Mark Carlson
Thomas Cavaliere
EvrIDGE Chapman
James Child
Mark Christensen
Chad Cornell
Ann Craig
John Crawford
Cindy Cwynar
David Dille
Bradley Dreier
Dan Driscoll
Douglas Eckstrom
Joseph Ells
Carolyn English
Ryan Finke
Hayes Gearhart
Kirk Gerdes
Catherine Geske
Laura Gonzalez
James Green
Maureen Grunder
Robert Gugino
David Gunsallus
Dennis Gurnett
Michael Harris
Donna Heintz
Terry Hoffman
Candace Holtham

Carolyn Keiter
Robert Kemper
Jacqueline Klahn
Michael Kroeger
Eeva Krusius
Frank Lehman
Marguerite Leverenz
Alex Lillis
Jim Machuga
Robin Makosy
David Maynard
David McElroy
Roberta Miehle
Garrett Nash
Joseph Pardee
Robert Pidanick
Raymond Pratt
John Preston
John Prochaska
Michael Purucker
Jeffrey Radt
Catherine Ried
Steven Rohring
Frederick Schmitt
Janice Strnatka
Paul-Joseph Struckmann
Mark Stuble
Brandi Sutherland
Donald Sutherland
Gary Sylvester
Paul Thomas
Gordon Tresch
Philip Twietmeyer
Kristen Waterstram-Rich
Sharon Wolff
Joann Ziervogel
Yancy Zoegar

Advisory Pastors in Attendance

Richard Blemaster
Jason Christ
Carl Happ
Peter Johnson

William Novack
Carl Prostka
Adam Salinas
Robert Spilman

David Wurster
David Young

Advisory Commissioned Ministers in Attendance

Cyndi Alviani
Kathleen Fretthold
Linda Gerlach

Lyle Heggemeier
Sharon McGuan
Matt Slaybaugh

Susan Steege
Janice Werth

Members of the Board of Directors, Convention Committees, Eastern District Staff, Official and Special Guests

Jon Allen
Cyndi Alviani
Rev. Eric Ash
Peter Babel
Susan Bell
Mark Bessell
Rebecca Bessell
Rev. Billy Brath
Rev. Ronald Breight
Rev. Dr. John Brunner
Karen Brunner
Cheryl Brzyski
James Carr
Rev. Jason Christ
Rev. Tony Cook
Carolyn Doster
Martin Doster
Rev. Cory Eckstrom
Mark Erbeling

Rev. Greg Finke
Rev. Robert Foote
Carl Fretthold
John Fretthold
Kathleen Fretthold
Keith Frndak
Diane Frndak
Thomas Green
Wally Grzyb
Rev. Dr. Daniel Hahn
Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison
Lyle Heggemeier
Rev. Jeff Hemmer
Rev. Frederick Hoover
Rev. Peter Johnson
Stephanie Johnson
Susan Knowles
Corey Laubenstein
Ruth Marzano

Terry Miller
Garrett Nash
Peter Olsen
Rev. John Pingel
Rick Porter
Jim Pritchard
Rev. Carl Prostka
Rev. Brian Smith
Mark Stuble
Bruce Sutherland
Gordon Tresch
Rev. Sean Walters
David Werth
Rev. Dr. Charles Whited
Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher
Bev Wicher
Barbara Williams
Rev. Arthur Zogar
Martha Zogar

Pastors and Commissioned Ministers Excused

Brian Bocian
Ronald Cox
Robert Crane
William Dorow
Carl Emberger
Lee Genter
Nathan Hartke
Jack Hartman

Jon Hofmeister
Wilbur Kromphardt
Joshua Obermann
Stephen Shrum
Jared Townley
Duane Voorman
Joseph Weatherell

To Approve Circuits Realignment

Whereas, In the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Eastern District a Visitation Circuit is a network of congregations that “walk together”, and

Whereas, “Districts shall establish visitation circuits according to geographical criteria” (Synod Handbook Bylaw 5.1.2), Therefore be it

Resolved, The Visitation Circuits be aligned as follows,

Buffalo North

Hananiah, Buffalo
Lutheran Church of Our Savior,
Buffalo
St. Luke, Cheektowaga
Holy Cross, Clarence
St. Paul, Clarence Center
St. John, Depew
First Trinity, Tonawanda

Buffalo South

Immanuel, Buffalo
Salem, Buffalo
La Santa Cruz, Buffalo
Redeemer, Colden
St. Martin, Colden
Immanuel, East Aurora
Faith, Elma
St. John, Orchard Park
Trinity, West Seneca

Lakeshore/Cattaraugus

St. Paul, Allen (Angelica)
St. John, Angola
Trinity, Ashford
Grace, Bradford, PA
Immanuel, Cattaraugus (E. Otto)
St. Paul, Eden
St. Paul, Fredonia
Immanuel, Gowanda
St. Paul, North East, PA
Trinity, Silver Creek
Salem Springville
First Trinity, Wellsville

Niagara

St. Paul, Batavia
Mount Olive, Lockport
St. Peter, Lockport
Trinity, Lockport
Trinity, Medina
Holy Cross, Middleport
Concordia, Newfane

Our Savior, Niagara Falls
St. Andrew, Pekin
Immanuel, Ridgewood
St. Michael, Wolcottville
St. John, Youngstown

Niagara South

Holy Ghost, Bergholtz
Grace, Niagara Falls
St. John, North Tonawanda
St. Mark, North Tonawanda
St. Matthew, North Tonawanda
St. Paul, North Tonawanda
Immanuel, Tonawanda

Rochester, East

Redeemer, Auburn
Grace, Canastota
Redeemer, Canastota
Faith, Penfield
Hope, Red Creek
Redeemer, Newark
Risen Christ, Fairport
Bread of Life, Rome
St. John, Rome
Trinity, Utica
Calvary, Waterloo

Rochester, South

Holy Trinity, Binghamton (Chenango Bridge)
Good Shepherd, Canandaigua
Faith, Corning
St. Paul, Cortland
St. John, Farmington
Alpha Deaf, Henrietta
Pinnacle, Henrietta
St. Mark, Mendon
Christ, Interlaken
Trinity, Ithaca
Zion, Owego
Grace, Vestal
Trinity, Wellsboro, PA

Rochester, West

Epiphany, Avon
St. Paul, Cohocton
Hope, Greece
St. John, Hamlin
St. Mark, West Henrietta
St. Paul, Hilton
Trinity, Spencerport

Pittsburgh North

Mount Olive, Beaver Falls
St. Luke, Cabot
Prince of Peace, Freedom
St. John, Morrisdale
Christ, New Castle
Christ, Oil City
Ascension, Pittsburgh
St. Paul, New Kensington
Martin Luther, Punxsutawney
Good Shepherd, State College
Mount Calvary, Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh South

St. John, Accident, MD.
Zion, Accident, MD.
Concordia, Brentwood
Zion, Bridgeville
Sts. Peter/Paul, Central City
Christ, Forest Hills
Trinity, Glen Savage (Fairhope)
Calvary, Murrysville
Faith, Pittsburgh
Trinity Deaf, Pittsburgh
Good Shepherd, South Hills
Grace, Penn Hills
St. John, Millvale
St. Matthew, Pittsburgh
Zion, Pittsburgh
Bethel, Glenshaw

Susquehanna (S) / Philadelphia

St. Luke, Croydon
S – Faith Easton
S – Christ, Freemansburg
S – Faith, Herndon
S – Grace, Hop Bottom
Hope, Levittown
Christ Memorial, Malvern
S – Our Savior, Mount Pocono
Christ Assembly, Philadelphia
Holy Cross, Philadelphia
St. Phillip, Philadelphia
S - St. John, Pittston
S - Immanuel, Scranton
S - Peace, Scranton
S - St. Paul, Tunkhannock
S - St. Peter, Wilkes-Barre

and be it finally

Resolved, This realignment shall be in effect immediately for the purposes of this 100th Convention of the Eastern District, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Submitted by the Board of Directors of the Eastern District (February 2022).

Rev. Brian Smith, Secretary
(electronic signature available in Workbook)

IN FAVOR: 134
OPPOSED: 4
MOTION PASSED

To Accept Changes to the Eastern District Regulations

Whereas, the Regulations of the Eastern District govern our corporate work together as a gathering of congregations, and

Whereas, the most current Regulations of the Eastern District were approved by the 2018 Convention of the Eastern District, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and

Whereas, according to the 2018 Eastern District Regulations, the District President, District Treasurer, and District Board of Directors were assigned responsibilities relative to Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc. (hereafter referred to as “Pioneer, Inc.”), and

Whereas, the District Board of Directors, serving also as the “Members” of Pioneer, Inc., at its October 2021 meeting restructured the Bylaws of Pioneer, Inc., therefore, be it

Resolved, the Eastern District in convention approve changes to its 2018 Regulations as proposed below, and be it further,

Resolved, Regulations 1.1.1.4, 1.1.2.3, 1.2.5.3, and 2.1.1.3 be stricken from the 2018 Eastern District Regulations,

Under, Board of Directors, General Responsibility and Authority

- ~~1.1.1.4 The Board of Directors shall be the Members of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., a corporation formed by the district for operating a camp and retreat center for benefit of the district’s ministry. The Board of Directors shall review and appropriately respond to the content of minutes and financial reports furnished to it by the Board of Directors of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc.~~

Under, Board of Directors, Fiscal Responsibility

- ~~1.1.2.3 The Board shall be empowered to carry out outdoor and related ministries of the district through Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., a corporation formed by the district for such purpose.~~

Under, Officers, Treasurer

- ~~1.2.5.3 The treasurer shall be the treasurer of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., a corporation formed by the district.~~

Under, The President, General Responsibilities

- ~~2.1.1.3 He, or his representative, shall be an advisory member of the Board of Directors of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., a corporation formed by the district.~~

and be it further,

Resolved, The marginal numbering of Sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.5, and 2.1.1 be adjusted to comply with the structured changes, and be it finally

Resolved, that the 2022 Eastern District Regulations reflect the changes made this day in convention.

Submitted by Eastern District Board of Directors, February 2022.

Rev. Brian Smith, Secretary
(electronic signature available in the Workbook)

IN FAVOR 81
OPPOSED 1
MOTION PASSED

2022 Convention Report

Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher, District President

INTRODUCTION

Friends in Christ Jesus.

This is the last time I will address you in this way. In a few moments from now you will elect a new District President. I hope he realizes what a fortunate man he will be to serve this District. We have our headaches and our problems but, by God's goodness, nothing is insurmountable. "With every trial, God gives us a way out" wrote St. Paul. And that promise carries into the office of the District President. Along with another promise: "God provides". I cannot tell you how many times that rang true for me sitting in the chair for the past thirteen years. Oh, and there is one other privilege he will get to enjoy...or not. [place on all those conference tags]. He will get to go to a whole bunch of conferences, seminars, and meetings. I've collected these which, believe me, does not represent all I have experienced.

This is my Verbal Report to the Convention. My Written Report is found in the Convention Workbook, pages 20 – 26.

Let me say a few words about:

- Covid, what it did and could never do
- About small congregations and the Partnership response by Eastern District congregations
- About Bronxville and our other Concordias
- And, from my perspective, a projection what the District needs to do moving forward

COVID, WHAT IT DID AND COULD NEVER DO.

Covid-19, now you know this just had to enter my report. What it did and could never do Churches across the board took a hard hit by the Pandemic. We were in uncharted territory. We were drained in numbers, finances, and emotions, during the pandemic. However, by the grace of God, congregations and schools in this District did as well. By all reports, we grew tired and weary as it loomed heavy upon every day and in all planning events. Some people were irritated and angry, like that was going to change anything. But, by and large we were energized and prayerful because of the pandemic.

Covid-19 strained us but it didn't confine the Word of God. We hear a lot of negatives about internet technology, but it was through the creative use of internet technology that our congregations reached across the covid-restrictions divide. Members of congregations were reached electronically, and so were community neighbors like never before. Our school enrollments even grew. Creativity among church leaders flourished. There was a handful of congregations that maintained in-person worship services. And what's more, income remained relatively stable, and in some instances, actually increased.

SMALL CONGREGATIONS AND THE PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE BY EASTERN DISTRICT CONGREGATIONS

We are a District blessed with many small congregations. We have large congregations to be sure, however, the number of small congregations simply is a feature of who we are. Times have changed. Small congregations are stretched thin, but Partnerships have been helpful for Congregations in need of pastoral services. And Partnerships are actually growing in number among us. Today, there are 4X that number compared to last Convention. In 2018 we could count 4 congregation Partnerships. That number exploded. Today, there are 16 of them. Partnerships are an example of congregations tearing down silos, the silos of doing ministry alone. Thinking alone; acting alone; planning alone; existing alone.

What's more, we are now seeing emerge another feature of today's church, satellite congregations, which are just beginning to appear. In 2018 we had no satellite congregations. Today we can count three. St. John Orchard Park with Grace Hamburg, but that has ended. St. Luke Cabot with Faith Butler. And Hope, Rochester with Concordia Brockport. These particular Satellites are "donate and dissolve" arrangements. The smaller congregation, because they could not sustain their ministry, arranged to donate their assets and liabilities to the larger congregation. Once that was done, the smaller congregation dissolved, leaving the larger congregation with a Satellite. This new arrangement opens opportunities for the larger congregation to restart a ministry on top of the old.

BRONXVILLE AND THE OTHER CONCORDIAS

In 2021, our college in the East, Concordia, Bronxville closed its doors. It was the third Concordia to close in almost as many years. First, there was Concordia, Selma, then Concordia, Portland. And now it is Bronxville. We were all surprised, and I was heartbroken to learn my alma mater would follow that unfortunate fate. Bronxville was Synod's last Concordia College East of Ann Arbor, MI.

However, the heart of God's people in the East came through for Bronxville's faculty and staff. The "Care and Comfort" campaign, launched by the Districts of the East Coast, including your Eastern District, raised funds to assist faculty and staff in the transition to a new place God had in store for them in life. Your Eastern District, congregations, and individuals donated nearly \$40,000 to that campaign, the total of which was nearly \$450,000. Thank you Eastern District.

No matter what anyone says, and there is a lot of talk floating round, our Concordias, in truth, are still the gems of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Each one of them deserves our appreciation. Their purpose is to raise future called workers for the church, and for general education. They minister to a far broader population than any congregation. And when it comes to the Lutheran/Non-Lutheran student ratio, they might compare to most of our Christian Day Schools, where only 5 - 10% of the student body is actually Lutheran, never mind members of the congregation.

I have heard college presidents speak at one time or another, and I must say they have the full Word of God in hand and the truth of Jesus Christ foremost in mind as they shape their institutions to share the saving Gospel "to the ends of the earth." Our Concordias prepare future leaders for our church body. What's more, they reach out to students in their communities and literally around the world, for the sake of the Gospel.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE / ADDRESSED MOVING FORWARD

Leading a District is similar to homeownership of a second-generation home. Things break down, wear out, need to be replaced, etc. There is always a lot of work to be done, and that is especially true when you are talking about people and organizations. It would be misleading to suggest we have it all together in this District. No, not at all. But I see great opportunities for our new leaders.

First, we need to **rub out apathy**. Apathy and its cousin cynicism, have a hold in some places in our beloved District. However, it appears to be nothing new for us. For this convention I surveyed some of the District Presidential Addresses from as early as the 1960's, and low and behold, what did I find? Words of grave concern over the apathy in the District even in the early 1960's. In this regard, "There is nothing new under the sun". Then District President Gus Karkau commented on the "great heaviness" recruiting volunteers to serve the many Boards and Committees of the District. The question remains today. How do we get people to participate, to realize the great gains that come with "mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren"? To join together in the blessed work we are privileged to share? Covid has intensified apathy, it is true, but Covid is not the problem. Apathy has been around for a long time, when, for the love of Jesus, we could be so much more.

Second, we need to **reclaim our youth**. One of the comments I heard numerous times at the visitations of congregations in the Fall of 2021, was this real concern. Our congregations are losing their youth and young

families. It is an ever-present concern, however, and it is noteworthy that this same sentiment was expressed by a previous District President Herm Frinke in the 1970s. One of his Ten Points Program for the District mentioned at the 1970 Convention was “We are going to have to adjust our youth work. Very few of our parishes have a vigorous youth program.” That’s what Herm said. Today, we can say the same. Congregations are losing their youth and young families. Some of the young crowd are hanging on, thanks be to God. That is a glimmer of hope. Nevertheless, the pinch is real and noticeable. The District will want to address this need. Congregations are calling for it.

And third, we need to **encourage our seniors**. Thank God for our seniors. Their gifts, talents, and experience are worth their weight in gold. They are already sitting in our pews. And many are living around us in our communities to the “ends of the earth”. Those without a congregation need one too, as much as do the churchless youth and young families in our communities. When clamoring for more youth in your pews, don’t forget the seniors. There would be a song in my heart for a District that “vigorously equips God’s people for Kingdom growth.” One final observation from my ministry experience before I bring this Report to a close.

Back in the 2000’s before I was elected to this office, I organized two servant trips to New Orleans. With a team composed of volunteers from multiple congregations, with some assistance from the District, and with 50 people one year and nearly 80 the second, we went to Camp Restore to assist in the clean-up in the aftermath of Katrina. We traveled together, slept together (that’s not as cheesy as it sounds), ate, worshipped and prayed together, and of course we worked together. It was a phenomenal experience I will not forget, not only for the good we did in New Orleans, but also for the good those servant events did for each participant. The good that split over into congregations. We went to New Orleans and we took home a high degree of excitement and contagious spiritual vitality the likes we never anticipated. That’s not the reason you serve or assist in mission, but why not? Renewed excitement for the church is what you take home.

I’ve learned to say if any congregation or any District will burst free from apathy, sluggishness, and decline, it will be by the Holy Spirit working in the Word through servant events and mission efforts for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It will be by reengaging in the meaning of our Convention Theme: “to the ends of the earth.”

HAVE FAITH AND HOPE IN THE FUTURE

What I would leave with you is these words: “chin up”. God has great things in store for those who love Him and follow Him.

Thank the Lord you have a very fine dedicated District staff.

Ruth Marzano, Bruce Sutherland, John Fretthold, Kathy Fretthold, Lyle Heggemeier, Peter and Stephanie Johnson, Cheryl Brezski, and Rick Porter, along with those who retired over the past three years, Mary Ellen Sima, Barb Sigafos, Bob Forester

Board of Directors

Vice Presidents, Circuit Visitors

Committees and Task Forces

KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING.

And, keep the main thing the main thing.

That was a phrase I learned from Pastor Art Dueker of Hope in Rochester, now resting in the eternal arms of His Savior. On the Board of Directors he would remind us to “keep the main thing the main thing.”

The mission of Christ is the main thing. That is my final word to you in this address. “Keep the main thing the main thing.”

MY PLANS

As for me, what am I going to do and where am I going? Good questions. And my answer is, look to Melchizedek in the book of Genesis and spoken about in the book of Hebrews. No one knew where he came from. No one knows where he went. All we know is someone was here by that name and that’s all that matters.

To God’s glory.

And now if you will look to the projection screen in front of you.

2022 Convention Opening Sermon

Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher

Acts 1:8, But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Jesus laid a huge task on the Disciples when He told them “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Ends is plural, not singular. This challenge was given to the Disciples at His ascension according to St. Luke the Evangelist.

What was the last huge, monumental task you had to face?

I recall when in High School, my desire was to become a Pastor. Actually, that desire burned in me before then, when I was in fourth grade. Being the third son born in my family of origin, I rarely had the pleasure at home of people actually listening to what I had to say. My brothers and I were quite competitive and around the dinner table, just picture it, my inability to get a word in edgewise. So, I believe you can understand when I say the thought of people, a captive audience, actually listening to me 20 minutes a week, I admit, had a ring to it. But in High School, there was one important matter that froze me in fear. I approached my Pastor about it and asked “How do you come up with things to say from week to week.” I remember his response, “they’ll teach you”. Who “they” were, he never said. This day, I have my ideas.

Jesus laid a huge task on the Disciples. He told them “You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.” Those words were heavy and difficult for the church then and for the church today. I suspect they had reservations of traveling to the “ends of the earth.” They might have objected; we don’t have the numbers. How will the eleven of us travel so far? We don’t have the skill set. We have a devalued IQ and our EQ is deflated. IQ being the intelligence potential. EQ being the emotional quotient, the personality, the relationship giftedness to actually connect and communicate well with our people.

Jesus made this promise to the Church then and to the Church today: **“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”** You will receive power. I will give it to you. I will send You the Holy Spirit. He will help you. He will guide you. He will show you the way.

You will receive power implies they did not have the power in the first place. This was precisely the case. The disciples did not have the strength or the inspiration to take on this huge task, to the ends of the earth. The power is Spirit-given and they will be Spirit-led. God will give the Spirit to them and He will be their power.

What a relief knowing we do not have the power; that the power will be given. This implies furthermore the Gospel goes where it chooses, and we go for the ride, God using us for His purposes.

And finally, “you will receive power”, implies the Gospel will turn hearts from being turned in on themselves, to being hearts focused God-ward, for salvation and life in God’s name. No wonder brother Martin Luther stated in the Meaning to the Third Article: “I believe I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the one, true faith.”

We cannot go to the ends of the earth alone. How sweet is the music of the Gospel that God inspires us, leads us, equips us, and sends us.

The words “witnesses to the ends of the earth”, is an intriguing play on our assumptions. For some time this phrase has been turning around in my mind. I mean, where is “ends” that Jesus forthrightly declares is our destination?

Mostly we understand the word “ends” means some far away, remote place. This is literal and concrete thinking, not saying that such thought is incorrect. It is the place that once we get there, what then. What happens when we

have reached the remotest place on earth? The far away hidden island, the impossible mountain range to climb, the deepest jungle to penetrate? What then. Is it over? Are we over?

There was a time in my parish ministry when I thought like this whenever I conducted a baptism. Maybe this thinking was picked up in the seminary, or maybe I picked it up in a Winkel meeting of pastors. I don't know, but it does not matter. But, I had a notion that God has a fixed concrete exact number in mind of those being saved. He probably does, if we can say He has a mind as we do. And there is nothing wrong with this thinking. But every time I conducted a baptism the idea of this possibly being the last one, the final number ran through me. And as I poured water over the head I silently wondered "is this the one?" Concrete thinking.

I believe there is more, much more to the "ends of the earth" phrase, when Jesus said "you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." The ends can be very close, not far away. The ends can be so close in fact that scores of people are overlooked. The ends might be your neighbor, friend, or spouse. Those without a saving relationship with the Lord of life.

"Ends" might also be inside our churches and schools. When we hear the phrases "we've done it before" or "they will not listen" or "they are so different." I mean really different, when they don't look like us, speak like us, dress like us, act like us. When they are so young and we are so old, do they really belong? Should they be here?

Along those lines I came across a book over the past few months called "**Faith for Exiles**". The authors are Aly Hawkins, David Kinnaman, and Mark Matlock. It is a book about young people, ages eighteen to twenty-nine, and what we can be doing to instill in them a resilient faith in Digital Babylon. Digital Babylon is a marvelous phrase because it draws on the complicated and contrary cultural norms and values of the ancient people of Israel exiled in the radically challenging culture of Babylon. This culture was not their culture of religious experience nor of The Word of God. The question of the book is how can young people attain and maintain the saving faith of Jesus Christ in a world where they are deluged with words, images, and principals over electronic technology? The writers of "Faith for Exiles" came up with five points: establish a deep and personal relationship with Jesus in God's Word and the Creeds of the church; cultivate Godly relationships in the church and outside the church; strengthen the muscle of discernment by which one can know the difference between the Truth of God and the junk of false prophets; train for vocational discipleship; and have mission experiences in cross-cultural settings.

When we think of "Faith for Exiles", we sense that the word "ends" does not have an end at all, as we understand ends. The end is but the beginning when every generation must receive and embrace for itself the faith that is passed on. From generation to generation. In every home. Through every classroom. From every pulpit and Christian life group and mentor.

Jesus Himself said "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." You will receive the Holy Spirit because you cannot take up this charge alone. You need help and the Helper will go with you.

Take up again this blessed and privileged charge by Jesus Himself.

Do not be afraid.

Now to God who is able to do incredibly more than all we can ask or conceive by the Holy Spirit at work among you, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation, and forevermore. Amen

2022 CONVENTION EVALUATION SURVEY RESULTS

Question # 1

How would you rate the overall comfort at the convention?

	<u>responses</u>
1) Terrible	0
2)	0
3)	9
4)	36
5) Fabulous	36

Question # 2

How would you rate visibility of screens and stage?

	<u>responses</u>
1) I couldn't see or read anything	0
2)	0
3)	5
4)	24
5)	51

Question # 3

How would you rate the audio levels at the convention?

	<u>responses</u>
1) I couldn't hear or understand anything	1
2)	4
3)	18
4)	41
5)	18

Question # 4

How would you rate the electronic process?

	<u>responses</u>
1) Impossible to figure out	0
2)	0
3)	7
4)	17
5) Simple, easy process	58

Question # 5

How would you rate the box lunches at the convention?

	<u>responses</u>
1) I couldn't eat anything	1
2)	6
3)	37
4)	30
5) Best box lunches ever	8

Question # 6

How would you rate the banquet food at the convention?

	<u>responses</u>
1) The banquet food was horrible	2
2)	1
3)	10
4)	32
5) A fabulous banquet meal	24

Question # 7

How would you rate the banquet setting?

	<u>responses</u>
1) We hope never to go there again	0
2)	1
3)	9
4)	36
5) Fabulous banquet setting	25

Question # 8

How would you rate convention process (discussion, voting, etc)? Not rating the

OUTCOME

	<u>responses</u>
1) Terrible	0
2)	1
3)	3
4)	27
5) Great	52

Question # 9

Rate Workshop – “Millennials...” by Rev. Billy Brath

	<u>responses</u>
1) This was a waste of my time	0
2)	5
3)	4
4)	14
5) This was very useful	35

Question # 10

Rate Workshop – “Joining Jesus...” by Rev. Greg Finke

	<u>responses</u>
1) This was a waste of my time	3
2)	2
3)	9
4)	11
5) This was very useful	16

Question # 11

Rate Workshop – “Spiritual Conversations” by Rev. Tony Cook

	<u>responses</u>
1) This was a waste of my time	2
2)	6
3)	11
4)	18
5) This was very useful	16

Question # 12

Please rate the decision to go with workshops instead of a keynote address.

	<u>responses</u>
1) I prefer a keynote address	2
2)	2
3)	17
4)	15
5) I prefer workshops instead of a keynote	46

Question # 13

How many Zoom meetings had you attended (or watched the recording)?

	<u>responses</u>
1) 0	18
2) 1	6
3) 2	12
4) 3	18
5) 4	29

Question # 14

Please rate the 4 delegate Zoom meetings

	<u>responses</u>
1) Not at all helpful	1
2)	11
3)	13
4)	20
5) This really helped me get ready for the convention	19

Question # 15

Please rate the hotel and breakfast (if you stayed at the Marriott)

	<u>responses</u>
1) Don't ever use them again	1
2)	2
3)	9
4)	18
5) Let's use them for every convention	13

Question # 16

Please rate the meeting at First Trinity vs another (rented facility).

	<u>responses</u>
1) Don't ever use them again	0
2)	1
3)	8
4)	16
5) Let's use them for every convention	56

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