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TODAY'S BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS 2026

69TH REGULAR CONVENTION

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod
July 18–23, 2026 | Phoenix, Ariz.

A PRAYER FOR OUR SYNOD IN CONVENTION

Heavenly Father,
vivify Your Church by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Strengthen the faith and quicken the love of Your people.
Give us confidence that our sins are forgiven
and our debts satisfied by Christ's all availing sacrifice.

Breathe on Your Church and bestow Your Holy Spirit
on the delegates and church leaders
gathered in Your name at Convention this summer.

Give wisdom to those who propose, deliberate and decide
for the work and welfare of our Synod.
Guard the lips of those who speak; open the ears and minds of all who listen.
Give us courage to do with integrity what we promise.
Bless our plans and actions and grant them fruition.

Only let our manner of life together be worthy of the gospel of Christ.
Lead us to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind
striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,
not frightened in anything by our opponents.

Grant that, for the sake of Christ, we may be counted worthy
not only to believe in Him and His cross,
but also bear our crosses and suffer for His sake.

Since He is risen from the dead,
let us count ourselves as dead to sin
and alive to God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Since He is risen from the dead,
make Your Church bold and unified in act and song,
until You gather us together in the Great Resurrection at the last day;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen.



ABOUT *TODAY'S BUSINESS*

This is the first of six issues of the publication *Today's Business* that will facilitate the business of the 2026 convention. It is mailed in advance to registered attendees and contains essential information including the convention schedule, late overtures and a late report, Part 2 of the President's Report, proposed special standing rules, and official announcements, some providing updates to information already published.

Please take special note this time of the potential (Res. 4-06) to reinstate the Commission on Worship and a related potential for elections and, therefore, reason to give prior thought to floor nominations (see notice on p. 8). The proposed standing rules (pp. 14–17) also reflect a new speaker recognition system (Rule 17) and the option of a daily consent calendar (Rule 10).

This first issue also contains the proposed resolutions to be considered by the 2026 convention as prepared by the convention floor committees during their May 29–June 1 meeting in St. Louis. These resolutions are the committees' proposed convention actions in response to the reports and overtures printed in the 2026 *Convention Workbook* and to the late overtures published in this issue of *Today's Business*. You will note that this edition contains the financial outlay estimates (Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]) for proposed resolutions requiring them, as well as a cross-reference of overtures and related resolutions.

This first issue of *Today's Business* is mailed well in advance of the convention to allow ample opportunity for study and discussion. It is also available at www.lcms.org/convention. Additional copies may be purchased from Concordia Publishing House for \$10.00 per copy.

After receiving this mailing, delegates and representatives are encouraged to participate in meetings of the circuits or groups that they will be representing to receive reactions and suggestions regarding the business contained in this book. Such suggestions or concerns may also be submitted in writing to the chairmen of the appropriate floor committees (names and addresses are included in this issue of *Today's Business*) at least one week prior to the convention. Please submit these by emailing lcmssecretary@lcms.org. Comments so sent will be filed electronically for the appropriate committees.

The five remaining issues of *Today's Business* will be published and distributed to all delegates and representatives each morning of the convention, the first to be distributed prior to the Sunday morning session. Each day's issue will contain the schedule for the day, substitute or revised resolutions, wording for proposed amendments, and other official announcements and information. A limited number of additional copies of daily editions will be available for visitors attending the convention.

Because this pre-convention issue of *Today's Business* contains the resolutions to be considered by the convention, it will be essential to have it available for ready reference during all convention sessions. This will be true also for the following convention publications:

- The 2026 *Convention Workbook*, received in early May (necessary when reference will be made to an overture or report)
- The 2026 *Biographical Synopses & Statements of Nominees* booklet received with the *Convention Workbook* (necessary to refer to when voting)
- The 2023 *Handbook* of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (copies will be provided during the registration process at the convention)
- All daily issues of *Today's Business* (it will often be necessary to refer to previous days' issues)

Conventions are the principal legislative assemblies of the Synod for electing officers and members of board and commissions, taking actions, providing direction, and addressing issues and concerns. They are also unique occasions for witness to one another, worship with one another, and spending time together while conducting the business of the Synod. May God bless this convention and may we rejoice together that *Christ is Risen Indeed*.

John W. Sias, *Editor*
Christian J. Boehlke, *Managing Editor*
Rachel Asbury, *Managing Editor*

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod July 18–July 23, 2026 • Phoenix Convention Center • Phoenix, Arizona

Floor committee meetings were held May 29–31, 2026 in St. Louis. The schedule is considered tentative as Bylaw 3.1.9 (i)(2) states that the President “shall, at the first session and during the course of succeeding sessions of the convention, announce the order of business for the day and following days.” Unless otherwise indicated, all activities take place in the Phoenix Convention Center North Building.

Friday—July 17, 2026

Registration Desk open 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

1:30–5:30 Floor Committees—closed meetings (1st floor, West Building)

Saturday—July 18, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:30–noon Floor Committee open hearings (1st floor, West Building)

10:00 Break

10:30–noon Floor Committee open hearings (1st floor, West Building)

12:00 Lunch on your own

1:00–5:00 Floor Committee closed meetings, if necessary

1:30–3:00 All Delegate and Representative Orientation (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

5:00 Delegate Dinner (Ballrooms A-D, 1st floor)

7:00 Pre-service music (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

7:30 Opening Divine Service with Holy Communion (Halls AB, 3rd floor)

Sunday—July 19, 2026

Registration Desk open 7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:00 Matins—Rev. Peter K. Lange

8:30 Preparations for Opening Business Session

8:40 Convention Opening and Presentation of Gavel

8:45 Electronic Voting System and Microphone Queue

9:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)

9:20 Standing Rules

9:35 Convention Schedule

9:45 President’s Report (Part 3)

10:15 Consent Calendar

10:30 Welcome and Greetings from Pacific Southwest District

10:35 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Jon S. Bruss, “Christ is the Truth”

11:00 Essay Responder—Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray

11:10 Presentation—All Nations Ministry

11:25 National Witness (#1)

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Brady L. Finnern

1:55 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Announce presidential election result)

2:00 Response from newly elected president

2:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Voting delegate registration report)

2:10 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for First Vice-President

2:20 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for Central Regional Vice-President

2:30 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for East-Southeast Regional Vice-President

2:40 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for Great Lakes Regional Vice-President

2:50 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for Great Plains Regional Vice-President

3:00 Presentation of Slate and Balloting for West-Southwest Regional Vice-President

3:10 Ballot to determine ranking of Vice-Presidents

3:20 Greetings—Concordia Plan Services, Kevin Herweck

3:30 Omnibus Resolution A, B, C

3:55 Committee for Convention Nominations (Nominations for Secretary and Synod Board of Directors)

4:10 Presentation—International Missions: Spread the Gospel

4:30 International Witness (#2)

5:00 Life Together (#4)

5:40 Evening Prayer

6:00 Recess

Evening—LCEF Ice Cream Social

Monday—July 20, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:00 Matins—Rev. Christopher S. Esget

8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11)

8:30 Consent Calendar

8:40 Greetings—LCEF, Rev. J. Bart Day

8:55 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)

10:00 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (Balloting for Secretary and Synod Board of Directors)

10:40 Special Recognition—LCMS President Emeritus, Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

10:45 Convention Essay—Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Egger, “Christ Changes Everything”

11:10 Essay Responder—Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller

11:20 Life Together (#4)

12:00 Recess

1:30 Midday Prayer—Rev. Dr. Terrence C. Chan

1:45 Minutes

1:50 Committee for Convention Nominations (*other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 2:30 Presentation—International Missions: *Planting Churches*
 2:50 International Witness (#2)
 3:20 Greetings—The LCMS Foundation, *David Fiedler*
 3:25 Greetings—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Rev. Mark G. Schroeder*
 3:35 Structure and Administration (#9)
 4:45 Presentation—National Missions: *Church Planting*
 5:15 National Witness (#1)
 5:45 Vespers
 6:00 Recess
 8:00 p.m.—*Erin Bode Concert*

Tuesday—July 21, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

Exhibits open 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. (Hall D, 3rd floor)

8:00 Morning Prayer—*Rev. Dr. Nabil S. Nour*
 8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections
 8:30 Greetings—Concordia Publishing House, *Jonathan D. Schultz*
 8:35 Consent Calendar
 8:45 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 9:35 Convention Essay—*Dr. Michael A. Thomas, “Christ Conquers Death”*
 10:00 Essay Responder—*Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller*
 10:10 Presentation—Military Chaplains, *Rev. Criag G. Muehler*
 10:30 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
 11:00 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
 12:00 Recess
 1:30 Midday Prayer—*Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor*
 1:45 Minutes
 1:50 Presentation—Church Relations, *Rev. Dr. Jonathan E. Shaw*
 2:10 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
 2:55 Special Recognition—*National and International Church Body Representatives*
 3:15 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 3:55 Special Recognition—*Newly elected and outgoing Synod Board of Directors*
 4:00 Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution (#10)
 4:40 Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries (#6)
 5:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 5:45 Responsive Prayer
 6:00 Recess
 Evening—*Alumni Receptions*

Wednesday—July 22, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (3rd floor)

No exhibitors

8:00 Morning Prayer—*Rev. Benjamin T. Ball*
 8:25 Registration, Credentials, and Elections
 8:30 Consent Calendar
 8:40 Greetings—Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, *Eden Keefe*
 8:45 Greetings—Lutheran Hour Ministries, *Kurt Buchholz*
 8:50 Finance (#8)
 9:40 Structure and Administration (#9)
 10:35 Convention Essay—*Rev. Kirk M. Clayton, “Christ’s Resurrection for You”*
 11:00 Essay Responder—*Rev. C. Bryan Wolfmueller*
 11:10 University Education (#7)
 12:00 Recess
 1:30 Commemoration of the Faithful Departed—*Rev. Dr. Michael E. Gibson*
 2:00 Minutes
 2:05 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 3:00 University Education (#7)
 4:20 Special Recognition—Former Officers
 4:25 Presentation—International Missions: *Showing Mercy*
 4:45 Mercy (#3)
 5:15 Theology and Church Relations (#5)
 5:50 Responsive Prayer
 6:00 Recess
 7:30 p.m.—*President Elect’s Reception*

Thursday—July 23, 2026

Registration Desk open 8:00 a.m.–Noon (3rd floor)

No exhibitors

8:00 Matins—*Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa*
 8:20 Consent Calendar
 8:30 Minutes
 8:35 Registration, Credentials, and Elections (#11) (*Balloting for other boards, CTCR, boards of regents, and synodwide entities*)
 8:55 Finance (#8)
 9:20 Life Together (#4)
 10:25 Mercy (#3)
 11:05 Unfinished Business
 11:50 Itinerarium
 12:00 Adjournment

OFFICIAL NOTICES

GENERAL INFORMATION: Voting and advisory delegates and representatives are reminded The 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) will be held at the Phoenix Convention Center in downtown Phoenix, July 18–23, 2026. The Opening Divine Service with Holy Communion will begin at 7:30 p.m. (with pre-service music at 7:00 p.m.) on Saturday, July 18, in Halls AB, 3rd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center. Following Matins on Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m., the first official business session of the convention will begin at 8:40 a.m. in Halls AB, 3rd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center.

REMAIN SAFE IN PHOENIX HEAT: All convention attendees should be mindful of how to be safe in the Phoenix heat and are encouraged to watch this video, which provides safety tips, prior to arriving: youtube.com/watch?v=qoywt5EKJ5I.

HOUSING: All registered delegates and representatives should have received housing and travel information by this time. *If this is not the case, the district office or the entity represented should be notified.*

CHANGE IN AVAILABILITY TO SERVE: If a delegate is unable to serve, the district secretary should be informed immediately so an alternate delegate can be properly registered through the Secretary of Synod.

ON-SITE REGISTRATION DESK: Delegates and representatives should check-in for the convention as soon as possible, to obtain their name badge and other convention related information and updates. Check-in will take place in the Phoenix Convention Center, 3rd floor, North Building. The Registration Desk will be open at the following times:

Friday, July 17	1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
Saturday, July 18	8:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 19	7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Monday–Wednesday, July 20–23	8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Thursday, July 23	8:00 a.m.–Noon

Visitors to the convention are welcome and not required to check-in. Members of the working press are asked to check-in with the Communications Office, Room 225AB, 2nd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center.

DELEGATE ORIENTATION: An orientation session will be held from 1:30–3:00 p.m., Saturday, July 18, at the convention center, Halls AB, 3rd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center. All voting delegates, advisory delegates, and advisory representatives should attend this orientation to review instructions and information about participating in convention business and activities, how to use the voting keypads and the process to enter the queue to speak at the microphone.

TODAY'S BUSINESS OFFICE AND ON-SITE SUBMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION: Any materials for publication in a daily edition of *Today's Business* should be submitted by 3:30 p.m. on the day before the item could appear in print. All submitters must return by 6:30 p.m. to approve what they have submitted before it can be printed for the next edition. Personal notices are not published in *Today's Business*. The *Today's Business* office is located in Room 222AB, 2nd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center and open the following times:

Saturday, July 20, 9:00 a.m.–6:45 p.m.
Sunday, July 21 through Wednesday, July 24, 7:30 a.m.–6:45 p.m.
Thursday, July 25, 7:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

DAILY ISSUES OF *TODAY'S BUSINESS*: Each day in the daily issue of *Today's Business*, information will be provided pertaining to that day's expected business or business to be addressed on a future day. Items included in daily issues of *Today's Business* may be, but are not limited to, the following examples: revised resolutions, proposed amendments, substitute resolutions, changes to candidate information, and other notices. Daily issues of *Today's Business* will be placed at the seat of each voting delegate and others may pick up a copy, beginning at 7:30 a.m., at the entrance to Halls AB, 3rd floor, North Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center.

PRAYER AT THE CONVENTION: A prayer chapel, located in Room 106B, 1st floor, West Building, of the Phoenix Convention Center, will be open beginning at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, July 18 and will be open Sunday through Wednesday, 7:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Chaplain Rev. Sean Daenzer, Assistant Chaplain Rev. Brian Crane, and Deaconess Cara Patton will be present throughout the convention to oversee the chapel and be available to provide prayer, spiritual care, and support. A prayer request basket will be located in the chapel to receive prayer requests. Prayer requests can be sent to the chaplains via email at chaplain@lcms.org. Please indicate on your prayer request whether it is a private or public concern. We will lift the private concerns to the throne of grace privately in the prayer chapel. Due to the volume of prayer requests received we cannot promise each public prayer will be offered during public worship, but the chaplains and deaconess are committed to lifting each concern in private prayer.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION: Individual confession and absolution will be offered in Room 106C, 1st floor, West Building, from 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 18, prior to the Saturday Divine Service, during lunch breaks (noon to 1:30 p.m.) Sunday through Wednesday, and by appointment. When the door is open, you may simply enter and the pastor will guide you through the service; when the door is closed, please wait outside the room until it is opened again. A closed door during the lunch hour indicates the room is occupied and being used for private confession and absolution.

CONVENTION NATIONAL OFFERING: Contributions intended for the National Offering will be received during the opening service, Saturday, July 18. Delegates who have congregational or individual National Offering gifts are encouraged to submit them during this service. National Offering gifts can also be delivered to the Synod's display in the exhibit hall; however, the opening service is the preferred and more secure option. You may also contribute using this QR code.



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INTERNET ACCESS: The Phoenix Convention Center offers complimentary Wi-Fi service on the first-floor lobby of each convention center building, the food court, and meeting rooms only. The complimentary service is not available in the halls, ballrooms, or the pre-function spaces of the halls or ballrooms. If faster service is needed or service in the halls or ballrooms, service will need to be purchased through the Smartcity page: <https://smartcitynetworks.com/> or refer to the handout included in the registration packet provided at check-in.

For more information, visit the convention website at www.lcms.org/convention.

CONVENTION WORKBOOK AND BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSES UPDATES

The following notices update or correct information in the *Convention Workbook (CW)* and *Biographical Synopses & Statements of Nominees (BSSN)*. Please note that changes to delegates and representatives will be published in the *Proceedings*.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Concordia University, Irvine (Calif.) Board of Regents Laypersons (BSSN, p. 68): Gary C. Nelson's biographical information should indicate that he has been a member of an LCMS congregation for 19 years, not 9 years.

Commission on Worship: Resolution 4-06 is to restore the Commission on Worship and to include in its membership three positions to be elected by the convention: one for a parish pastor, one for a commissioned minister who is a director of parish music or parish teacher, and one for a layperson. The Standing Committee for Nominations has been alerted to this possibility and is selecting from names already "in the pool" (*BSSN*, pp. 77–81) an initial slate for use, should Res. 4-06 be adopted, so that these positions may be filled by the convention and not left vacant to be filled under Bylaw 3.2.5. This slate will be published at a later date. An opportunity for floor nominations will also be provided on Monday of the convention; for these, read carefully the instructions and use the forms on pp. 82–84 of the *BSSN* or on the pages immediately following in this book.



69TH REGULAR CONVENTION | The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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FLOOR NOMINATIONS FORM

Bylaw 3.12.3.7 (2023 Handbook) provides opportunity for nominations from the floor prior to certain elections of the Synod. Such nominations will take place early in the convention after the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations has provided his report to the convention. Unless the convention decides to do otherwise by majority vote, only names submitted prior to the published deadline for submission of names (October 18, 2025) will be eligible for nomination from the floor. If there is question whether a particular name is in this “pool,” refer to the “Report of Nominees Submitted” in the back of the *Biographical Synopsis and Statements of Nominees workbook*.

This form is provided to facilitate the floor nominations process and is available on the LCMS Web site at www.lcms.org/convention/downloads. To submit a nomination, this form must include the required nominee information as detailed in Bylaw 3.12.3.6 (c) of the 2023 Handbook and be accompanied by the **Consent Form for Floor Nominations**, which must include the signature of the person being nominated and indicate willingness to serve if elected. Persons making nominations from the floor must be prepared to submit this information at the time that the nominations are made. The Committee on Convention Nominations will check all floor nominations for validity and will report names and accompanying information in *Today’s Business* prior to elections.

Please provide all requested information regarding the person nominated.

1. Name of Position (Office, Board, or Commission): _____

2. Name of Person Nominated: _____

Residence Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Name and Location of Congregation: _____

Name of District: _____ Residing in Region: _____

Years as a member of LCMS congregation: _____

Occupation or Profession: _____

Present Position: _____

Organization: _____ Other: _____

Educational/Training: High School _____ College/University _____ Advanced Academic Degree _____ Seminary _____

3. Synod Positions Held (past and present, listing most recent first)	Years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. District Positions Held (past and present, listing most recent first)	Years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Congregation Positions Held (past and present, listing most recent first)	Years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. Other Positions Held (past and present, listing most recent first)	Years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CUS BOD/BOR POSITIONS:

7. The following qualifications are especially helpful in evaluating nominees for service as a regent of a Concordia University (BOR) or as a director of the Concordia University System (CUS BOD) (Bylaw 3.6.6.3).

The nominee possesses the following (Please select at least two):

- Theological acumen
- Higher education administration
- Religious nonprofit law
- Legal counsel to complex organizations (CUS BOD only)
- Strengthening the mission of Synod's congregations and schools (CUS BOD only)
- Investments (BOR only)
- Facilities management (BOR only)
- Advanced academic degree
- Higher education accreditation (CUS BOD only)
- Higher education law
- Fund development (BOR only)
- Technology (BOR only)
- Other (e.g., professional) advanced degree (qualifies for CUS BOD only)
- Administration of complex organizations
- Law (qualifies for BOR only)
- Professional church worker education (CUS BOD only)
- Finance (BOR only)
- Human resources (BOR only)
- A specific instructional or operational domain designated by the institution (BOR only)

8. How and to what extent has this individual demonstrated familiarity and support of the colleges and universities of the Concordia University System? With which institution(s) and region(s) is he/she most familiar?

9. How has he/she demonstrated familiarity with and support for the doctrinal positions of the Synod?

10. List separately two (2) or three (3) of the above qualifications marked (see #7 above), with supporting information for each:

I have read the document *Notes for Nominators and Nominees* and consent to the information contained in the document.

Nominating Delegate Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Nominee Signature: _____





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CONSENT FORM FOR FLOOR NOMINATIONS

STATEMENT OF WILLINGNESS TO SERVE

In addition to the commitment of the necessary time and energy required for service, officers and members of boards and commissions agree to serve in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, doctrinal statements and resolutions of the Synod.

When pastors, teachers and laypersons are requested to serve as board members or in similar part-time capacities, the Synod will assume the expense of travel, lodging, meals and other incidentals connected with such service. The Synod will not pay for the casual service rendered in a non-salaried position, nor pay for any substitutes engaged while away on duty. If financial outlay is required to perform the duties of the position involved, it is expected that congregations will assume this responsibility as needed.

Position to which you have been nominated:

I AM WILLING to serve for this position: ___ Yes ___ No

Status: ordained commissioned lay

BRIEF PERSONAL STATEMENT

The report on final nominees for Synod offices is to contain pertinent information concerning each candidate, such as occupation or profession; district affiliation; residence; specific experience; number of years as a member of an LCMS congregation; present position; offices previously held in a congregation, district or the Synod; qualifications for the office in question; and, “if the candidate so desires, also a brief personal statement” (Bylaw 3.12.3.6 [c]).

As a nominee you may make such a statement in the space provided below. You may wish to say something about your vision for the future of the Synod or about your interest in service in the position to which you have been nominated. **Your statement should not exceed 100 words.**

With your consent, this statement will be published in a convention issue of *Today's Business* and made available to the voting delegates of the convention.

Release Approval: I agree to the release of this information for publication. ___ Yes ___ No

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read the document *Notes for Nominators and Nominees* and consent to the information contained in the document.

This form is provided to facilitate the floor nominations process and is available on the LCMS Web site at lcms.org/convention/downloads

LCMS INTERNATIONAL CENTER • 1333 S. KIRKWOOD ROAD • ST. LOUIS, MO 63122-7295 888-THE LCMS (843-5267) • [LCMS.ORG/CONVENTION](https://lcms.org/convention)



FLOOR COMMITTEE OPEN HEARINGS AND OTHER KEY LOCATIONS

Open Hearings—Saturday, July 18, 2026

1st floor, West Building, Phoenix Convention Center

1. National Witness 8:30–10:00 a.m.; 104A
2. International Witness 8:30–10:00 a.m.; 101C
3. Mercy 10:30 a.m.–noon; 104A
4. Life Together 8:30 a.m.–noon; 101A
5. Theology and Church Relations 8:30 a.m.–noon; 105B
6. Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries 8:30 a.m.–noon; 102A
7. University Education 8:30 a.m.–noon; 102B
8. Finance 10:30 a.m.–noon; 101C
9. Structure and Administration 8:30 a.m.–noon; 102C
10. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution 8:30 a.m.–noon; 103A

Other Key Locations

Phoenix Convention Center—*all locations are in the North Building of the Phoenix Convention Center, unless otherwise noted*

- Chapel..... 106B, 1st floor, West Building
- Communications..... 225AB, 2nd floor
- Confession and Absolution Room..... 106C, 1st floor, West Building
- Convention Office 221A, 2nd floor
- Delegate Dinner..... Ballrooms A–D, 1st floor
- Delegate Orientation..... Halls AB, 3rd floor
- Exhibit Hall Hall D, 3rd floor
- General Session and Worship..... Halls AB, 3rd floor
- Registration..... 3rd floor
- Today’s Business..... 222AB, 2nd floor

FLOOR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Comment should be directed electronically to the Office of the Secretary at lcmssecretary@lcms.org, to be forwarded to the respective floor committee chairman. Please label such communications clearly as communication to a floor committee, indicating which floor committee the comment should be forwarded and which resolution(s), overture(s), or topic(s) are being addressed.

Number and Name

1. National Witness

Chairman

Rev. Eric C. Johnson, President
Southern District
100 Mission Drive
Slidell, LA 70460-5216

2. International Witness

Dr. R. Lee Hagan, President
Missouri District
660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63141-8512

3. Mercy

Rev. John L. Pingel
Eastern District
5111 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221-5203

4. Life Together

Rev. Christopher S. Esget, Fifth Vice-President
East-Southeast Region
1801 Russell Road
Alexandria, VA 22301-1934

5. Theology and Church Relations

Dr. Brian S. Saunders, President
Iowa East District
1100 Blairs Ferry Road
Marion, IA 52302-3093

6. Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

Dr. Scott R. Murray, Third Vice-President
West-Southwest Region
5800 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77057-5617

7. University Education

Rev. Brady L. Finnern, President
Minnesota North District
PO Box 604
Brainerd, MN 56401-0604

8. Finance

Dr. Roger C. Paavola, President
Mid-South District
1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN 38016-4905

9. Structure and Administration

Rev. Justin A. Panzer, President
Kansas District
1000 SW Tenth Ave
Topeka, KS 66604-1104

10. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

Rev. Robert D. Beinke, President
New England District
400 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01109-2723

11. Registration, Credentials, and Elections

Rev. James B. Maxwell, President
Rocky Mountain District
88 Inverness Circle East, Unit A-210
Englewood, CO 80112-5521

Committee for Convention Nominations

Rev. Jamison J. Hardy, Grand Blanc, MI

CONVENTION STANDING RULES

Minutes

1. Minutes shall be distributed every next morning for consideration and approval. The first item of business of the afternoon session shall be the formal approval of these minutes. The final day's minutes shall be approved by the Board of Directors at its first meeting following the convention. Only substantive corrections to the minutes (impacting the meaning or effect of convention actions) shall be offered from the floor for consideration. Editorial corrections or non-substantive changes to the minutes (misspellings, numbering errors, faulty references, incorrect titles, punctuation, grammar, etc.) should be provided in writing to the Secretary for incorporation into the final version of the minutes published in the 2026 Convention Proceedings.

Resolutions

2. Resolutions shall be prioritized by floor committees and normally shall be presented to the convention in numerical sequence. However, resolutions that impact nominations or elections may be given earlier consideration at the discretion of the chair, in consultation with the floor committee chairman and the chairmen of the floor committees on nominations and elections.
3. The preface, preamble, rationale, and whereas sections shall be regarded as integral parts of resolutions and therefore subject to the same consideration, amendment, and adoption.
4. It shall be the discretion of the chairman or presenting member of the floor committee to read the preface, preamble, rationale, and whereas sections of resolutions from floor committees that are printed in *Today's Business*. In addition, the chair of the convention is not required to read each resolution as he states the questions and then as he puts the resolution to a vote.
5. The convention chairman, in consultation with floor committee chairmen, may identify resolutions to which up to 1 ½ hours of continuous consideration should be allotted, as follows:
 - 15 minutes (if needed) Floor committee presentation
 - 30 minutes (if needed) Debate on the main motion, excluding amendments and other subsidiary motions
 - 45 minutes (if needed) Presentation of and debate on amendments, substitute motions, main motion, or main motion as amended.
6. Whenever possible, substitute resolutions and amendments to proposed resolutions shall be submitted to *Today's Business* for publication prior to convention consideration of the resolutions to which they pertain. When this is not possible, as in the course of discussion, one written copy of the proposed amendment shall be provided to the Secretary immediately after it is offered from the floor.
7. Amendments to Constitution or Bylaw language require advance review and approval by the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM); these should be presented to the Today's Business office in time for publication, or in advance to the Secretary on the dais.
8. Only *substantive* amendments to a resolution shall be offered from the floor (those impacting its purpose or effect). The Secretary is authorized to make typographical and grammatical corrections provided such corrections do not alter the substance of a resolution. Any editorial corrections or *non-substantive* changes to introduced resolutions should instead be shared in writing with the Secretary. Until a resolution is presented to the delegates, any such changes should be suggested directly to the floor committee chair.
9. The delegates will consider omnibus resolutions as part of regular scheduled business. Omnibus A includes overtures referred to a board, commission, or other group of Synod to consider and take action deemed appropriate. Omnibus B includes overtures with respect to which the action taken by a previous convention is to be affirmed. Omnibus C acknowledges overtures of thanks or recognition. Each floor committee's Omnibus D (if any) dispenses formally with overtures declined by that floor committee. During consideration of a given omnibus, a majority vote is required to remove an overture from the omnibus resolution and have it referred to the appropriate floor committee for action.

10. In addition to the Omnibus Resolutions above, any remaining resolutions may be placed on a consent calendar if they are deemed by the chair to be non-controversial, courtesy, or honorific in nature and it shall require 10 percent of voting delegates to remove said resolution from the consent calendar. All resolutions not successfully removed shall be adopted without further action of the convention. The chairman may publish in each day's *Today's Business* a consent calendar for consideration that day.
11. If any resolution is not acted upon by the convention before adjournment, it dies and the subject matter may be reintroduced for possible consideration by an overture to the next convention.

Process

12. Unless covered by these Special Standing Rules, parliamentary procedure shall be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.
13. The chair shall see that the agenda is followed as closely as possible. The chair may deviate from the printed program when necessary or expedient.
14. All nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives may participate in debate, but may not nominate candidates, make motions, or vote.
15. Registered delegates and advisory representatives wishing to address the convention, once recognized by the chair, shall state their name, the name of the district (or other entity of the Synod that they represent), and whether they are a voting delegate, advisory delegate, or advisory representative. Delegates and representatives shall normally address the convention from their assigned microphones.
16. A microphone queue list will be enacted for every debatable motion considered by the assembly. The pro-con method of debate will be used to the extent possible intermingled with secondary motions in queue order. When a member of the floor committee speaks in favor of a resolution, it shall be recognized as a "pro" speech and will be followed by a "con" speech.
17. Delegates and representatives seeking recognition for any reason must first register at the nearest microphone kiosk, indicating their general purpose (speak pro or con, make a motion, raise a point of order, or request information). All queue entrants will be addressed as they appear in the queue order, except where the chair gives preference otherwise in recognition due to rules of order or another reason explained to the body. When called upon by the chair, delegates and representatives must identify themselves and state the desired action. Speakers can check their current position in, or withdraw from, the queue at the kiosk.
18. Ordinarily, questions of privilege (or point of personal privilege) shall be addressed in writing to the chair or his designee.
19. No delegate or representative may speak in debate any longer than two (2) minutes per speech. No delegate or representative may speak more than twice on the same motion on the same day and may not speak a second time until all delegates and representatives desiring to speak the first time have had the opportunity. The chair shall have discretion to make exceptions to this rule. When a floor committee is called on to answer a question or to give information, this rule shall not apply.
20. A delegate who speaks on an issue may not move to call the question at the close of his or her speech.
21. If a substitute motion is offered and seconded, the presenter shall be offered two (2) minutes to provide the rationale for offering it and a member of the floor committee shall be offered two (2) minutes to present rationale for why the committee believes the original motion is to be preferred. The convention shall decide by majority vote without further debate whether or not to consider the substitute motion. If the decision is in the affirmative and if the substitute motion is subsequently adopted, the original motion dies. If the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or adopt, the original motion is again pending.
22. While any voting delegate may move to close debate (call the question) at any time that it is his or her turn to speak, a vote on closing debate (two-thirds vote required) on the main motion shall be put by the chair after every twenty (20) minutes of debate (except those to which Standing Rule 5 pertains). The chair may also call for a vote on closing debate (two-thirds vote required) when in his judgment the assembly has heard

sufficient speaking from both sides of the issue.

23. Amendments of non-contiguous words may be made to a pending question, so long as the consequence of such non-contiguous words does not constitute in effect a substitute motion.
24. During the last two days of the convention, the President shall have the privilege of calling up for action those resolutions that in his judgment must be acted upon before adjournment.
25. No motion to reconsider or rescind shall be made or called up during the last day of the convention.

Floor Nominations

26. No floor nominations will be accepted for the First Vice-President or regional vice-presidents (Bylaws 3.12.2.1; 3.12.2.7 [c]). In the case of election of the Secretary and board and commission members, floor nominations are allowed, to take place at the time of the report of the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [a–b]). “Such floor nominations may only be made from the list of names which have previously been offered to the Committee for Convention Nominations prior to the final deadline for the submission of nominations, unless the convention shall otherwise order by a simple majority vote” (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [c]). Floor nominations are not debatable and shall be brought individually before the convention for approval, being voted on immediately, before being added to the ballot (Bylaw 3.12.3.7 [a–b]).

Allowable floor nominations for all positions of boards and commissions shall be opened for a period of forty (40) minutes, unless ceased earlier by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. At the end of forty (40) minutes, a vote to cease nominations shall be called by the convention chairman. If a two-thirds vote to cease nominations is not received, the period for floor nominations shall be extended an additional twenty (20) minutes. This cycle shall continue in twenty (20) minute intervals until a two-thirds vote for nominations to cease is received from the assembly.

Voting

27. An electronic response system shall ordinarily be used to register votes. If the system is not available, or at the discretion of the chair, the chair may take votes by voice, by show of hands, or by a rising vote. The chair may order a count if any voice, show of hands, or rising vote seems inconclusive. When possible, vote tallies shall be recorded in the minutes.
28. An invalid vote is defined as a vote entered on the keypad with a number not offered as a selection or entered before voting is opened or after voting is closed. Invalid votes are not counted in the total number of votes cast.
29. The privilege of granting delegates the right to record their votes in the minutes with respect to a particular resolution shall be granted by the assembly by a majority vote without debate. If such privilege is granted, the votes of record shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod within 15 minutes after the close of the day’s business on which such privilege was granted.

Use of Voice, Print, and Electronic Devices

30. In order to promote an orderly and non-distracting convention atmosphere, the following shall apply to the use, and area of use, of all printers and electronic equipment, including wired and wireless communication devices, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, pagers, laser pointers, PDAs, PEDs, or other similar electronic devices. In all cases where use is permitted, the sound-producing capabilities of such devices shall not be used. Except as approved by convention staff, personal extension cords shall not be allowed in Halls AB.

	Type of Usage Permitted in Designated Area			
	Voice	Printers	All Electronic Communications including email, text, and social media messaging from any device, e.g., laptops, tablets, pagers, laser pointers, PEDs, smart phones, wearable technology including smart watches, activity trackers, and like devices.	Laptop computers, Smartphones, and tablets WITH communications disabled (e.g., Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Cellular, and Infrared communications turned off or in airplane mode.)
Voting and Advisory Delegates & Representatives Areas	No	No	No	Yes*
COP, BOD, CCM, COH, CTCR, Press, Special Guests Areas	No	No	Yes	n/a
Visitors, Back Seating Area	No	No	Yes	n/a
Convention Staff, All Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a

*unless required for the use of a medical device or hearing aids

HISTORY OF LCMS CONVENTIONS

Structure of the Synod

When the Synod was organized in 1847, the number of congregations was small, and its geographical area limited. There was no need for districts. Seven years later, in 1854, the Synod inaugurated its current basic structure by dividing itself into four districts which initially convened at the same time as the national convention and then, later on, during years when the national delegate convention did not meet.

Since 1854 until the present time, the Synod has made clear that it is not a federation of districts. It adds, divides, or combines its districts according to need. Delegates attending national conventions take into consideration not only the interests of their own districts (which are the Synod in that place), but also the welfare of the entire Synod.

Delegate Representation

The 2026 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will be its 69th Regular Convention and its 53rd delegate convention.

From 1847 to 1872 (the first 15 conventions) each congregation was represented by a lay member and its pastor.

Beginning with the 1874 convention, assembly size necessitated delegate representation, as provided in the 1923 Synod Constitution, which required that “a number of congregations shall form a group, which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.” The 1947 Constitution became a little more specific: “Large congregations shall form small circuits and small congregations shall form large circuits.”

Since 1967, electoral circuits have generally been identified with visitation circuits comprised of 7 to 20 congregations with a combined membership of 1,500 to 10,000 confirmed members. Exceptions to these numbers may be granted by the President of the Synod upon request of district boards of directors.

Frequency of Conventions

The Synod met annually during its first eight years (1847–1854). Since that time, it has usually convened every three years.

Exceptions occurred at the time of the Civil War, when the 11th Regular Convention was held in 1863; the 12th in 1864; and the 13th in 1866. In addition, a special convention was also held in 1864 to consider reorganization proposals for the President’s Office and delegate arrangements.

An additional exception to the three-year rule occurred in 1874. The 1872 convention had resolved to hold the next (16th) convention in 1875. Via a vote of the districts, it was resolved to hold the next convention in 1874 due to pressing business. The next following convention was not held until 1878.

A constitutional change by the 1965 convention brought about yet another exception to the three-year cycle. From 1967 to 1981, conventions met every two years. The three-year rule has been in effect since that time. The recent 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2019 conventions declined resolutions that would have changed the convention cycle to every four years. The 2023 convention was delayed a year, making this a “four-year triennium” or *quadrennium*. This was due to concern for districts having their conventions during COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, by a 90.67% affirmative vote of the congregations that concluded on February 16, 2021. As a result, districts could meet in either 2021 or 2022 and convention-related terms were extended accordingly.

Convention Locations

Host cities and the frequency of their hosting national conventions of the Synod have been as follows (2026 convention included):

St. Louis (21)	Indianapolis (1)
Fort Wayne (13)	New Orleans (1)
Milwaukee (9)	New York (1)
Chicago (4)	Phoenix (1)
Cleveland (3)	Pittsburgh (1)
Detroit (3)	Saginaw (1)
Houston (3)	St. Paul (1)
Anaheim (1)	San Francisco (1)
Dallas (1)	Tampa (1)
Denver (1)	Wichita (1)

PRESIDENT’S REPORT, PART 2

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Cor. 15:58)

Introduction

My dear brothers and sisters in Jesus: It has always been my custom to present a theological piece on this occasion of Floor Committee Weekend, based upon the theme of our upcoming convention. In the second part of this presentation, I’ll highlight some challenges we face and offer a few thoughts for your floor committees. But first: “Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” Indeed, the resurrection is the heart of all Christian faith and life. And it gives us all we need to face the many challenges before us.

The Enlightenment and Biblical Interpretation

The glorious fact of the resurrection is repeated over and again in the Gospels and in the rest of the New Testament. In this 250th anniversary of our nation, we do well to note that perhaps the greatest and most insightful and influential man, when it comes to the founding of our nation and its founding documents, particularly the Bill of Rights, had not the slightest understanding of the New Testament.

It was Thomas Jefferson who advocated for the production of the Bill of Rights and influenced it by his letters to James Madison, the author. Jefferson’s Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was also key to the First Amendment. How reasonable and glorious it is. Later, however, Jefferson privately chopped up a copy of the New Testament and titled it *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, Extracted Textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French & English*. He edited it with a pair of scissors in 1804. It was unfortunately published by the Smithsonian in 1904 and handed out to both houses of Congress for years. Jefferson wrote in the preface that it was an easy task plucking the (moral) “diamonds” from the “dung hill.”

What did Jefferson regard as so much dung? Well, his recension has no virgin birth. No angels. No miracles. No claims to divinity. No passion predictions. No “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” No institution of Baptism. No Trinity at Jesus’ Baptism. No institution of the Lord’s Supper. No Office of the Keys. No Matthew 28. The last line of the book is Matthew 27:60, “And they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.” So much for the alleged “life” and morals of Jesus! Hermann Sasse asserted that it is not the “morals” of Jesus that are unique, though they are as Jefferson wrote “sublime.” Every moral teaching of Jesus can be found in other religious and religious writers.

Jefferson was a true son of the Enlightenment also on religion. He followed in the paths set before him by Deists like Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), who believed that Jesus’ disciples did not directly fabricate falsities, but that later Christians enveloped the Gospels in mythology. In fact, Jefferson owned and annotated a copy of Christian Wolff’s *Institutes of the Law of Nature and Nations* (1750). (Wolff caused untold havoc in German Lutheranism around 1750.) David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874), in *Das Leben Jesu* (1835), built on Reimarus’ skepticism and viewed the Gospel narratives as mythic constructions of the community, not written by the apostles but by much later Christians, and quite at odds with Jesus’ own self-identity.

Jesus Had Wire-Rimmed Glasses!

LCMS friend Hermann Sasse, student of ultimate liberal scholar Adolf von Harnack, joked about the culmination of the 19th century’s “quest for the historical Jesus” (“*Leben Jesu Forschung*”). The greatest German scholars had intensely searched and investigated the New Testament trying to figure out who the real Jesus was. What did they discover? That Jesus was a 19th-century German liberal looking back at them from the pages of the Gospels, complete with gold wire-rimmed glasses!

We have seen the horrid results of this ever more radical approach to the Bible, especially in mainline Protestantism but growing also in evangelicalism. Roman Catholicism has by no means been immune, nor have we in the LCMS in what became Seminec. All of the historically Lutheran churches of Europe are in a death rattle or worse. The Lutheran World Federation, following in their wake, is continuing the spread of contagion around the world. (See “The Lutheran World Federation Today” by LCMS Church Relations Director Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw at lcms.org.) The whole paradigm must be ditched if the Gospel is to be proclaimed.

Gods Dying and Rising Right and Left?

The ancients had gods who died and rose (Tammuz, Bel-Marduk, Adonis, Sandan-Heracles of Tarsus, Attis, Osiris, the Cretan Zeus, Dionysius ... and cf. the Mithras sacrifice and double life of Kore. (Albrecht Oepke, “ἐγείρω, κτλ.,” TDNT 2:335).) But Paul’s interactions with the pagan philosophers in Athens highlights something very significant. “To speak of a man as judge and of the resurrection of a real man from the dead must have seemed to Greeks to be such hair-raising nonsense that their patience was exhausted” (*The Journal Articles of Hermann Sasse*, p. 234).

Resurrection No Myth; Justification as Myth

The resurrection of Christ is no myth. That’s a major source of the offense of the Gospel of the New Testament. A religion of law/ethics like that of Jefferson needs no resurrection. All modern and postmodern theologies that masquerade as Christian and even Lutheran, while rejecting the fundamental biblical doctrine of the justification of the sinner before God by grace through faith, finally turn the Gospel into law. Political liberation of peoples, of women from oppression, of the environment from global warming — to the extent they are not an excuse for Marxism — may be fine works of law/love. But they are not the Gospel. Justification and resurrection cannot be contextualized into something else. Justification rests squarely upon Christ’s resurrection. The Gospel can never be contextualized into law. He “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). The Gospel of the resurrection floats off into the mist (*Pferdmist!*) of mysticism, which always looks for a Jesus apart from the actual apostolic witness of the Bible.

Hadrian Marks the Spot!

In A.D. 130, Roman Emperor Hadrian reconstructed Jerusalem into a pagan city. In doing so, he intentionally desecrated the location of the crucifixion (Golgotha) and resurrection. These places were remembered indelibly and were sites of Christian worship after A.D. 33 and even up to A.D. 130. Archeology has shown definitively that the site — then outside the city wall — was a quarry, then a garden, then a cemetery. Hadrian did us a favor. He leveled Golgotha and the tomb of Christ. He built a wall, stairs and a platform. The stairs are still there. He placed a statue and temple of Jupiter over the tomb and a statue of Venus over Golgotha. The pagan gods marked the spot for 180 years!

Constantine's Mother

When Constantine came to power, he sent his mother to find and mark the places of the great events in Christ's life. She co-opted Jerusalem Bishop Marcarius for the first-ever recorded archaeological dig in Jerusalem. Eusebius recounts that they found the very monument by which Christians had marked the spot of the crucifixion under the statue of Venus, and they found the very tomb of Christ under the statue of Jupiter. Constantine built a church and the Mausoleum of the Anastasis. (Read and see the whole marvelous story in *Where God Came Down: The Archeological Evidence* by Joel P. Kramer.)

No Resurrection Deniers in the Community

Of course, we see right in the New Testament that there were deniers of the resurrection. The religious leaders were invested in retaining the status quo. **However, it is very significant that there are no resurrection deniers from within the Christian community.** The early religious authorities in Jerusalem responded predictably.

"While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, 'Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble'" (Matt. 28:11–14).

There is, of course, a denial of the Christian's resurrection by the "Christ party" (1 Cor. 1:12), but they were not explicitly denying Christ's resurrection. Paul's argument is that by denying the Christian's resurrection, they denied Christ's own resurrection. First Paul asserts the fact of the resurrection.

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me" (1 Cor. 15:3–8).

"Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:12–26).

Josephus' (A.D. 37/8–100) Silence Is Deafening

Josephus mentions the crucifixion as fact, but of the resurrection states, "But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported Jesus had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive" (Paul Maier, *Josephus: The Essential Writings*, p. 264; Antiquities XVIII.63). Paul Maier notes that "no one has pointed out that Josephus does not seek to scotch the resurrection claim by any information at his disposal that Jesus' body still lay in its tomb. Certainly, this is an argument from silence, but the silence is especially eloquent in view of Josephus' known habit of roasting false Messiahs elsewhere in his histories, in contrast to the near-favorable reference here." Maier notes that though early Jewish sources deny the resurrection, none of them deny the tomb was empty. "His disciples stole His body," they countered. And this line of defense continued into the second century and down to today (Paul Maier, *In the Fullness of Time*, p. 200).

The Case of James, Christ's Brother: "Jesus Is Out of His Mind"

The Gospels state that Jesus' "brother" and "family" do not believe. "Then He went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when His family heard it, they went out to seize Him, for they were saying, 'He is out of His mind'" (Mark 3:20–21). St. Paul notes the remarkable fact that Jesus appeared to His brother prior to the apostles. "Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:7). Luke records the following, "Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James, [none of these named James were the Lord's brother.] All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers" (Acts 1:13–14). And finally, the fact that James, the brother of Christ, came to be "a pillar" of the church in Jerusalem according to Paul is significant. "When James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentile and they to the circumcised" (Gal. 2:9). What but the appearance of the resurrected Christ to His brother accounts for this conversion? Reiche places this meeting in A.D. 49 and Galatians at A.D. 55.

Paul: Zealous Murderer to Christian Zealot

And there is the case of St. Paul, hardened opponent of Jesus and the church (Acts 7–9; 22; 26; Gal. 1; Phil. 3; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Tim. 1), who is at the stoning of Stephen circa A.D. 34, urging on the murderers. Paul is described as "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord," who "went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1–2). How can Paul's stark about-face be explained apart from the resurrected Christ's appearance to him? "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4) a voice asked him in A.D. 36, three years after the resurrection.

No One; Not One

Then there is an argument that is silent but powerful. There is simply no one from within the earliest church who ever came forward and denied the resurrection occurred, or that anything in the Gospels did not happen. No one ever asserted that he/she was present with Jesus, or claimed a relative or friend was with the apostles then or long after, and claimed the resurrection was a lie.

A Mythical New Testament as the Product of the Community Debunked

Already half a century or more ago, Lutheran Bo Reicke (Bill Weinrich's doctor father) and J.A.T. Robinson eviscerated the paradigm. They demonstrated that the entire New Testament was written prior to the Jewish-Roman War. "One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period — the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple — is never once mentioned as a past fact" (J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p. 13). Simply put, there is no way none of the all-Jewish authors of the New Testament could possibly have not mentioned the Jewish-Roman War (A.D. 66–73), which culminated in the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This assertion is particularly poignant in light of the predictions by Jesus that it would happen. The whole evolutionary paradigm that asserts Mark's Gospel is early and simple, and that John is late first century or even second century and not composed by John because it allegedly has more mythical accounts, is toast. The idea that St. Paul cooked up a religion at odds with the real religion of Jesus is D.O.A., including the idea that a number of his letters impose Roman ideas of sex or views of homosexuality at odds with Jesus, including a high Christology and the divinity of Christ. The facts are that the whole New Testament was written within a little over 30 years after Christ's death and resurrection. I don't know about you, but I well recall events of 1996. If today some group of people were to write falsely about the issue and person or people I cared most about and knew personally, I guarantee you I'd write a rebuttal stating, "I was there. It didn't happen that way." The Bible is true, and archeology is proving that virtually every day. (See the work of Bo Reicke on the synoptic Gospels and Paul. Bo Reicke, *Re-examining Paul's Letters: The History of the Pauline Correspondence*, and Joel Kramer, *Where God Came Down*).

The Fact of the Resurrection in the New Testament

There are, of course, dozens of texts.

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?'" (Luke 24:1–5).

"He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay" (Matt. 28:6).

"Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.' Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:26–29).

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred

brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me" (1 Cor. 15:3–8).

"God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24).

The Effects of the Resurrection

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Without the resurrection, Jesus is no divine Son of God.

"And was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:4).

Without the resurrection, there is no sacrifice for sins and no justification by grace through faith.

"Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

Without the resurrection, there is no divine Word of God.

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:25–26).

Without the resurrection, there is no reconciliation.

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).

No resurrection, no Spirit, no witness, no mission. The Spirit enlivens the words of and regarding Christ.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26–27).

Without the resurrection, there is no grace.

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:1–10).

There is no Christian faith without the resurrection!

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17).

No faith and hope in God without the resurrection.

“Who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21).

Without the resurrection, sin has dominion.

“We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him” (Rom. 6:9).

Without the resurrection, there is no Son of God, no apostle, no St. Paul, no grace, no faith and no witness to the nations.

“And [He] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations” (Rom. 1:4–5).

Without the resurrection, there is no forgiveness of sins in Baptism, no conversion, no resurrection to faith and life.

“Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12).

Without the resurrection, there is no confession and absolution.

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld’” (John 20:19–23).

Without the resurrection, the Sacrament of the Altar is merely a human sociological sham, and not the assurance of eternal life.

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever’” (John 6:53–58).

Without the resurrection, there is no indwelling of the Spirit.

“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

Without the resurrection, there is no prayer, no access to the Father.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:12–14).

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian fruit, no Christian love.

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another” (John 15:16–17).

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian joy.

“So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22).

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian hope.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

Without the resurrection, there is no one interceding for us with the Father.

“Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Rom. 8:34).

Without the resurrection, we are dead in sin.

“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:8–11).

Without the resurrection, there is only judgment, indeed no certainty of Christian righteousness.

“Because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Without the resurrection, the Old Testament is false, there is no conversion.

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise

from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.’ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd” (Acts 17:1–5).

Without the resurrection, there is no new life in Christ.

“We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Without the resurrection, there are no heavenly mansions, no resurrected eternity with the resurrected Christ.

“In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:2–3).

Without the resurrection, Jesus is no “resurrection and life” for mankind.

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” (John 11:25–26).

Without the resurrection, there is no effective remembrance of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection for us.

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’ And they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened” (Luke 24:1–12).

Without the resurrection, there is no Gospel and no Christian preaching.

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8).

Without the resurrection, there is no one to bring us from death to life, and our sins stand against us.

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:13–14).

Without the resurrection, there is no hope of our glorious transformation on the Last Day.

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20–21).

Without the resurrection, all suffering is meaningless; at best it is a mere punishment for sins.

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own” (Phil. 3:10–12).

Without the resurrection, I remain dead in my sins and have no certainty of God’s love in Christ for this life or the life to come.

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Without the resurrection, I would merely follow Christ to death.

“But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ” (1 Cor. 15:23).

Without the resurrection, God sent no savior to raise us up.

“And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power” (1 Cor. 6:14).

Without the resurrection, there is no belief, no salvation, no confession.

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” (Rom. 10:9–10).

Without the resurrection, there is only sin, no life.

“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:8–11).

If there is no resurrection, we have none of the promises to the fathers or to Christ. With it, all promises are ours.

“And as for the fact that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ Therefore, He says also in another psalm, “‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption’” (Acts 13:34–35).

Without the resurrection, there is no eternal life, indeed no Christian resurrection to life.

“Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

Without the resurrection, there is no hope after death.

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live’” (John 11:25).

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian comfort in eternal life.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:18–19).

Conclusion

Dear friends, the resurrection is true and ours. And in the resurrection, we are gifted with everything we need in this life and in the church’s life. There is no problem in the church that the resurrection does not touch and provide the repentance, the grace, the means, the faith, the strength, the joy, the hope and the humility to address. “We are beggars: This is true” (Luther). And yet, as St. Paul wrote to a very troubled congregation in which he invested more time, blood, sweat and tears than any other: “So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours” (1 Cor. 3:21). We have challenges aplenty, but they all pale in comparison to the glorious bodily resurrection of Christ and what it delivers to us. Thank you for your attention and thank you for your service to Christ and His blessed church. What Paul says applies to us all individually and together as church in this Synod. “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

Amen.

Preface

Grace and peace to you in our risen Lord, Jesus Christ. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that makes our labor in the Lord meaningful. Paul does not begin his exhortation in 1 Corinthians 15:58 with “therefore” for nothing. He has just walked the Corinthians through the great chapter of the resurrection: Christ the firstfruits; the dead raised imperishable; death swallowed up in victory; the sting of death, which is sin; vanquished by the Lord Jesus and His cross. Only after this does Paul say, “Therefore.” Because Christ is risen, our labor is not in vain. Because He is risen, the Word preached actually creates faith. Because He is risen, the Sacraments truly give what they promise. Because He is risen, this convention’s work, every careful resolution, every patient hour of debate, every collegial conversation across the table; is taken up into His ongoing work for His church and for the world He is still in the business of saving.

This is why we gather. This is why we labor. The risen Christ is in His Word, the speaking presence around every floor committee table this weekend. He has given us His Word, His Sacraments, His church. He has placed us in this Synod at this moment in history. Our task is not to invent the church’s mission — that has already been given — but to receive it, steward it and pass it on to those who come after us. We do this together. We do it in the joyful confidence that because He lives, we shall live also, and that this labor is laying up treasure that endures.

We thank each of you for your willingness to give these days to the Synod’s work. Your congregations, your districts and our common life together as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are blessed by your service. We are grateful.

To the Floor Committees: A Word on the Work Ahead

We received significantly more on-time submissions this year (464 vs. 322 in 2023), resulting in 374 unique overtures for the *Workbook* (279 in 2023), many of them clearly and carefully labored over. As noted in the *Workbook*’s preface, a number of these overtures appear to have been assisted by artificial intelligence (AI). While the use of AI for some purposes can be very helpful, several overture submissions demonstrate that the technology unfortunately produces inaccuracies. We recommend careful reading as recommended in Scripture: “Test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). A well-crafted resolution by a floor committee will often serve the body better than a hastily drafted overture whose underlying concern is genuine, but whose content is incomplete.

Floor committees draw from four sources: the overtures published in the *Workbook*; the reports of officers, boards and commissions; comments received from allowable parties (Bylaw 3.1.8[c]); and this report to you. Staff who are subject matter experts are present this weekend as a resource; please use them generously. Staff are there to assist but are not members of the committee. First Vice-President Peter Lange and the Office of the President have met with each committee chair and vice-chair, and the conversations have been candid and helpful. What follows are observations and counsel offered in that same spirit.

A new procedural tool: consent calendar and omnibus resolutions

This convention introduces a Consent Calendar for resolutions alongside the long-standing omnibus resolutions for overtures. The distinction is important. Omnibus resolutions group similar overtures together into four categories: (A) Responsibility Assigned to Others, (B) Addressed by Previous Conventions, (C) Expressions of Encouragement and Gratitude, or (D) Declined. The Consent Calendar, by contrast, gathers floor committee-drafted resolutions that the committee anticipates will receive broad agreement without substantial debate and are likely to be adopted without amendment. The Consent Calendar is a helpful tool. A resolution placed on the Consent Calendar still carries the full weight of the Synod. At the same time, it preserves precious convention floor time for resolutions where discussion is most needed. We commend the prayerful and generous use of the Consent Calendar — not to limit people’s voices or the responsibility to carefully consider matters, but rather to allow time for other significant matters to have sufficient time for review and debate often desired by the assembly.

A word on task forces

Several previous conventions have appointed task forces in response to genuine needs, and good work has resulted. We have, however, learned by experience that task forces tend to multiply, can be costly, and sometimes produce results that are lesser than a well-charged standing committee or office would have produced in the same amount of time. Where a matter properly belongs to an existing board, commission or office of the Synod, we encourage the committees to direct the work there. Where a specific task force is needed, we say so plainly below.

A word on tone

The theme of this convention is “Christ Is Risen Indeed.” Let this not be a slogan we sing on Sunday morning and then leave behind when we enter the committee rooms. Resolutions are confessions. When we adopt a resolution on church planting, we confess that the risen Christ still saves sinners. When we adopt a resolution on the Lord’s Supper, we confess that He is truly, bodily and graciously present in that Meal. When we adopt a resolution that bears witness to the inerrant Word, we confess that His Word is living, active and trustworthy. Let our resolutions sound like the Gospel they confess, as they are clear in doctrine, charitable in spirit and hopeful in expectation. The world is watching, but more importantly, the angels rejoice when sinners gather in the name of Jesus and labor together for His kingdom. Let our work give them cause for rejoicing.

Committee 1: National Witness

Chair: Eric Johnson; Vice-Chair: Dien Taylor; Primary Staff: Michael Meyer

We come to this committee’s work with great encouragement. The Lord is doing something remarkable among us. Since 2022, adult confirmations have been running significantly above the long-term trend. Young people, especially young men, are finding their way to LCMS congregations, often by way of lcms.org and the podcasts of faithful pastors, looking for the authentic Word and the historic Divine Service. The fields are white for harvest, and the Lord of the harvest is providing both workers and the harvest itself. This committee’s work, we pray, will be a faithful response to His grace at work in our day.

With 33 overtures before this committee, 13 of them from the Board for National Mission (BNM), the work is substantial. We commend the discipline of asking, of each BNM overture, whether it: (a) proposes something genuinely new requiring the convention’s direction, (b) celebrates work already being faithfully done, or (c) requests convention approval for work the Office of National Mission (ONM) could properly undertake on its own. Often overtures in the second and third categories can be handled through the Consent Calendar or through a resolution of encouragement-and-thanks-giving that elevates the work without binding the body to additional action. Begin with a resolution that will be a clear win for the Synod, something unifying and forward-looking, and let the remaining workflow from that good start. About 10 resolutions from this committee is a reasonable working target.

Toward strong resolutions

- **Church planting (Ov. 1-06).** This is an excellent overture, well aligned with the Office of National Mission’s data on what has proven most fruitful: the preaching station and mother-daughter congregation model, along with a committed lay core and the support of a neighboring pastor. We have roughly 100 church plants that are either potential sites or are in various stages of the church planting process, and we believe a substantive resolution — reflecting the ONM data and specifically naming this model of church planting — will give the Synod a clearer way forward than past program-based approaches to church planting.
- **Campus ministry (Ovs. 1-04 and 1-05).** Both overtures address the same conviction: Campus ministry is among the most fruitful investments we can make. The committee may wish to combine the two overtures into a single substantive resolution restoring a full-time Campus Ministry coordinator at the Office of National Mission. We note the importance of carefully phrasing action that has a financial impact; the phrase “as designated funds are available” is both realistic and helpful for the resolves that involve new funding.
- **Apologetics (Ov. 1-12).** The overture is good, and the need is real. We suggest the committee consider whether “encouraging” rather than “tasking” the Synod and her arms, educational institutions, auxiliaries and Recognized Service Organizations produces a stronger resolution and more accurately reflects our relationship to them. We also commend the committee to include the seminaries and universities to the apologetics conversation; they are natural homes for the deeper formation work that supports congregational apologetics.
- **Lutheran schools (Ovs. 1-14 through 1-19).** Ov. 1-17, which commends and thanks God for our schools, could be strengthened by including specific data regarding statistical trends of school baptisms and enrollment. Additionally, the U.S. House of Representatives 1 Bill, also officially known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” passed by Congress in July 2025, provides a new tax credit opportunity, beginning in 2027, of up to \$1,700 for donations to scholarship-granting organizations supporting Lutheran schools. We commend the committee to consult Chief Mission Officer Dan Galchutt regarding operationalizing this opportunity. Ov. 1-18 regarding educators and administrators, similarly, will be strengthened by current data and a brief note on continuing education options through the Concordia University System.
- **Schools’ curricula (Ov. 1-15).** The first resolve, as written, requires Lutheran schools to use “only the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions” as curricular material. The intent of this overture is good, but the language is impractical and would not honor what our excellent Lutheran educators are doing with confessionally faithful curricula every day. We commend a more realistic revision that calls for curricular materials to be “in accord with LCMS doctrine.” We recommend the committee review the final whereas to consider rewording or removal.
- **Catechism 500th anniversary (Ovs. 1-29 and 1-30).** The 500th anniversary of Luther’s Small Catechism arrives in 2029. We commend the committee to draft a substantive resolution launching Synodwide planning now, offering direction to Concordia Publishing House, the Office of National Mission and the Concordia University System to develop resources that will permeate our homes, schools and congregations in the run-up to that anniversary.
- **Young people in the church (Ov. 1-13).** The overture cites genuinely encouraging facts. We are reluctant, however, to recommend establishment of a task force on this matter. We commend the committee instead to ask the Office of National Mission to monitor these encouraging developments closely and to report regularly to the body through normal channels. The Spirit is at work; we want to walk alongside what He is doing, not over-program it.
- **All Nations Ministry (Ov. 1-01).** There are now 527 identified “All Nations” groups across the Synod. The committee may wish to highlight in this overture current fruits of our multilingual and multiethnic outreach efforts, including the new Spanish hymnal and Lutheran Heritage Foundation resources.
- **Synodwide conversation on decline (Ov. 1-07).** The aspiration is worthy, but a broad Synodwide conversation involving “all entities” preparing “study materials” represents a heavy lift that has not, in our recent experience,

produced commensurate fruit. We commend the committee to consider whether more action-oriented language — directing specific offices to bring concrete proposals to 2029 — would better serve the body.

- **Black Ministry (Ovs. 1-02 and 1-03).** The overtures call for Synod support of the upcoming celebration in 2027 of 150 years of Black Ministry within the LCMS. We commend a single, unified resolution that honors the legacy and affirms continued financial support consistent with prior convention actions.
- **Armed security in schools (Ov. 1-14).** This overture is well intended. However, legal questions surrounding the specific resolves require careful review with LCMS Legal before any time is spent drafting a proposed resolution.
- **Urban ministry (Ov. 1-10).** This overture recognizes the challenges of urban ministry and calls for administrative assistance from the Office of National Mission that has financial implications. Coordination with Floor Committee 8 on Finance is necessary.
- **re:Vitality (Ov. 1-08).** The committee will note the third whereas observes that fewer than 5% of congregations have used the program. A resolution that warmly commends and encourages broader use of this program would likely serve the Synod well.

Other matters

- **Web presence.** *The Lutheran Witness* article outlining the next triennium called for a stronger LCMS web presence with the primary purpose of directing seekers to local LCMS congregations. No overture before this committee addresses this directly, but the data — young adults finding congregations through *lcms.org* and Lutheran podcasts — is too significant to set aside. We commend the committee to consider drafting a resolution directing the Office of National Mission and LCMS Communications to develop a coordinated strategy and report progress to the Council of Presidents.
- **Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM).** An LCMS auxiliary exists as an arm of the Synod for the extension of the mission and ministry of the Synod. LHM is a valued auxiliary that works alongside the LCMS in various areas of national and international mission and mercy efforts. We thank God for LHM's over 100 years of sharing the Gospel, planting churches and showing mercy around the world. We recommend the committee consult with Chief Mission Officer Dan Galchutt to learn more of LHM's efforts and then identify opportunities for enhanced alignment and collaboration. We recommend the committee consider proposing a resolution that engages the CMO along with an LHM representative to develop strategies and plans to enhance the relationship and stewardship of resources between the LCMS and LHM.
- **Deaf ministry.** The LCMS officially adopted "Deaf Missions" as a program of the Synod in 1896. We recommend the committee consider the 130th anniversary of LCMS deaf ministry celebrated in 2026 with a resolution of thanksgiving and encouragement to continue to support RSOs and others that continue to be involved in this outreach.

Committee 2: International Witness

Chair: Robert (Lee) Hagan; Vice-chair: Nathan Meador

Despite enormous geopolitical, financial and logistical pressures, the Lord continues to bless our international work. This has been an encouraging year for new missionary recruitment; financial support for our missionaries has been generous; and the Office of International Mission, in partnership with the Boards for International and National Mission, has done outstanding work. While the quantity of overtures assigned to this committee is modest, the quality and significance of the work being celebrated and considered is anything but. We commend the committee to draw from the Office of International Mission report and the counsel and experience of its leadership as it develops resolutions that celebrate what the Lord is accomplishing through us in many languages and lands.

Toward strong resolutions

- **FORO support and participation (Ov. 2-01).** The forums of the church (FOROs) — where missionaries and members of partner churches gather to further the spread of the Gospel — have proven a fruitful model. The committee may wish to develop this overture into a resolution supporting FOROs synodwide; we encourage the committee to consult with the executive director of the Office of International Mission to obtain an update of current and developing FOROs and to understand the purposes and benefits the FORO model has produced in mission fields.
- **Adopt-a-Missionary (Ov. 2-02).** The overture rightly commends the Network-Supported Model, which is sound. We invite the committee to clearly state that this overture encourages support directed toward missionaries serving through the Office of International Mission — including to Mission Central as an arm of LCMS Mission Advancement (not as a standalone fundraising entity) — rather than an independent organization funding and sending missionaries. It would also be appropriate for the committee to note Bylaw 3.8.3, which provides that the Board for International Mission (BIM) shall serve as the only sending agency for workers and funds, though RSOs and official mission societies of the Synod may send long-term workers overseas. The committee may consider encouragement to congregations that believe they cannot afford to financially support a mission, reinforcing that even modest, sustained giving carries blessings back, not only to the missionary, but also to the giving congregation itself by establishing relationship with a missionary and the mission field.
- **International congregations and ecclesiastical supervision (Ov. 2-03).** The committee is right to note the Synod has already directed this work. The current question is what concrete next step is timely. The matter of an "international circuit" for LCMS-related congregations not currently tethered to a U.S. district is a real one. Consultation with the executive director of the Office of International Mission and the secretary of the Synod will help. Two separate resolutions — one addressing international congregational supervision and another addressing missionary support — may better serve the Synod than a single combined resolve. The secretary of the Synod may offer guidance for developing bylaw amendments.
- **EIIT pastors and mission service (Ov. 2-04).** The historical pattern noted in the first whereas deserves examination. The committee will want to consult with the seminaries and the Office of International Mission regarding the actual obstacles to EIIT pastors' service overseas — which include the reality that many of our international workers serve as theological

educators, a role for which the EIIT program is not designed, since EIIT pastors receive only a fraction of the residential coursework.

- **Protection of divine calls for missionaries (Ov. 2-05).** This overture, while framed generically, addresses a specific recent situation that remains tender. We commend the committee to handle the matter with great care and balance. The doctrine of the divine call is essential to the Synod's confession; the practical realities of mission deployment are also genuine. The Board for International Mission's perspective deserves a careful hearing alongside the concerns expressed in the overture.
- **International schools (Ov. 2-07).** The 60th anniversary of LCMS international schools in Asia is a genuine cause for thanksgiving. The committee should be aware, however, that the situation with Hong Kong International School and its association continues to develop and includes matters before LCMS Legal. The resolutions should celebrate the international school's work without entering into that pending matter.

Committee 3: Mercy

Chair: John Pingel; Vice-Chair: Kevin Wilson

This committee's work touches both mercy outward — into the world the risen Christ still loves — and mercy inward — toward the workers and families who pour themselves out for His sake among us. With eight overtures before it, the committee's work is more measured in volume than several others, but no less weighty.

A pause to give thanks

Before turning to specific resolutions, this committee will help us take a moment in convention to give thanks for two decades of mercy work — from Project 24 and its child-sponsorship program, to relief efforts following the 2004 Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, through a partnership with a Lutheran school in South Africa, to the development of the Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) volunteer network, to the countless church workers supported through Soldiers and Veterans of the Cross, through the millions of dollars granted to support pro-life efforts, and in a hundred other places where the Synod has been quietly faithful. We do not list these labors as accomplishments; we count them as evidence that the risen Christ has used the LCMS far beyond what we deserved or could have engineered. To Him be the glory.

Toward strong resolutions

- **Adoption and foster care (Ov. 3-01).** The overture rightly commends the Recognized Service Organizations (RSO) that provide adoption and foster-care services. We commend the committee to add concrete data regarding the number of LCMS RSOs currently providing adoption and foster care, and the number of RSOs that have either voluntarily withdrawn or have had status removed in recent years. The recent reduction in RSOs providing adoption and foster care services make our remaining RSOs that continue to provide these critical services more important, not less.
- **Life Ministry (Ov. 3-02).** The Synod's Life Ministry, working with congregations and supported through the Million Dollar Life Match, has assisted approximately 640,000 mothers and babies in the last triennium (it was later clarified that this was for the period 2022–2026). That is an astonishing fruit of mercy. The committee may wish to ensure the resolution gives appropriate recognition to what is already being done by the Office of the President and the Office of

National Mission, including participation in state life marches and the March for Life in Washington, D.C., and the broad participation in pro-life efforts across the Synod, before encouraging additional civic and ecumenical engagement.

- **Disaster Response (Ov. 3-03).** This is an excellent overture, but the committee can strengthen it by including concrete data regarding the response to recent disasters, volunteer participation, volunteer service hours given and financial assistance provided. The third-from-last resolve calls for every district to appoint a district disaster response coordinator; the committee should identify which districts already have a coordinator and which do not and share those facts. Mention of partner organizations like Lutheran Church Charities and Orphan Grain Train will further strengthen the resolution.
- **Human care and our immigrant neighbors (Ov. 3-04).** The overture references our immigrant and refugee neighbors three times, making care for our immigrant neighbors a subtle subtheme. We commend a two-kingdoms framework to this matter: upholding the Christian citizen's vocational duty to support orderly immigration and the rule of law, while never forgetting the vocational call of mercy toward every neighbor God places before us in need, regardless of legal status. The Synod's mercy footprint is enormous, including Recognized Service Organizations, congregational ministries and partnership efforts, and the resolution will be stronger for naming that breadth.
- **District immigration commission (Ov. 3-05).** This overture primarily addresses district structure rather than Synod action, which makes it unusual to be taken up by the Synod convention. The committee should be aware that Lutheran Social Services of New York, mentioned in the overture, is currently in the RSO renewal process, with matters relating to its earlier board composition and policy stance being in active dialogue with our office and the Atlantic District. Throughout these discussions and the renewal process, the Synod's standards remain firm and clear.
- **Worker wellness (Ov. 3-06).** This is a strong overture and aligns well with the strategic plan distributed to district presidents. The fifth whereas notes that approximately 20% of rostered workers are not enrolled in Concordia Plans; this is a real concern the resolution can helpfully address. Kevin Herweck, Concordia Plans (CPS) president, can provide useful data and talking points regarding the complex nature of this issue and available CPS resources. The committee may also wish to highlight the Synod's financial support of DOXOLOGY retreats, Shepherd's Canyon Retreat and Soldiers of the Cross, as many within the Synod are unaware of the extent to which these ministries are being supported.
- **Telehealth counseling (Ov. 03-07).** This overture addresses a real and growing need. The committee should be aware of state-by-state licensing complexities for cross-state telehealth providers. The resolution should encourage development of these services with these legal and regulatory realities in view.
- **Leadership and worker wellness (Ov. 3-08).** The overture correctly identifies that the term "leadership" carries different meanings in various settings (business, church, etc.). We encourage the committee to consider what the growing body of research into effective leadership can contribute to our support of the Office of the Holy Ministry. Leadership is one aspect of wellness, albeit an important one.

- **Mental health (Report R60).** The CTCR’s end-of-life document (Report R62.1) and the Mental Health Task Force report (Report R60) are both exceptional resources speaking into the actual situations people are facing in daily life. We commend the committee to draft a resolution adopting the key recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force report (Report R60) and warmly commend the end-of-life document to pastors, congregations and Lutheran health care workers.

Committee 4: Life Together

Chair: Christopher Esget; Vice-Chair: Lucas Woodford; Primary Staff: Rick Serina

This committee carries a substantial overture load that clusters helpfully into seven groupings: mission emphasis and priorities; race and Christian Nationalism; the question of a new hymnal; worship practices and orders of service; Recognized Service Organizations; artificial intelligence and online technology; and the overtures concerning Charlie Kirk. Presenting eight to 10 resolutions to the assembly, supplemented by appropriate use of the Consent Calendar, is a reasonable goal.

Mission emphasis and priorities (Ovs. 4-01 through 4-12)

The Boards for National and International Mission have jointly proposed a renewed mission and ministry emphasis under the theme “Tell the Next Generation,” supported by the convention offering and a \$500,000 challenge grant. We commend this work. A note for the committee’s precision: the term used in the bylaws is “mission and ministry emphases” (in the plural). Additionally, the term “mission priorities” does not appear in the Bylaws as such. The plural form provides flexibility that the body has historically valued. The committee may wish to follow the BNM/BIM joint recommendation closely. If “Tell the Next Generation” is adopted as the emphasis through Ov. 4-02, then Ov. 4-01, which sunsets prior emphases, could be turned into a resolution and placed on the Consent Calendar. We recommend the committee make use of the helpful list in the first whereas of Ov. 4-11 of relevant bylaw provisions on this issue.

Race, Christian Nationalism and Antisemitism (Ovs. 4-13 through 4-22)

This grouping contains genuinely important material the Synod must address with both clarity and pastoral care. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has indicated a willingness to take up a written treatment of Christian Nationalism; we commend the CTCR for their anticipated work on this subject. We suggest the committee combine the strongest material from the Michigan, Rocky Mountain and other district overtures into a unified resolution that: (a) condemns racism, antisemitism and the specific aberrations associated with “Christian Nationalism,” especially in its more extreme online expressions; (b) directs the CTCR to elaborate in a forthcoming document; and (c) references Luther’s unfortunate later writings about the Jewish people, which the Synod has previously addressed in convention (1983 Res. 1-20 and Res. 3-09). Material best suited for encouragement or reaffirmation, and unlikely to generate controversy or significant debate, may be appropriate for the Consent Calendar. The concern raised in Ov. 4-17, however, deserves a substantive response, rather than omnibus disposition.

Worship and hymnal questions (Ovs. 4-23 through 4-31)

Regarding the question of beginning plans for the development of a new hymnal or a hymnal supplement as called for in Ov. 4-24

and Ov. 4-25, the committee is commended to carefully consider this matter, seeking consultation with Chief Financial Officer Nathan Haak and other subject matter experts to determine the best course forward to address the availability of new music not currently in Lutheran Service Book (LSB). Ovs. 4-23, 4-24 and 4-25 could be consolidated into a single resolution, particularly if proposed bylaw changes in Ov. 4-23 are included. We commend these proposed bylaw changes to the committee’s careful consideration as they would reestablish the Commission on Worship, which is the natural place for work on a new hymnal to be coordinated, and provide direction for the development, adoption, and revision of agenda and hymnbooks adopted by the Synod in convention. Ov. 4-26 brings concerns regarding the worship materials used at the National Youth Gathering (NYG), concerning which the committee is commended to consult Rev. Sean Daenzer, director of LCMS Worship, for current information regarding NYG worship materials and plans. Regarding (Ov. 4-29) challenging some reverences of Holy Communion and Baptism, 2016 Res. 4-04A remains the Synod’s clear and irenic statement appealing, in evangelical freedom to the congregations, to retain the historic order of the Divine Service. The committee may wish to direct district presidents to engage congregations not currently using the hymnal, not in a spirit of policing, but of brotherly conversation about what the Synod has confessed together. The first resolve of Ov. 4-29 contains a few factual and liturgical inaccuracies that the committee will want to address.

Recognized Service Organizations (Ov. 4-32 through 4-35)

Over the past five years, 115 organizations have been granted RSO status; in the same period, 77 have been terminated, denied or withdrawn. Of those 77, 49 organizations did not represent LCMS doctrine and practice adequately and RSO status was ended. It is important the committee understand that reviewing new RSO applications and the renewal of current RSOs is not a simple paperwork process along with a quick on-site visit or phone call. Rather, it is complex work dealing with multiple stakeholders, various organizational structures, and a variety of unique situations and contexts. This work is best done through ongoing relationships and in-person dialogue that is respectful of all parties resulting in working together toward a common mission. We commend a resolution that affirms the work done, encourages continued rigor, and gives thanks for the 326 RSOs currently faithfully extending the Synod’s mercy, witness and educational mission.

Online technology and artificial intelligence

Report R62.6, the CTCR’s study document *Online Technology in the Church: Study Materials* (2024), is assigned to this committee for consideration. We strongly recommend this document to congregations and pastors, especially its guidance on appropriate and inappropriate uses of digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI). The *Workbook* preface notes the concerns of AI in overture composition in this convention cycle. A well-drafted resolution could help congregations and pastors to carefully consider the benefits and challenges with the use of this technology in both communications and teaching in our schools and congregations.

Overtures concerning Charlie Kirk (Ovs. 4-53 through 4-55)

Three overtures seek Synod recognition or commendation of Charles James Kirk as a faithful Christian witness. The Synod has not historically adjudicated the personal faith of public figures from the convention floor, and we are reluctant to begin that practice now.

However, we understand there is a valid pastoral concern beneath these overtures — a desire to honor Christian public witness in our time — that may better be served by a resolution thanking God for all those, named and unnamed, whose Christian witness in the public square has come at personal cost. We commend that approach to the committee’s prayerful consideration.

Other matters before the committee

The Koinonia Project, developed from previous convention-adopted resolutions calling for greater harmony throughout the Synod, focused on and grounded in the concordia of the Augsburg Confession, has been a useful initiative to foster theological discussions to strengthen our joint witness and bring greater unity to our doctrine and practice. This project is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to theological discussions, but is detailed in what it means, the elements to include, following the framework of the Formula of Concord with its affirmations and rejections. We encourage the committee to consider encouragement of renewed use of the Koinonia Project as originally defined and described. (See lcms.org/about/leadership/president/koinonia-project)

Committee 5: Theology and Church Relations

Chair: Brian Saunders; Vice-Chair: Ryan Wendt; Primary Staff: Joel Lehenbauer and Jonathan Shaw

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has been remarkably productive during this triennium. It has published 13 documents and opinions, which are commended to this committee. Church Relations (CR) has engaged most of the 103 LCMS sister, associate and other churches, increasing its visitations, fellowship dialogues, theological engagements, regional fora and theological education. A target of approximately 12 resolutions from this committee — or fewer — will allow each resolution to be substantial and well-considered. Forty-four overtures are before the committee, including nine concerning relations with sister churches, one proposing fellowship recognition with the Evangelical Christian Lutheran Church of Bolivia (ICEL), one supporting future recognition of fellowship with Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A), and seven raising concerns regarding ecclesiastical relations.

New fellowship recognition

- **ICEL (Ov. 5-01).** Fellowship dialogue with the ICEL has proceeded exceptionally well. The CTCR has completed its work, the bylaw process has been followed, and convention ratification is the appropriate and joyful next step.
- **LM-A (Ov. 5-02).** As noted under Committee 2, fellowship recognition is being deferred pending adoption of LM-A’s constitution in August 2026. We recommend the committee consider drafting a resolution expressing the theological agreement we share and the Synod’s commitment to formally ratify fellowship upon LM-A’s adoption of their constitution. A recommended resolution expresses theological agreement and the Synod’s commitment to ratify fellowship upon LM-A’s adoption of its constitution.

Concerns about sister churches (Ovs. 5-03 through 5-09)

- **SELK (Siberia) (Ovs. 5-03 through 5-05).** LCMS CR has held three theological dialogues with SELK leadership on the questions of apostolic succession “of the hand” and episcopacy. These are genuine concerns, but SELK leadership has apologized for earlier offenses. This is deeply appreciated. We will move forward in the Spirit of Christ with our dear brothers and sisters. Dr. Jonathan Shaw can provide context and more details.

- **ELCK (Kenya) and the LWF (Ov. 5-06).** The ELCK has officially withdrawn from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) by concurrent unanimous votes of the ELCK Church Council (April 9, 2026) and its General Assembly (April 10, 2026). The ELCK has notified the LWF General Secretary of its withdrawal. We praise God for the ELCK’s act of confessional conviction. We recommend the committee consult with Dr. Shaw, director of Church Relations in the Office of the President, closely on this matter.
- **ELCL (Latvia) (Ov. 5-07).** LCMS CR has conducted extensive theological discussions with the ELCL on the doctrine and practice of church fellowship. Discussions remain cordial and hopeful. Dr. Shaw can provide context and more details.
- **SELK (Germany) (Ov. 5-08).** The Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche currently has a vocal minority advocating women’s ordination and two women serving in a Pfarreferentin role with preaching permitted in the absence of a pastor. Encouraging developments include the most recent SELK conference soundly rejecting women’s ordination and the SELK seminary calling another confessional Lutheran professor. Drs. Shaw and Lehenbauer can provide context and more details.
- **AALC (USA) (Ov. 5-09).** A March 2025 AALC-LCMS discussion was positive and very cordial. There were a couple of outstanding issues. One involved a case of a pastor removed for cause who joined the AALC roster. We view the matter differently. Those present at this meeting (Harrison, Lange, Shaw, Lehenbauer, Frese, Serina and Krikava) are all quite dumbfounded at recent AALC assertions. We’ll do our best to “Back up and Push” as the old bluegrass song says. Pray for us. God works good through trials and crosses, and we thought and still hope we are on the verge of a better relationship.
- **LWF departures.** Significant work has been done with LCMS sister churches still in the LWF. Since the 2023 LCMS convention resolution that urged withdrawal from the LWF, two LCMS sister churches (ELCG [Ghana] and ELCK [Kenya]) have left the LWF, and others are in the process of leaving. LCMS CR continues theological education and patient engagement in this matter.
- **ELS and WELS conversations.** For the first time in over six decades, an LCMS president has been welcomed in convention by both the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Since 2012, leaders of the ELS, WELS and LCMS have met annually for joyful conversations focused on understanding nuanced doctrinal distinctions within their shared theological heritage. An ELS-WELS-LCMS free conference is planned for June 2027.

Closed Communion (Ovs. 5-16 through 5-18)

The Synod has addressed the practice of closed Communion in successive conventions, with increasingly strong support from the voting delegates (83% in 2019, 89% in 2023). This trajectory is both encouraging and worthy of reinforcing. We commend a resolution referencing the many CTCR reports on the Lord’s Supper that warmly and biblically articulates closed Communion as the loving and faithful practice it is.

Women as lectors and related matters (Ovs. 5-26 through 5-30)

Four overtures address whether women may serve as lectors or readers of Scripture in worship. This has been addressed in CTCR Report R62.8, *Unity in Doctrine, Uniformity and Variety in Practice*, and R62.11, which is the CTCR response to the president's question on lay reading of sermons and conduct of worship in the absence of a pastor. We urge the committee to use these documents as the primary basis for any resolution in this area. Currently, the CTCR's 1989 report on women in the church recommends against lay reading of the Scriptures in the Divine Service, while the Synod has not, so far as I know, forbidden the practice. We urge thoughtfulness and care on these issues.

Other significant matters

- **Sister churches: a recommended terminology change.** LCMS Church Relations, in coordination with the staff of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, has requested that the *Handbook's* nomenclature for church bodies in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod be changed from "partner church" to "sister church." The change is terminological rather than substantive, and it will bring helpful clarity to a real source of confusion in our ecumenical relationships, including occasional misunderstandings of fellowship status. There are 24 occurrences of "partner church" or "partner churches" in the current *Handbook*, with two additional occurrences of "partners" in Bylaw 6.2.2 that warrant clarification. We recommend that the committee draft a resolution making these changes and direct the committee to consult with Dr. Jonathan Shaw, director of Church Relations, on the particulars.
- **Clarifying Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) on fellowship recognition.** LCMS Church Relations, in coordination with the staff of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, has identified two phrases in Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) that could mislead the reader on matters of real theological consequence: the threefold use of "formal fellowship" (which implies an informal fellowship category the Synod does not recognize), and the threefold reference to "the approval of the commission" (which suggests the CTCR approves fellowship, when in fact it recommends recognition to the Synod). The proposed changes are terminological rather than substantive but serve our common confession of what church fellowship is and how the Synod comes to recognize it. We recommend that the committee draft a resolution making these changes. We also urge the committee to consult with Dr. Jonathan Shaw, director of Church Relations, on the particulars.
- **Documenting the director of Church Relations in the Bylaws.** An overture (Ov. 5-42) is before the committee to amend Bylaw 3.3.1.1.2 (c) to document in our governing documents what has been the practical reality of the Synod's ecumenical work since 2008: that the president's director of Church Relations ordinarily serves as his representative for ecclesiastical relations with other church bodies. The amendment is descriptive rather than substantive and preserves the president's full discretion as the Synod's chief ecumenical officer. We commend the matter to the committee's consideration and urge the committee to consult with Dr. Jonathan Shaw on the particulars and on the work of the Office of Church Relations, which today supports our engagement with 104 church bodies worldwide.
- **Eternal functional subordination (Ov. 5-37).** This is a genuine theological discussion presently occurring in international Lutheran circles. We recommend a resolution or referral to the CTCR for substantive study and report.
- **Six-day creation (Ov. 5-10), eschatology (Ov. 5-15), in vitro (Ovs. 5-19 through 5-21) and organ donation (Ov. 5-23).** The Synod has spoken to several of these matters in previous conventions; others involve developing information and resources, encouraging actions and further study and prayerful consideration of medical and pastoral situations. Where the Synod's position is well established, a brief resolution reaffirming that position or an Omnibus B referral is likely sufficient. Where there is no such position, proposing further study may be an appropriate path for the committee to consider.
- **Women's suffrage in the church (Ovs. 5-31 through 5-34).** The Synod has spoken to this matter repeatedly over many decades. We commend the committee to consider omnibus referral rather than reopening a settled question on the convention floor, which would consume time and energy with little prospect of new understanding.
- **COVID-19 response (Ovs. 5-24 and 5-25).** Some aspects of the church's response to the pandemic were handled imperfectly; others were handled well under extraordinary circumstances. A sweeping convention resolution of self-condemnation is, in our judgment, neither historically accurate nor pastorally fruitful. We commend the committee to consider whether a narrower, more measured statement might better serve the Synod — or whether the matter is best left to the Lord's grace and the wisdom He continues to teach us through hindsight. "We are beggars: This is true."
- **Declaration concerning the Center for Missional and Pastoral Leadership (Ovs. 5-38 and 5-39).** A formal declaration of an organization as a "heterodox tract and mission society" from the convention floor is a high-threshold action requiring careful, sustained theological review. As this is an ecclesiastical supervision issue, we recommend referral to the president of the Synod and the Council of Presidents for study and discussion. We further encourage the committee to consult with the secretary of the Synod regarding the definition of "heterodox tract and mission society."
- **CTCR documents broadly.** Reports R62.1 through R62.13 represent extraordinary work. We recommend the committee consider how it might apply, cite or commend these documents in its resolutions or to draft a resolution commending them collectively to the body, with specific resolves naming the most pastorally urgent for congregational and pastoral study — particularly R62.9 *Proper Administration of the Lord's Supper*, R62.10 *Deacons, Evangelists and the Office of the Holy Ministry in the New Testament*, R62.7 *A Theology and Philosophy of Lutheran Education*, and R62.11 *President of Synod Request for Opinion on Lay Reading of Sermon and Conduct of Worship in the Absence of a Pastor*.

Committee 6: Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

Chair: Scott Murray; Vice-Chair: John Hill; Primary Staff: James Banek

This is the most heavily loaded committee with 88 overtures clustering into approximately 24 sub-topics. The committee's task

is genuinely demanding, and we are confident in the chair and vice-chair God has given the Synod for this work. We recommend the committee focus on five or six core topics, proposing resolutions on those topics that can win a strong two-thirds majority on the convention floor. Resolutions adopted at high percentages, with a super majority, will serve the Synod's unity in ways that narrowly divided resolutions cannot.

The fundamental conviction undergirding this report's counsel is that residential seminary formation at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, remains the primary and preferred path to the Office of the Holy Ministry in our Synod, as stated clearly in previous Synod resolutions. Both seminaries are financially healthy, theologically sound and in increasingly fruitful partnership with our international mission work. We have also been blessed by Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) and other alternate-route pastors serving in contexts where residential graduates have not been available. Both convictions can be held together. The challenge is articulating the proper relationship between them in a way that strengthens, rather than fractures, our common life together.

Online and competency-based M.Div. proposals (Ovs. 6-25 through 6-44)

Twenty overtures cluster in this area. We commend the committee's careful theological reflection. Several overtures propose what is functionally a model of theological conferences renamed as "Koinonia"; the Koinonia Project as originally established was about theological study, not pastoral formation reform. The processes outlined in several of these overtures are unwieldy and would not, in our judgment, serve the Synod well. Competency-based M.Div. approaches, well-intentioned as they are, raise serious concerns about the formational dimension of seminary education that cannot be reduced to demonstrated competency. We commend the committee to draft a resolution that warmly affirms residential seminary education as the Synod's primary path while acknowledging the genuine pastoral need in some contexts that these conversations seek to address.

Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program (Ovs. 6-51 through 6-63)

Thirteen overtures address SMP admission, appropriate uses and supervision. 2013 Res. 5-04B resolved that "district presidents not approve specific ministry sites which could reasonably be expected to support a general pastor or sites where a minister of religion—commissioned could fulfill the duties." That 2013 resolution passed with an 82% majority and affirmed residential seminary education as the "premier" path. This remains the Synod's posture. Concordia Seminary reports that, at the current rate of matriculation, by 2050 over half of its graduates will be SMP. Furthermore, SMP candidates have received no education in Greek and complete only about one-third of the M.Div. coursework. We commend the committee to chart a realistic course — one that affirms SMP's legitimate role, strengthens supervision and operationalizes the spirit of 2013 Res. 5-04B without freezing or unraveling the SMP program.

The Pastoral Formation Committee (PFC) (Ovs. 6-64 through 6-71)

Eight overtures address the PFC — its merits, composition, charge and future. The PFC has done good work and represents the current iteration of what was historically the Board for Pastoral Education and, before recent years, the SMP committee. Ov. 6-69's second whereas candidly acknowledges that "the current system of graduate level residential training ... continues to struggle to

provide both the sorts and the numbers of pastors that the congregations of the Synod desire." This is honest, but it also reveals the underlying tension: Some advocate for not merely more pastors, but a different "kind" of pastoral formation.

Routes to ordination outside Synod-approved pathways (Ovs. 6-14 through 6-24)

Eleven overtures address irregular routes to ordination currently operating in some districts and congregations. Constitution Article III paragraphs 1 and 3, and Article VI on unionism, are the relevant confessional and constitutional anchors. We note with interest that no overture before the convention supports the current irregular routes directly — a meaningful signal of where the Synod's conscience rests. The challenge is operational: Who knows precisely which congregations are sending men through these routes, and how should the Synod respond? A definition from the secretary of the Synod of what constitutes a violation of the Constitution's service requirements would be helpful. We commend the committee to draft a resolution that, in clear and unambiguous terms, calls upon districts and congregations to honor the Synod's established pathways while also inviting brothers and sisters with genuine concerns about access to pastoral care for their congregations to bring those concerns through proper channels for our common consideration and response.

Other matters

- **Pastoral colloquy bylaws.** We commend Ov. 6-11 from the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, which would reinsert, back into Synod Bylaws, much that was in the Bylaws for some 60 years but was then transferred from the Bylaws into policy in 2010. This restoration would provide for greater stability and accessibility of colloquy requirements, as explained in the whereases.
- **Assignment of initial calls for pastors.** Synod Bylaws designate the Council of Presidents (COP) as the Board of Assignments (2.5.2, etc.). The Bylaws also speak of seminary "placement officers" (2.9.2 [a]) and "placement policies" (3.10.5.7.10 [h]). In recent years, discussion has arisen regarding the complementary roles of the COP and seminary placement offices in the assignment of first calls for pastors. We suggest that Floor Committee 6 consider whether and how it might assist in bringing clarity to the question.
- **Set Apart to Serve.** Enrollment numbers at our universities and seminaries are climbing. All 35 districts have adopted *Set Apart to Serve*. We commend a resolution of thanksgiving and continued encouragement drawing on Ovs. 6-76, 6-77 and 6-78.
- **Worker wellness in the ministerium.** We recommend coordinating with Floor Committee 3 on Mercy on these matters. Ovs. 6-79 (support for bi-vocational and co-vocational pastors), 6-82 and 6-83 (sabbatical policies for church workers) acknowledge concrete matters worthy of the committee's attention.
- **Report R62.10 (Deacons, Evangelists and the OHM).** This CTCR document provides the proper theological framework for understanding the breadth of ministries in the New Testament and their relationship to the pastoral office. We commend the committee to ground any resolution touching on diaconal or evangelist roles outlined in this document.

Committee 7: University Education

Chair: Brady Finnem; Vice-Chair: Rick Stuckwisch; Primary Staff: Jamison Hardy

The past decade brought real challenges to the Concordia University System (CUS). Ambiguity and advocacy of views contrary to Scripture had gained footholds at several institutions, and the reduction of Concordia University Ann Arbor and now the sale of the south campus is painful. The 2023 governance reform, developed in close partnership with the university presidents, has begun to bear good fruit. We are grateful for the leadership of the Concordia University System (CUS) Board, the university presidents, and the dedicated regents and faculty across our institutions. With 29 overtures concentrated in three main areas — prior approval (11), changing the CUS to a commission (3), and defining Lutheran identity (4) — the committee's focus is clear.

The CUS structure question (Ovs. 7-01 through 7-03)

Ov. 7-01 proposes converting the CUS into the Commission for University Education. The university presidents all would like more time to consider this issue. The 2023 governance structure is less than three years old and is showing positive results. We commend the committee to refer this matter to the CUS Board and the LCMS Board of Directors for careful study over the next triennium, with a recommendation to the 2029 convention, if appropriate. Stability serves our universities now. The parties concerned will not be shy about legal and other concerns on both sides of the issue.

Lutheran identity at our universities (Ovs. 7-04 through 7-07)

These overtures touch the heart of the matter. We commend the committee to draw on 2016 Res. 4-04A (which named the historic order for Divine Service and called for its retention) and the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcome Standards (LIMOS) as developed by the CUS and used in the visitation process. We urge the committee to strengthen the LIMOS by adding clear scriptural and confessional references and definitions where it is most needed. Regarding Ov. 7-06 concerning worship practices at CUS schools: The argument that university chapel practices should mirror the diversity of practice across the Synod is not theologically sound; the universities should teach and demonstrate the best of *Book of Concord* Lutheran practice, which includes broad freedom. They are formative institutions, not merely representative ones.

The prior approval process (Ovs. 7-14 through 7-24)

The prior approval process has a long history, and 11 overtures engage this important process. We commend the committee to draft a resolution that: recognizes the significant benefits the prior approval process has produced (including much stronger theological faculties); explains the process clearly for the body's understanding; notes that the CUS has published the process on its website; and acknowledges that the panel may be as transparent with candidates as is responsibly possible. The Office of the President's ecclesiastical supervision responsibility is the proper anchor for this process and should be affirmed. It is the president of the Synod who has ecclesiastical supervision of the faculties.

Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor (CUWAA)

We have provided an account of the Ann Arbor situation in Part 1 of the President's Report. Here let me just assert that there are basically two parties in the conflict. They pretty much agreed on the financial challenge that CUW and the AA campus faced. One party was convinced that given time the programs of the newer north campus in Ann Arbor would grow to cover the costs incurred largely

at the south campus. The other party believed that after a decade of effort, yearly deficits were beginning to jeopardize the entire CUWAA operation. The pain in the Michigan District is real. We've been working at this with disappointed results for a year and a half. The Synod does not control what a board of regents is given to do by the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws. Both parties are committee to the north campus. We commend a pastoral resolution — developed in conversation with the LCMS Board of Directors and the CUS — that gives thanks for Ann Arbor's history, acknowledges the grief of its closure, affirms the integrity of those who labored over the decision, expresses gratitude for the Michigan District's continued engagement, and asks for the Lord's healing. Ovs. 7-27, 7-28 and 7-29 may be folded into such a resolution. The third resolve of Ov. 7-11 calling for full transparency of any course of action being considered is well-intentioned but raises real legal complexities about what an institution under financial pressure can and cannot share. It would be appropriate to refer this overture to the CUS Board and the LCMS Board of Directors. Michigan District President David Davis' recent message urging forgiveness should be commended. The hope of future church work programs would be a welcome addition to the resolution. God help us all.

Other matters

- **Encouragement of financial support for the CUS (Ov. 7-08).** This overture is a good example of a matter that is to be supported by a large majority of voting delegates, and thus it is a good candidate for the Consent Calendar. The committee may consult with Chief Financial Officer Nathan Haak and LCMS Mission Advancement on the phrasing of the second-to-last resolve regarding where financial support can be best directed.
- **Bylaw 3.6.6.1 amendment (Ov. 7-09).** The overture proposes that the CUS Board — rather than the convention — be empowered to create, revise or discontinue commissioned ministry programs of study. The CUS argument (that three-year convention cycles are too slow for university adaptation) is real; the concern (that major commissioned ministry decisions could occur without convention voice) is also real. Reference to the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) Opinion 25-3072 on the Director of Family Life Ministry is relevant. The committee may wish to identify a balanced clarification.
- **Luther Classical College (LCC) (Ov. 7-25).** LCC is an independent institution with a sincere confessional commitment. I like what they are trying to do. The Synod has bylaws governing the process by which a new college may come into the LCMS. The universities have gone through a great deal of change and increased accountability across the board. The CUS visitations of our Concordias are rigorous. There is concern that the benefits of Synod recognition without full Synod accountability (Synod election of regents, etc.) is problematic. I urge the floor committee to hear all sides on the issue before making any firm decisions. Referral to the LCMS Board of Directors and the CUS is an option. Lord have mercy upon us.
- **Counselor colloquy (Ov. 7-12).** Significant work remains before a Director of Family Life Ministry (DFLM) colloquy program can be ready to receive applicants; there are CCM and CUS considerations regarding whether the proper path is a new commissioned ministry category rather than use of the DFLM track. Referral to the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry and the CUS is recommended.

- **CUNE regent election change (Ov. 7-13).** Any proposed resolution that removes Synod election authority from a board of regents warrants particular caution. We recommend the committee consult with the CCM and the secretary of the Synod on this matter.
- **Thanksgiving for the successful implementation of a new Concordia University System governance model.** We recommend that the committee consider a resolution of thanksgiving for the work of both the 2019 and 2023 Floor Committee 7 that successfully set in motion the outstanding work, goodwill, collaboration and partnership demonstrated in this triennium by the university presidents, leadership, faculty and students, the CUS staff and board of directors, and many others involved in all the blessings that have come from this effort.

Committee 8: Finance

Chair: Roger Paavola; Vice-Chair: James Rockey; Primary Staff: Nathan Haak

The Synod is, by God's gracious provision, in a financial position as healthy as we have known in some 40 years. Approximately 78 cents of every dollar contributed goes directly to program ministry efforts. The annual unrestricted operating support from district plates to Synod, Inc. totals about \$12 million. These are not vanity figures; they reflect the generosity of the Synod's people and the careful stewardship of those managing these resources. Eighteen overtures cluster into four larger topics and five standalone matters.

Concordia Plan Services authority (Ovs. 8-01 and 8-02)

Ov. 8-01, submitted by the Concordia Plan Services Board of Directors, is more expansive than Ov. 8-02, submitted by the LCMS Board of Directors. The latter is narrowly focused on the new Concordia Risk Solutions entity providing property and casualty insurance services. We support adding risk management to CPS's authority. The broader scope of Ov. 8-01, with its proposed amendment to Bylaw 3.7.1.2 wording to include "but not limited to" language, raises legitimate legal questions. We recommend the committee consult with the secretary of the Synod or the CCM and with LCMS Legal on the implications of the proposed bylaw change.

CPS services beyond LCMS membership (Ovs. 8-04 and 8-05)

Two overtures from district boards of directors propose that CPS be empowered to offer services to non-LCMS Lutheran bodies. The argument from financial stability is real. The concern about pressure to add non-LCMS members to the CPS Board of Directors is also real. The Council of Presidents has discussed the current CPS exit fees and the broader question of long-term sustainability of the plan. Bylaw 3.7.1.1(f) allows for national inter-Lutheran entities to be "employers" under CPS. Interestingly, neither overture proposes bylaw language. We recommend the committee refer the matter to the LCMS Board of Directors.

Free access to Concordia Publishing House (CPH) resources (Ovs. 8-09 through 8-14)

Six overtures address access to CPH resources. The first four are largely shared text concerning the new edition of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. Ov. 8-12 is the most substantive of the four, acknowledging CPH's recent action in placing the *Book of Concord* text on its website. Ovs. 8-13 and 8-14 are broader, with

mission-work implications. The committee should note the seventh whereas of Ov. 8-13 makes an unsupported assertion about copyright costs discouraging missionary translation; that assertion warrants substantiation before being included in a resolution. We commend the committee to turn these overtures around by asking CPH to respond directly with current facts about mission accessibility, low-cost availability of Rev. Peter Bender's materials, the Office of the President's subsidy of CPH shipping for missionaries, and CPH's overall financial sustainability. A resolution that warmly commends CPH for its faithful stewardship and continues to invite continued mission accessibility is the right path.

LCMS, Inc. legal expense reporting (Ovs. 8-16 through 8-18)

Three overtures address transparency around legal costs related to the HotChalk lawsuit, the Concordia University Texas (CTX) matter, and the Hong Kong International School (HKIS) association situation. The committee must consult with LCMS Legal Counsel prior to addressing these matters. The committee may determine, with legal counsel, additional reporting may be appropriate. However, legal limits on what can be shared during ongoing litigation must be understood. We note that none of the overtures acknowledges the other side of these legal matters: the amount HotChalk sued the LCMS for, the substantial value of CTX campus property owned by the Synod's congregations, or the current situation at HKIS. Such financial facts require accompanying context to be edifying rather than divisive. We commend the committee to weigh whether the intent is to inform the body or to create the impression of mismanagement; the resolution should serve the former, not the latter.

Other matters

- **Joint Seminary Fund and seminary support.** The Synod has consistently provided millions of dollars per triennium in support of our two seminaries. A resolution recognizing the Synod's record of financial support to the seminaries, the critical importance of this continued partnership, and commending the Joint Seminary Fund will serve the Synod well. Currently, each seminary receives about \$1.5 million per year in support from the Synod.
- **LCMS Foundation and Lutheran Church Extension Fund.** Both the LCMS Foundation and Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) continue to provide outstanding service. A resolution warmly commending their work and encouraging congregational and individual use of their financial services and tools fits the body's ongoing recognition of these blessings.

Committee 9: Structure and Administration

Chair: Justin Panzer; Vice-Chair: Ben Ball; Primary Staff: Nathan Haak

The 52 overtures before this committee divide helpfully into three categories: 14 from the Synod's major boards (five from the Commission on Handbook, four from the LCMS Board of Directors, four from LCEF and one from the LCMS Foundation); 29 from districts, congregations and individuals; and a small number that, in our staff's candid assessment, are unlikely to advance. The committee's primary task is to attend to the substantive structural work proposed by the Synod's standing boards while gently and appropriately handling the remainder.

From the Board of Directors and other Synod boards

- **Greater authority for the mission boards (Ov. 9-11).** The Synod Board of Directors proposes granting the Boards for National and International Mission greater supervisory authority. This represents, in part, a reduction in the authority of the Office of the President. We support this direction. Our mission boards should have the tools they need to do their work effectively, including the necessary scope of authority over the work entrusted to them.
- **Structure and Administration (Ov. 9-06 and Ov. 9-08).** Overture 9-06, submitted jointly by the LCMS Board of Directors, LCEF, Concordia Plans/Concordia Plan Services, the LCMS Foundation, and the Pacific Southwest District, proposes to unify in Bylaw section 1.5 the requirements governing corporate entities created or used by Synod and its agencies, retiring the older guidance of 1981 Res. 5-07 and introducing a taxonomy of "Instrumental Entities" — including new Special Purpose and Passive Investment Entities — that would let the Board of Directors authorize real-estate redevelopment and investment vehicles while safeguarding the "property of the Synod." Because it addresses the same field as Ov. 9-08 (clarifying that LCEF may provide real estate evaluation and redevelopment services), the committee is asked to confirm with the CCM how the two relate before recommending action.
- **Chief operating officer (COO) position (Ov. 9-09) and chief mission officer (CMO) responsibilities (Ov. 9-10).** These overtures propose bylaw changes to clarify and streamline the chief executive positions — consolidating the chief administrative officer (CAO) and chief financial officer (CFO) positions into the chief operating officer (COO) position — responsible to assist the LCMS Board of Directors in carrying out its responsibilities, along with redefining the responsibilities of the chief mission officer. These deserve careful committee attention but are not anticipated to generate significant controversy.
- **LCEF governance (Ovs. 9-08, 9-15, 9-16, 9-47).** These overtures address several LCEF matters including real estate services authority, board composition (Synod-elected versus appointed), thresholds for changes to governing documents, and the board member district representation. These are governance refinements brought by a critical financial partner of the Synod and deserve substantive consideration.
- **Commission on Handbook (COH) overtures (Ovs. 9-01 through 9-05).** These overtures are routine bylaw improvements that the committee can address with the COH's assistance. They may be appropriate to be placed on the Consent Calendar.

Electoral circuit parameters

The 2023 convention established a task force (2023 Res. 9-06A) to evaluate electoral circuit parameters. They have produced two substantial white papers (Reports R59.1 and R59.2). The committee may wish to draft a resolution responding to the task force's findings; directing the appropriate next steps for districts and the Council of Presidents; and, if warranted by the evidence, bringing a specific recommendation to the 2029 convention. We commend caution against premature decisions on contested elements where additional study is genuinely useful.

Restructuring proposals (Ovs. 9-12 through 9-14)

Several overtures propose various restructuring of Synod structure: combining the mission boards into one board of which four members would serve on the LCMS Board of Directors (Ov. 9-12), or in effect redoing the 2010 Synod restructuring (Ovs. 9-13 and 9-14). Major restructurings come at significant cost in convention and organizational time, organizational disruption, and employee and board morale. We commend the committee to consider whether these proposals warrant task force study rather than convention action in this triennium.

Other matters

- **Restoration of Synod president election to the convention floor (Ovs. 9-21 and 9-22).** I have no dog in this fight. If elected in 2026, I will not stand in 2029. The Synod's current process of electing the Synod president prior to convention gives every member congregation a vote in the presidential election — a meaningful broadening of the franchise that has served the body well. For a while it de-politized the conventions somewhat, but the interested parties figured out how to make broader use of technical opportunities, often for political nonsense. Voter participation in the presidential election has declined in part because small, vacant congregations tend not to participate. Reverting to convention election of the Synod president would narrow that franchise. If I chose today, I'd say bring the vote back to the convention.
- **Four-year convention cycle (Ovs. 9-42 and 9-43).** The matter of implementing a quadrennial convention cycle has been considered in several previous conventions. We offer no fresh counsel beyond reviewing past convention proceedings on this matter, consulting with the secretary of the Synod for a deeper understanding of the impact, and noting that any change would require a two-thirds constitutional majority and congregational ratification.

Committee 10: Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

Chair: Bob Beinke; Vice-Chair: Mark Chepulis; Primary Staff: Peter Lange

Approximately 90% of the matters of ecclesiastical supervision discussed with district presidents are addressed calmly and corrected without ever becoming public. Unfortunately, in this current internet age, a few do become public. That ratio is a sign of a system functioning largely as the Synod intended, with a Council of Presidents that has grown stronger and more theologically united in recent years. The remaining 10% draws attention — often amplified by online platforms that do not afford the patience and care that genuine pastoral supervision requires. With 39 overtures clustering in several distinct groupings, the committee's task is to attend to real concerns without inadvertently undermining what is working well. We encourage attention to overture numbering: Priority resolutions should carry lower numerals (e.g., 10-01 is top priority), since resolutions are typically presented numerically to the delegation.

Internet accusations, district president response and Synod president authority (nine overtures, including 10-06 through 10-10)

Six of the nine overtures in this grouping come from a single congregation and contain narratives that, in our judgment, are not consistently accurate. In particular, the fifth and sixth whereases of Ov. 10-06 and the fourth whereases of Ov. 10-08 do not align with the

actual sequence of events. The Synod president did not reverse what a district president undertook, but rather the president encouraged conversation between the parties. Within the proper bounds of ecclesiastical authority, there is real work to be done on the use of online platforms to monitor and publicize the practices of other congregations. We recommend the committee consider clarifying — without inflaming — the relationship of the Synod president to district presidents, drawing on Constitution Article XI B paragraphs 1–3, the preamble of 2016 Res. 12-01A, and CCM Opinion 16-2791. The Synod president cannot direct a district president; he can, with care, raise the question of whether a district president’s authority is being responsibly exercised.

At this stage, a sub-committee of the Council of Presidents constituted during the next triennium to address the use of online platforms in monitoring congregational practice — and to develop guidance for the council’s consideration — may serve the Synod better than proposing bylaw amendments to address the matter at this stage. We commend that approach to the committee. Ov. 10-07, which proposes establishing a new Ecclesiastical Appeals Panel, we do not recommend pursuing.

The dispute resolution process (Ovs. 10-12 through 10-16)

Part 1 of the President’s Report identified the need to revisit the Synod’s reconciliation and dispute-resolution bylaws. After living with the current bylaws for several decades, the time has come for a careful review and revision. The current process has yielded fewer official conflicts, but it often produces dissatisfying outcomes for all parties, takes too long, and has additional challenges. Five overtures address genuine problems with the current Bylaw 1.10 dispute resolution process and its frequent confusion with Bylaw 2.14, which pertains to ecclesiastical supervision and expulsion of a congregation or individuals from membership in the Synod. The two are distinct — one addresses disputes among members, the other heterodox practice — but they bleed into one another in practice. Pastors and district presidents alike often struggle to determine which applies. The requirement of the face-to-face meeting with the accuser and accused across the geographic scale of our country is also questionable for many situations. Several of these overtures call for a committee or task force to address the process. We are calling for a small task force in the next triennium charged with thoroughly studying the Bylaws, interviewing individuals involved in a dispute resolution process, and proposing bylaw amendments to the 2029 convention. Floor Committee 10’s work should make use of Ov. 10-13 and Ov. 10-15, which contain good material that can serve as a foundation to a proposed resolution. Ov. 10-14’s first resolve confuses Bylaw 1.10 and Bylaw 2.14, illustrating the very problem the overture is trying to address. One more note, if a pastor is doing something contrary to the public confession and commitments of the Synod, it should not be the duty of another pastor to take that individual into a dispute process. If verified, it should be handled by the district president by meeting with the brother, verifying the facts, and getting a clear apology and promise not to repeat. To be clear, this does happen often.

Public sin and private sin (Ov. 10-12)

The next-to-last whereas of this overture has real merit. The CTCR’s 2006 document “Public Rebuke of Public Sin” remains a valuable resource and should be referenced in any resolution work on this topic.

Prosecution of sexual misconduct (Ovs. 10-27 through 10-30)

Four overtures address the prosecution of sexual misconduct, with particular concern for whether investigations should continue after a worker has left the roster. This is a matter the Synod has been engaged with substantively since well before the 2023 convention’s Res. 10-05A, “To Speak to Spiritual Care of Victims of Sexual Misconduct by Individual Members of the Synod,” was adopted. We are committed both to care for victims and to respond appropriately to perpetrators. Each situation is uniquely complicated, and a pending civil lawsuit can constrain the Synod’s pastoral follow-up to those involved. We recommend the committee consult with LCMS Legal Counsel and Deaconess Dr. Tiffany Manor, managing director of the Office of National Mission, regarding the legal and authority questions raised with investigating individuals no longer on the roster. The Synod maintains a zero-tolerance posture regarding sexual misconduct and abuse by individual members of the Synod. The third resolve of each of these overtures is significant and deserves substantive discussion. The committee may also wish to consult with Council of Presidents members who have been deeply engaged on this matter (such as Minnesota South District President Lucas Woodford) regarding the fruit of 2023 Res. 10-05A over the past three years.

Visitation (Ov. 10-01)

This overture recognizes the importance of ecclesiastical oversight and supervision, calling for the encouragement of visitation to be conducted by the Synod president and district presidents. The Office of the President, with the assistance of internal and district staff, district presidents, and Synod vice-presidents, has conducted approximately 100 district visitations since this practice formally began in 2013 (2013 Res. 7-01A). Bylaw 4.4.4 requires a district president to visit triennially congregations within his district — an ongoing practice faithfully carried out by district presidents. Refinement and improvements to this process are welcome, and the first resolve of this overture is a good proposed action. The second and third are already taking place. The committee may wish to recast this overture as a resolution of thanksgiving and encouragement to continue this practice, including a brief history of the visitation work undertaken in recent years. The committee may wish to carefully redraft the preamble so that it is clear and succinct but still describes the importance and benefit of visitation.

Other matters

Installation of district presidents. Historically, the Synod president, or a Synod vice-president whom he designates, installs (or reinstalls) each district president at the district convention where he is (re)elected. This is understood as an extension of Bylaw 2.10.3. With 35 districts, however, this sometimes requires a great amount of communication and coordination to inform convention planners and navigate the expectations, traditions, and in some cases even policies or bylaws of 35 different districts. We encourage a simple bylaw fix to standardize the practice of district president installations. Secretary Sias is prepared to suggest language that would allow the Synod president or his designee to install at the district convention while still allowing for the transitional needs of a district when a new district president is elected. The new language could be inserted in Bylaw 4.2.

Lawsuits (Report R62.12). The CTCR opinion on lawsuits between Christians or between members and Synod institutions provides a strong basis for a resolution encouraging Christian dispute resolution consistent with 1 Corinthians 6:1–7.

Pastoral care for congregations (Ov. 10-09). We remind the committee that district presidents already have this authority to provide pastoral care for congregations affected by major disciplinary actions. This overture is a fine example of an overture for omnibus disposition to the Council of Presidents.

RSO oversight. The committee is encouraged to coordinate with Floor Committee 4 on Life Together to draft a resolution highlighting the substantive work being done with organizations engaged in obtaining or maintaining LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status. A resolution affirming continued robust standards for granting RSO status and termination will serve the Synod well.

In Closing

Brothers and sisters, we have laid before you a substantial body of counsel. These are observations and suggestions, not directives. The Synod has entrusted to you the careful work of crafting proposed resolutions that will shape our common confession and our common life for the next triennium. You are not alone in this work. The Holy Spirit, who gathered us in this Synod, who keeps us in the one true faith, and who continues to send us to the ends of the earth with the Gospel, is at work via His Word and Spirit in every committee room. Trust Him.

Two anniversaries draw nearer. In 2029, Luther's Small Catechism will be 500 years old. In 2030, the Augsburg Confession will reach the same milestone. These are not merely historical observances. They are opportunities for the Lord to renew His church through the very means He has always used: clear preaching of the Gospel, careful catechesis of the young, the Sacraments rightly administered, and the bold confession of His Word in season and out of season. We commend their preparation to your prayers and to the patient work of this and the next convention.

In the meantime, we have a convention to hold and a Synod to serve. Be kind to one another. Be patient. Hear voices that disagree with you and assume the best of their intent. Be decisive when decision is required, and humble when it is not. Remember that the brother or sister across the table from you is baptized into the same Christ as you, fed at the same altar, bound by the same Confessions, and called to the same mission. The risen Christ has placed us here together. He knows what He is doing.

Above all, let us keep our eyes on the One who unites us: Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, who was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). His Word does not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). His promise to be with His church to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20) is the only foundation any of our work can rest upon.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let's go (Mark 1:38).

Matthew C. Harrison, President

LATE REPORTS

The following report has been provided by the Synod Board of Directors pertaining to 2023 Res. 7-04B [C].

LR63

Board of Directors Supplemental Report on 2023 Res. 7-04B [C]

The Board of Directors was directed by 2023 Res. 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod,” Part C, “To Clarify Relationship of the Synod’s Board of Directors to the Concordia University Boards of Regents,” that it should, “after input from the Commission on Constitutional Matters [CCM], review within the upcoming triennium the governing documents and governance practices of all higher education institutions of the Synod, and all boards of regents and boards of associated foundations be directed to correct any identified noncompliance with the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions.” It was further assigned to facilitate the acknowledgement, by each university of the Concordia University System (CUS), of “the paramount right, title, and interest of the Synod in the name *Concordia*.” The board was required “to report to the subsequent Synod convention its progress in achieving the foregoing and any proposed bylaw changes or other action needed to more faithfully steward resources for higher education in the Synod.”

The board reported in Report R5 that “much progress has been made in this effort. But there remains more work to be done.” It also promised a supplemental report, which promise is now being fulfilled. Progress has continued since the board submitted Report R5. However, as listed below, further work remains to be completed for the higher education institutions to come into compliance with the directives given them by 2023 Res. 7-04B.

The board has no doubt that the institutions are giving proper attention to these matters and that they will have no problem completing the required work within the triennium now at hand. The board has also adopted policy providing clarity on the matter of higher education reversionary language, in fulfillment of Bylaw 3.3.4.7 and 2004 Res. 4-04, and expects the full cooperation of the higher education institutions in placing and maintaining the required language, for the protection of the property of the Synod as dedicated to Synod’s purposes.

The CCM reported extensively in its Op. 23-3023 (minutes of Sept. 12–13, 2025) on its comprehensive review of the higher education governing documents it was able to obtain. In its review—which, due to its scope, the press of other assignments, and the desire of the commission to review all institutions’ documents coherently, took some time—the commission noted the following:

In its reviews [the commission] has noted areas where institution governing documents are not in harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, in some places, due to the changes effected in the Synod Bylaws by 2023 Res. 7-04B, but in many places, with regard also to prior Synod Bylaws. It is important to note that the commission is charged to identify such disharmonies, not to improve generally upon the governing documents of the institutions (although it sometimes offers what are intended to be helpful suggestions). In this work, the commission must often consider where an omission from agency articles or bylaws of a detail that is not explicitly required to be included in such documents (by, for example, Bylaw 1.5.3.6) constitutes such a disharmony. To give one specific instance, the commission

has found, and indicates in these reviews, that agency articles and bylaws, where they state or assume from corporation law generally an ability of the board to amend the articles or bylaws, need to include explicitly the requirement that such amendments be reviewed and approved in advance by this commission, as required by Synod Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 (a). As the Board of Directors considers changes to Bylaw section 1.5, containing requirements for governing documents and practices of Synod agencies, the explicit requirement of inclusion of this explicit provision in agency governing documents may warrant inclusion.

Generally, the commission has noted certain provisions included in agency documents that, apart from inclusion of material from the Synod Bylaws, could prove misleading in isolation. It has not, however, generally scrutinized the governing documents for places where contradictory default inferences from laws of relevant jurisdictions or arguments from silence made otherwise might cloud a Synod procedure for, for example, removal of directors (Bylaw 1.5.7) or limitations on real property or borrowing authority, etc. The commission has likewise not fully attended to the implications of board policy for the agencies, which is generally beyond its scope of work. The commission considers the determination of what language needs to be included in the documents to grant the Synod necessary comfort as to the binding nature of particular aspects of Synod governance on the institutions to be a matter for consideration by the Board of Directors more than by this body.

Having received the above input, together with the detailed reviews of higher education governing documents, updates on the state of amendments being proposed by the universities, and correspondence between the institutions and the Office of the Secretary, the board has taken several actions:

First, it assigned its Chief Administrative Officer to “follow up with the institutions to request that all documents thus far requested by CCM or that are otherwise relevant be delivered immediately for review” (minutes of Feb. 19–21, 2026). The issue of certain university foundations has been identified as one requiring focused review, as not all foundations have governance, especially as pertains to the composition of their boards, that is compatible with Synod’s requirements for agencies.

Second, the board has taken to heart the CCM’s concerns, expressed above. To give proper and regular attention to these matters it intends as part of its proposal (Ov. 9-09) “To Amend the Bylaws to Clarify and Streamline Responsibilities of Appointed Synod Officers” to enhance its in-house legal and compliance capacity.

Third, the board, in its corporate governance project now embodied as Overture 9-06, “To Amend Bylaw Section 1.5, etc., to Unify in the Bylaws and Revise Corporate Formation Requirements for Instrumental Entities of Corporate Synod and Agencies of the Synod,” has proposed bylaws that address certain concerns expressed by the CCM regarding what needs to be included in university (and other agency) articles of incorporation.

Fourth, rights to the name *Concordia*, previously secured in various ways and jurisdictions by Concordia University Chicago, have been transferred to the Synod. Synod’s legal counsel is working on obtaining the required written acknowledgements from the universities.

Fifth, though not directly addressed in 2023 Res. 7-04B [C], the board has noted the obligation of the boards and officers of the institutions under 2004 Res. 4-04, “To Direct Establishment of

Reversionary Interests on College, University, and Seminary Properties,” to see “that each institution of higher education of the Synod shall hold title to properties presently owned or at any time hereafter acquired by it subject to a reversionary interest or possibility of a reverter in favor of the Synod in such form and stating such conditions as shall be established by the Board of Directors of the Synod except as provided by such Board.” The board has engaged a review of university property reversionary language and relevant local laws and adopted at its May 2026 meeting uniform language and procedures for placing and maintaining such language. The board has engaged institutions where required provisions are either not in effect or of questionable effect, either presently or at some point in the future. This is most notable at Concordia University Irvin (CUI), with regard to its Spectrum Campus.

CUI purchased its Spectrum Campus (16355 Lagnua Canyon Rd., Irvine, CA) on Mar. 3, 2023, pursuant to permission granted by the Board of Directors on Dec. 22, 2022, subject to the requirement “that LCMS, Inc., be granted reversionary rights on the property.” Further, the board approved the request of CUI “to allow the Narrative Memo prepared by President Thomas on Dec. 14, 2022 (as attached to the protocol minutes), to stand temporarily in lieu of a revised campus master plan, and grant Concordia University Irvine 18 months to revise its campus master plan inclusive of the Alton Property and to submit it for approval by the CUS Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.” As of May 18, 2026, the university has not arranged for placement of the required reversionary right as required by the purchase authorization. Several capital projects undertaken by CUI have also not been submitted to the board for approval.

The board and its officers continue in long but fruitful discussion (including the board’s meeting with CUI administration and regents in Irvine in Feb. 2026) to place appropriate provisions and to bring its property and capital projects into line with the expectations of the Synod. As of May 18, 2026, progress has been made on the reversionary language to be placed, but the university’s use of a limited liability corporation to hold the property and details regarding placement of the reversionary language remain to be worked out. As it is in response to 2004 Res. 4-04 that the board is pursuing the required reversionary language, the board feels it must report this matter to the convention. It is well past time for the convention’s directive to be followed with regard to this property, and the board is determined to see it completed in shortest order.

While the board would rather be able to report compliance, the discussion that has been taking place will benefit the board’s practice in administering this important requirement for the protection of the property of the Synod in a manner that supports the various universities’ faithful and well-resourced execution of the mission of the Synod committed to them.

Returning to the main topic, of the review and revision of higher education governing documents directed by 2023 Res. 7-04B [C], the board notes with appreciation the institutions that have engaged this project meaningfully and with deliberate speed. The board recognizes that changes to fundamental governing documents must be undertaken with due care and that contemplation of the task of governance to the point of codifying good practice and excluding bad takes much reflection and careful work. The following is a concise summary of the state of work as of May 18, 2026:

Concordia University, St. Paul engaged thoughtfully with the Secretary and CCM in an extensive revision and much robust discussion about the 2023 Synod bylaw changes and potential impact on accreditation, which turned out not to be as much a concern as first feared. CCM-approved bylaws have been

adopted. A minor change to the university’s articles to conform more fully with the Bylaw 1.5.3.6 language has also been adopted. A conversation with regional accreditors as part of the bylaw revision process has provided useful guidance for other institutions. The university has also submitted a significant revision of its board policies (aka *Handbook*) for CCM review.

Concordia University Wisconsin—Ann Arbor has submitted for review and the CCM has reviewed a draft set of Bylaws. The CCM awaits a response on these, as well as on its reviews of university foundation and CU Ventures governing documents and board policies.

Concordia University Nebraska has shared with the Secretary for preliminary review a potential Bylaw revision, to which the Secretary has responded with comment. It has also shared aspects of conversation with the school’s accrediting body regarding institutional control policies.

Concordia University Chicago has submitted to the CCM a proposed amendment of its bylaws. An amendment of articles of incorporation is awaited.

Concordia University Irvine’s board approved proposed revisions at in its May 2026 meeting, with review by CCM to precede adoption. The CCM also awaits documents on Concordia University Foundation and a limited liability corporation formed to hold certain property.

Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) has indicated that it intends to adopt the modern incorporation statute, a step in which LCMS will need to participate. Drafting is understood to be underway but a definite proposal is awaited.

Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne) has not yet indicated a definite plan.

The seminaries have very little in the way of governing documents. Much of what they have is severely outdated—as is Bylaw section 3.10.5, which provides most of their operating regulations. As indicated in some work before the convention, the Bylaw section 3.10.5 as it stands does not take into much account modern developments in faculty structure or seminary operations. This should likely be a broader project in the near term.

The board through its regular minutes will continue to keep the Synod apprised of progress in this important project, and will plan to summarize the state of work again in its report to the next convention of the Synod.

Christian A. Preus, *Chairman*

LR64

Additional Opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters

The following opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) were issued since the report included in the *Convention Workbook* as **R61** and are included here as they relate to potential convention business. Full commission minutes are reported at lcms.org/ccm.

Participation in Nonapproved Pastoral Formation Routes (26-3076)

Minutes of May 28–29, 2026

By an email of February 6, a member of the Synod, the president of an educational institution of the Synod, requested an opinion of the commission on three questions (the latter two restated by the commission), to which the commission responds as follows.

Question 1: Acknowledging that, historically speaking, individual members of the Synod have taught in institutions of mixed, other, or secular confession, it seems like there is a difference between teaching, e.g., history or classics in such a setting and teaching theology for the purpose of fulfilling the church's charge to send pastors into the church and world. In other words, is producing men (and women) together with those of a heterodox confession for ministry in every manner of church body a violation of Constitution Article VI 2?

Opinion 1: The Constitution of the Synod establishes as an objective of the Synod that it, under the Scripture and Lutheran Confessions, shall "3. recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth" (Const. Art. III). Further, the Articles of Incorporation of the Synod state (Article II, Objectives) that a purpose of the corporation is "d. to support the establishment and maintenance of theological seminaries, colleges, universities, and other institutions of learning to train ministers of religion—ordained, ministers of religion—commissioned, and laity for service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church." Even within the structure of the Synod, Bylaw 4.1.5 reserves to the national Synod itself (and its agencies, including its established seminaries and colloquy committees, in relevant part) jurisdiction over "general supervision of doctrine and practice; foreign missions; *institutions of the Synod; qualification for ordination, commissioning, and installation of ordained and commissioned ministers and requirements for individual as well as congregational membership in the Synod; publication of official religious periodicals; conduct of negotiations and affiliations with other church bodies; and the like*" (emphasis added).

For the purpose of serving member congregations of the Synod and their schools, Bylaws 2.5.1–2 set the clear expectation that all church workers called to or serving in the Office of the Public Ministry, and all church workers to be called to auxiliary offices, shall be those admitted to their respective ministries and to membership in the Synod only via the definite mechanisms the Synod itself has set forth.

Bylaws 2.5.1–2 do not speak to the preparation of church workers for service outside the member congregations of the Synod and their schools. The Office of International Mission and sister churches of the Synod operate seminaries beyond the two that the Bylaws authorize to produce church workers for Synod congregations, and participating in these efforts—with the basic presumption that such participation is orthodox—is certainly not contrary to the standards

of membership in the Synod, even though the result of that preparation, plus a call, does not result in membership in the Synod. Members of the Synod also have taught and teach in educational institutions that are not *of the Synod*, some of which have participated, and do participate, in preparation of workers for the broader church but not for the roster of the Synod.

Review of the record for possible precedent reveals that the commission has previously found (Ag. 598 and 598A, Minutes of May 16–17, 1974), that a professor at Seminex could "be retained on the clergy roster of the Synod as a candidate on a renewable annual basis under the terms of Bylaw 4.37" while at the same time assiduously maintaining (Ag. 682, "Constitutional Comments on the Present Controversy Within the Synod," Minutes of Oct. 11, 1974; published in *Lutheran Witness* as "An Analysis of Assertions in Present Controversy"): "The question is not: 'How may Seminex students be qualified for the ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?' The question rather is: 'How has the Synod decided that it wishes to have pastors trained, qualified, called, ordained, and installed in its congregations?' In answer to that question the Synod has spoken again and again. Perhaps no other subject receives as much attention in the bylaws. The Synod has stated in great detail that it will train its own pastors, set its own requirements, do its own certifying, etc. In short, the Synod has made it plain that it will not permit a small group within the Synod to usurp these functions which the Synod has reserved to itself."

Thus, provided the member teaches and practices entirely in accordance with the confessional standard of the Synod, membership in the Synod is not incompatible with teaching *outside the Synod's designated structures*. (Teaching in such capacity does not qualify one to be called or to have an active position on the roster of the Synod, but would be done, in the absence of another contemporaneous position of active service under Bylaw 2.11.1, as an inactive member, candidate or emeritus. Nor does the fact that members of the Synod are teaching in such capacity confer the ability on a faculty to declare graduates qualified for service in any sort of church work in Synod congregations or schools; the Synod has definite mechanisms for that otherwise.)

Another factor must be considered, that raised most directly by the question as posed, which is the constitutional expectation that all members of the Synod renounce "unionism and syncretism of every description" (Const. Art. VI 2). When does an orthodox contribution to a heterodox effort violate the conditions of membership (cf. Const. Art. VI 2)? To this question, broadly speaking, the commission has spoken in Op. 18-2875 (Minutes of April 6–7, 2018):

For the purposes of understanding the Constitution—while there may be shades of meaning, with *unionism* tending more toward commingling practices or services and *syncretism* toward commingling doctrines or teaching—there is considerable overlap between the two. An historically defensible, precise dissection of these terms is unlikely to be possible. For the purposes of understanding the Constitution, though, it is not necessary sharply to divide the terms. The phrase "*aller Kirchen- und Glaubens-mengerei*" or "unionism and syncretism of every description" is best understood as an expansive single thought—perhaps a pleonasm, the use of two almost identical terms to avoid any possible misunderstanding or minimization.

While other terms are also used in the literature of the Synod to express the same concept, the Constitution clearly states that it is the expectation of members of the

Synod that, because they “accept without reservation the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions” (Const. Art. II), they would renounce activities *of every description* that would commingle the confession, teaching, or practice of that true and salutary confession with any contrary (and therefore false and harmful) confession, teaching, or practice. Whether or not any particular activity or “fact situation” would be determined to constitute unionism or syncretism (*Kirchen- und Glaubensmengerei*) and, therefore, to constitute a violation of the conditions of membership in the Synod, falls outside of the authority of the Commission on Constitutional Matters. Such a decision is properly the responsibility of the ecclesiastical supervisor of that member.

...

The positive requirement of the Constitution is not only that members avoid the prohibited example activities, but that they *renounce unionism and syncretism of every description*. Contrary to that required renunciation are any activities inviting the reasonable inference that the exclusive teaching and practice of Synod’s confession (Const. Art. II) may, as a matter of indifference or insignificance, be laid aside, replaced by, or comingled with other teachings or practices. Such activities violate Const. Art. VI 2 and give the sort of offense contemplated in Const. Art. XIII 1’s *offensive conduct*.

This sort of offense presents a second manner (in addition to not teaching entirely in accordance with the confessional standard of the Synod), perhaps not the last imaginable, in which a member of the Synod teaching in a higher education institution—other than one regulated by the Synod under its Const. Art. II confessional standard—that is preparing individuals for ministry could run afoul of the conditions of membership. As the commission noted in the above-cited opinion, “Whether or not any particular activity or ‘fact situation’ would be determined to constitute unionism or syncretism and, therefore, to constitute a violation of the conditions of membership in the Synod, falls outside of the authority of the Commission on Constitutional Matters. Such a decision is properly the responsibility of the ecclesiastical supervisor of that member.”

That said, such teaching *per se* is not a violation of the conditions of membership in the Synod, even if it contributes to the formation of church workers for service outside the Synod. While the situation is not exactly the same, the commission notes an analogy to the fact that an ordained member of the Synod may, while a member of the Synod, serve a congregation that is *not* a member of the Synod (as provided for under Bylaw 2.11.1 [c] and in the tradition stretching back to the Synod’s beginning).

Question 2: A congregation establishes a non-rostered “leader” of a “campus” of a congregation, who functions in most if not all ways as the *pastor loci* (preaching, conducting the service, and providing pastoral leadership). Members refer to him as *pastor*, though he is not listed publicly as such. Is this contrary to Bylaw 2.5.2 and, if so, what recourse does the Synod have?

Opinion 2: Without commenting on the particular fact pattern, the commission addresses itself to the question of whether a congregation of the Synod may be served in a pastoral capacity by an individual who is not eligible under Bylaw 2.5.2 to be called to do so or to serve otherwise in that capacity. The commission noted the following in its Op. 23-3009 (minutes of April 28–29, 2023). This opinion traced the development of Bylaw 2.5.2 from 1969 Res.

5-23, “To Reiterate in Bylaws that Member Congregations Must Be Served by Members of the Synod,” through the changes made by 2001 Res. 7-12, “To Separate Calling and Service of Clergy from Other Church Workers,” concluding that:

The terms *call* and *be served by* [in Bylaw 2.5.2] are not to be regarded as synonyms. In today’s practice many others are serving congregations by leading worship without a call. Emeritus pastors regularly serve as vacancy pastors, at times for congregations not in the process of calling, or regularly simply serve in vacant congregations every Sunday, often for periods of a year or more, which might include offering the sacraments and conducting weddings and funerals. Ordained ministers on candidate status also are eligible to serve in the same way. Students from the seminaries of the Synod lead worship in congregations that have no pastor. Vicars on occasion are the only one serving congregations with their supervising pastor called by and serving a neighboring congregation. While these other instances of serving reflect a wide variety, what is consistent is that those serving are either ordained members of the Synod, or students authorized by a seminary of the Synod and under the supervision of an ordained member of the Synod.

In regard to the question posed in Op. 23-3009, as to whether a congregation that has “as its worship leader a pastor, not called by the congregation, who is Lutheran and has promised to teach completely in line with LCMS teaching but is on neither the roster of the Synod nor that of a church body in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod” is “in violation of Constitution Article VI 3 and Bylaw 2.5.2,” the commission understanding “the term *worship leader* as used in this question to mean the individual performing the role of the pastor in the public worship of the congregation, proclaiming the Word and/or administering the Sacraments,” the commission found:

A pastor who is not a member of the Synod or of a church body with which the Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship is ineligible either to be called by a congregation or to serve a congregation by leading worship. For a congregation to so call or be served would be a violation of the conditions of membership under Const. Art. VI 3. Bylaw 2.5.2 requires congregations to “call and be served only by” individuals listed in the three following categories (i.e., ordained ministers on the roster of the Synod; candidates certified for initial placement, for example, by successful completion of colloquy; and ordained ministers in good standing on the roster of church bodies in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod), the word “only” highlighting the exclusive nature of this requirement. A congregation may not *call* an excluded individual. The words “and be served by” indicate that a congregation also may not be *served by* an excluded individual in a pastoral capacity (such as by his leading worship), *even if it does not call him* (Cf. Op. 20-2957). By calling or being served by an excluded individual, the congregation puts its membership in the Synod in jeopardy (Bylaw 2.5.4; Const. Art. VI 3; XIII 1).

The commission finds this opinion to be directly applicable here. A district president who “becomes aware of information or allegations that could lead to expulsion of a member from the Synod,” which the above would constitute, “shall commence” the action of Bylaw section 2.14, “Expulsion of Congregations or Individuals from Membership in the Synod.” Part of this process is admonition and

reproof, in the hope that the offensive conduct may cease and expulsion prove unnecessary.

Question 3: Rostered workers establish a seminary “in response to requests from congregations and church leaders for a quality, affordable, effective online degree program that would equip potential pastors and church workers for missional ministry in areas that are not currently being served.” Is this contrary to Bylaw 2.5.2 and/or Bylaw section 2.7, and if so, what recourse does the Synod have?

Opinion 3: Again without commenting on the particular fact pattern, the commission distills two distinct questions and a broader concern. All of them it addresses under one fundamental presumption, namely, that the doctrine and practice taught by a member of the Synod in any such scenario is in every respect consonant with the doctrine and practice of the Synod; otherwise this alone would constitute a clear violation of the expectations of membership in the Synod.

First, do the conditions of membership in the Synod prohibit a member of the Synod from participating in or promoting the training of church workers, outside institutions approved by the Synod for this purpose, *who are either not drawn from, or not to be commended for the service of, Synod congregations?*

This question the commission has answered above under Opinion 1. Provided the member’s teaching and practice is orthodox and free of “activities inviting the reasonable inference that the exclusive teaching and practice of Synod’s confession (Const. Art. II) may, as a matter of indifference or insignificance, be laid aside, replaced by, or comingled with other teachings or practices,” such participation or promotion is not contrary to the conditions of membership in the Synod.

Second, do the conditions of membership in the Synod prohibit a member of the Synod from participating in or promoting the training of church workers, outside institutions approved by the Synod for this purpose, *who are drawn from and to be commended for the service of congregations of the Synod?*

As stated in Bylaw 1.7.1, “The Constitution, Bylaws, and all other rules and regulations of the Synod apply to all congregational and individual members of the Synod.” Further, “While congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Constitution Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions” (Bylaw 1.3.4.1). As stated above under Opinion 1, those Bylaws under which all have agreed to “live and work together” and which “apply to all congregational and individual members” require workers to be called for commissioned service (Bylaw 2.5.3) and those to be called *or simply who will be serving* in a pastoral capacity (Bylaw 2.5.2) within the Synod to be admitted to the ministry by the Synod for said purpose.

It is one thing for a member of the Synod to advocate for changes to the Bylaws or even Constitution of the Synod, which may be made by the congregational member delegates in convention if so persuaded (Bylaw 1.3.4.1). It is another thing for a member of the Synod to advocate for or participate in the *circumvention* of the Bylaws or Constitution of the Synod, for example, by facilitating and promoting to member congregations a route to pastoral ministry that is incompatible with the requirements of Bylaw 2.5.2. As noted above from Ag. 682, “The Synod has stated in great detail that it will train its own pastors, set its own requirements, do its own certifying, etc. In short, the Synod has made it plain that it will not

permit a small group within the Synod to usurp these functions which the Synod has reserved to itself.”

The Synod has provided exclusive mechanisms for preparing and qualifying workers to serve in the ordained and commissioned ministries of the Synod (Bylaw section 2.7), apart from which no one can be qualified for such service. Bylaw section 2.5 makes clear that congregations, as regard the ordained ministry, are to call and be served only by those who have been so qualified. The contemplated seminary cannot so qualify men for service as one of the Synod’s own seminaries could. As far as *members of member congregations* being prepared for such service are concerned, neither can colloquy complete what such a seminary began. Bylaw 3.10.2.4 states clearly that members of Synod congregations are not permitted to seek pastoral training elsewhere and then to enter onto the roster of the Synod by colloquy. By this prohibition, the Synod fully closes the door on the idea that members of member congregations should be so induced. There is no legitimate route to ordained ministry in a Synod congregation for a member of a member congregation other than through a seminary authorized by the Synod for such formation and qualification. Participating in and promoting an unauthorized seminary *for individuals who are drawn from and to be commended for the service of congregations of the Synod* is therefore contrary to the order set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod.

The commission has held previously (Ag. 729 H, J, “Opinion re Removal of District Presidents from Office,” Minutes of Feb. 21–22, 1975) that “the first object of the Synod is the conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith and a united defense against schism and sectarianism (Const. Art. III 1)” and that “a district president who deliberately acts contrary to the Bylaws may have the effect of creating an unrest and a schism in the Synod,” and that “any member of the Synod (which includes District Presidents) whose deliberate acts have the effect of creating a schism in the Synod may be guilty of an offensive conduct (Rom. 16:17–18), which, if persisted in after proper admonition, may lead to expulsion.” (Const. Art. XIII 1). The “regular call of pastors and any commissioned ministers” is a condition of membership in the Synod (Const. Art. VI 3). Inducing or facilitating a Synod member congregation to call or be served otherwise (contrary to Bylaw 2.5.2) risks separating that member from the Synod (see especially Bylaw 2.5.4), creating, in effect, a schism. For at least this reason, participation in or promotion of the training of church workers, outside institutions approved by the Synod for this purpose, *who are drawn from Synod congregations and to be commended for the service of congregations of the Synod* is an activity that could result in removal from the roster of the Synod, provided that the ecclesiastical supervisor and subsequent panel conclude that this is, in fact, an offensive conduct. The commission’s former opinions have indicated this conclusion to be possible.

Finally, the commission notes, considering questions 2 and 3, a broader concern. Can a member congregation extend the Office of the Holy Ministry to “others” by way of men not admitted to ministry under Bylaw 2.5.2? A congregation in relation to “others” is not acting alone but *as a member of the Synod*. A congregation establishing some relationship with “others” *as the congregation acting independent of its synodical commitments*, as it would in such a case, would seem to be engaged, at least, in “selective fellowship.” Where a member congregation of the Synod arranges for some other group to be served with pastoral ministry, the congregation gives of that with which it is served—that is, of ministers admitted to the ministry by the Synod under Bylaw 2.5.2—and not of something else.

Relative Force of 1989 Res. 3-10, 2005 Guidelines, and 2016 Res. 5-14, regarding Man and Woman in the Church (25-3071)

Minutes of May 28–29, 2026

By an email of August 15, 2025, a member of the Synod, a pastor, requested an opinion on the following question(s). The commission requested and received input from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

Background: 1989 Res. 3-10, “To Address Questions re: Service of Women in Congregational Offices,” included, among other actions, the directive: “...that the congregations of the Synod be urged to conform their practice to [the] counsel [provided by the CTCR in this matter],” namely, that it “strongly recommends that to avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church, such assistance [with communion distribution] be limited to men.”¹ This is presumed to remain in force. Synod’s “Task Force Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices” (2005), in their section on women assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion (pp. 21–22), quote verbatim from 1989 Res. 3-10 the phrases to which the congregations of the Synod were “urge(d) to conform.” 2016 Res. 5-14, “To Reaffirm Biblical Teaching on Man and Woman in the Church,” also resolved: “That the three specific recommendations from the 2005 Task Force Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices (pp. 21–22) be commended to the people of the Synod.”

Question: Does the “urge to conform” directive from 1989 Res. 3-10—having been adopted by the Synod and never rescinded—retain its original force and expectation for the congregations of the Synod, even when re-presented within later documents that are merely “commended” (e.g., the 2005 Guidelines as commended in 2016 Res. 5-14)? In other words:

- Does the act of commending a document in which an adopted and still-in-force resolution is quoted alter the binding or advisory force of the quoted material?
- Or does the quoted language retain its original status and effect as adopted by the Synod in 1989, regardless of the softer term “commend” used in later resolutions?
- As a result, should congregations continue to be “urged to conform” on the question of women distributing communion, or are they merely “commended”? How does the difference between these words affect our action as congregations of the LCMS?

Opinion: 1989 Res. 3-10 noted a “divergence of opinion in the Synod concerning women serving as assistants in the distribution of Holy Communion” and that “the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has stated in its 1983 report *Theology and Practice in the Lord’s Supper* (p. 30) and reaffirmed in the 1985 report *Women in the Church* that ‘the commission strongly recommends that to avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church, such assistance be limited to men’ (p. 47).” As does the 2016 resolution, 1989 Res. 3-10 *commended*² the former CTCR report to the congregations for “study and guidance in this matter” and resolved “that the pastors and congregations of the Synod be urged to conform their practice to this counsel” (*Proceedings*, 116). The language of item 14 in the noted 1983 CTCR report is as follows:

May women serve as assistants in the distribution of the Lord’s Supper?

While some might argue that assisting the presiding minister in the distribution of the elements is not

necessarily a distinctive function of the pastoral office, the commission strongly recommends that, to avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church, such assistance be limited to men.

This “distinctive function” language echoes that of 1969 Res. 2-17, “To Grant Women Suffrage and Board Membership,” which “accepted” the following “declaration” as a “guide”:

1. Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office.

1989 Res. 3-10 thus “strongly recommends”—for the stated reason of avoiding “confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church”—to limit those assisting the presiding minister in distribution of the elements to men. 1989 Res. 3-10 stops short of establishing as a position of the Synod that women assisting in distributing the Lord’s Supper are engaging in a distinctive function of the pastoral office. Had it drawn that conclusion, such participation by women would be a prohibited activity in accordance with the position of the Synod expressed in 1969 Res. 2-17, namely, that on the basis of definite statements of Scripture women “ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office.” Neither did it state the opposite conclusion, that the service of women in this capacity is a definite *adiaphoron*, a thing neither commanded nor forbidden. Rather, it urges seriously upon the congregations that—to avoid any confusion or offense about the practice either being or suggesting such prohibited service—it not be practiced.

With regard to 2016 Res. 5-14, the commission notes from the minutes that the floor committee changed “be endorsed” to “be commended” in the key fourth resolve, as to the recommendation “that lay assistance in the distribution of the elements in the celebration of Holy Communion, in order ‘to avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church,’ [1989 Res. 3-10] be limited to lay men.” This restatement in other words does not alter the force of the strong recommendation of 1989. At the same time, that recommendation remains just that.

The commission feels a further word clarifying the force of these resolutions may be helpful, as some may question, on the one hand, how the convention can make a strong recommendation against a practice that it seems to concede *may* be *adiaphorous*, that is, neither commanded nor forbidden by God (FC Ep X 1, FC SD X 2). Or, on the other hand, if this is simply advice, some may question what value it has. To understand the constitutionality and the weight of such convention actions, it is necessary to understand the confession on which the Constitution is based. The Formula of Concord, which is “a true and unadulterated statement and exposition” (Const. Art. II) of that Word of God that is to govern “all matters of doctrine and conscience” (Const. Art. VIII C) provides regarding *adiaphora*:

We believe, teach and confess that the community of God in every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the good right, power, and authority to change and decrease or increase ceremonies that are truly *adiaphora*. They should do this thoughtfully and without giving offense, in an orderly and appropriate way, whenever it is considered most profitable, most beneficial,

and best for good order, Christian discipline, and the Church's edification. Furthermore, we can yield and give in with a good conscience to the weak in faith in such outward adiaphora. Paul teaches this in Romans 14 and proves it by example (see Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:19). (FC SD X 9; see also 7–8)

It is thus entirely consistent with the Constitution of the Synod for the convention—without elevating human rules to have supposedly divine authority (ctr. FC SD X 26 and Const. Art. VII C)—to take even a strong and unqualified advisory stance with regard to its membership on a matter that *may be* (or even on a matter that *is*) an *adiaphoron*, because, as the remainder of FC X makes clear—in the particular context of persecution but with a sense applicable generally—adiaphora *communicate*, even *confess*, in “works and actions” what is in the “words” (FC SD X 10).³ In this instance, the convention has taken the unqualified advisory stance, with regard to a practice that *may be* adiaphorous (it has not definitively said that it is), that the practice is to be avoided.⁴

While the convention is “not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to an individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body,” and while, “accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned” (Const. Art. VII), the advice of the convention in such a matter is an important part of what the Synod exists to give (see also Const. Art. III 6–7). That is, it *is* an *advisory body* and congregations participate in the Synod to share and receive *such advice*. Where the convention has given such advice, the officers and agencies of the Synod are bound, as part of their carrying out the direction given by the convention, to offer it to the member congregations and individuals of the Synod.

1 The original form of the question cited 1989 Res. 3-10 as saying “that the congregations of the Synod be strongly urged to conform their practice to the counsel provided by the CTCR in this matter,” but this is not a quotation but a paraphrase or conflation of the CTCR’s “*strongly recommends*” with the convention’s “urge to conform.”

2 Note that the “commendation” language of the first *resolve* of 1989 Res. 3-10 corresponds exactly to the “commendation” of the language from 1989 Res. 3-10 in 2016 Res. 5-14. The use of “commendation” language in the 2016 resolution can hardly, therefore, be understood to diminish the sense of *urging* in 1989 Res. 3-10, since these two were already juxtaposed in 1989. Neither does the 2016 resolution conflict in any sense with, or rescind any part of, the 1989 resolution.

3 The convention has done so from the beginning: Consider the Synod’s first Constitution, Chap. V 14: “Synod holds in accordance with the 7th article of the Augsburg Confession that uniformity in ceremonies is not essential; yet on the other hand Synod deems such a uniformity wholesome and useful, namely for the following reasons: a. because a total difference in outward ceremonies would cause those who are weak in the unity of doctrine to stumble; b. because in dropping heretofore preserved usages the Church is to avoid the appearance of frivolity and a desire for innovations; Furthermore Synod deems it necessary for the purification of the Lutheran Church in America, that the emptiness and the poverty in the externals of the service be opposed, which, having been introduced here by the false spirit of the Reformed, is now rampant. All pastors and congregations that wish to be recognized as orthodox by Synod are prohibited from adopting or retaining any ceremony which might weaken the confession of the truth or condone or strengthen a heresy, especially if heretics insist upon the continuation or the abolishing of such ceremonies. Where private confession is in use, it is to be kept according to Article 11 of the Augsburg Confession. Where it is not in use, the pastor is to strive through teaching and instruction to introduce it. Yet in congregations where the total abolishing of general confession and absolution is hindered by unsurmountable obstacles, general confession may be kept along with private confession. The desired uniformity in the ceremonies is to be brought about especially by the adoption of sound Lutheran agendas (church books).”

4 Contrast the same 1989 convention’s distinct treatment of what may seem to be a similar issue in its Res. 3-14, detailed helpfully in the Commission on Theology and Church Relation’s October 2025 report, “Unity in Doctrine, Uniformity and Variety in Practice.”

Commission on Constitutional Matters

LATE OVERTURES

3. Mercy

Ov. L3-09

To Encourage Synod to Respond to Growing Mental Health, Homelessness, Incarceration, and Addiction Crises

WHEREAS, Addiction has been around since the original sin and continuing temptation of Satan: “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5 NIV; see also Prov. 25:28, Matt. 26:41, Heb. 4:14–16); and

WHEREAS, The Lord promises through St. Paul: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13 NIV; see also 1 John 2:15–17, Rom. 12:1–2, Titus 2:11–12); and

WHEREAS, A perfect storm of mental health, homelessness, incarceration and addiction has settled over the nation in the 21st century, and has only intensified in the aftermath of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Annual deaths related to drug overdoses totaled more than 70,000 people in the US in 2017 and topped 100,000 in 2021–23. At least two-thirds of drug overdose deaths were linked to opioids—more than those killed by guns, car crashes, or HIV/AIDS ever killed in a single year in the US and higher than all US military casualties in the Vietnam and Iraq wars combined. While we have seen recent promise in the area of opioid deaths dropping for a number of reasons, we also see a resurgence street drugs like crack cocaine and methamphetamine, increased use of alcohol and recreational marijuana which is now legal in many states, the emergence of new Narcan-resistant harmful drugs available on the streets and over the counter in convenience stores, and cannabidiol (CBD) dispensaries near schools; and

WHEREAS, Addiction affects not only the individual, but also families and communities. It is often related to mental health, can contribute to homelessness, and is especially disconcerting in prisons and amongst the formerly incarcerated. While some people can function effectively for years as an alcoholic or casual drug user, this is not the case with opioid/heroin abuse, in which addicts are consumed by their habit and often resort to criminal behavior and violence. “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them” (James 4:17); and

WHEREAS, Addiction, more broadly defined, is any behavior that attempts to separate us from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Recovery after years of addiction is a long process. Many will need job training, housing, healthcare and assistance to obtain work to become “21st century fishermen.” Others desire the training they need to become “fishers of men” and to help others on their road to recovery. “And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19); and

WHEREAS, The Anchor of Hope Alliance, LLC, was formed in the New Jersey District to address, in a meaningful way, this perfect storm of growing mental health, homelessness, incarceration, and addiction crises. The inspiration comes from Hebrews 6:19 (NIV): “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” The Anchor of Hope model aligns a college or university with a rescue mission or not-for-profit organization, churches, and like-minded community organizations to address an important social issue in the community; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod shall investigate restoring the hope expressed in Hebrews 6:19 to addicts and their families. Long-term treatment facilities are needed along with assistance to find jobs—since the lack of jobs, and of the dignity that comes from a job, leads to homelessness, broken families, poverty, crime, vacant houses and low performing schools. “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8 NIV); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod explore alliances between the Concordia University System, Gospel rescue missions (e.g., Citygate Network, aka Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, and the Gospel Rescue Mission Fellowship), and the local community to address this complex and multi-faceted issue; and be it further

Resolved, That since no single organization can address all of these issues effectively, the Anchor of Hope Alliance, LLC, in the district will serve as a model for collaboration as commended in Proverbs 16:3 (NIV), “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans”; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod, after exploring potential alliances, shall work alongside all the districts in the Synod to establish at least one new partnership per district to be in place by the 2029 Synod convention and utilized in and among the districts in supporting these efforts and bringing hope to local communities; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention pray for those suffering from or impacted by the perfect storm of mental health, homelessness, incarceration, and addiction and adopt this resolution as a call for action on this crisis (Rom. 12:11–12; Phil. 4:13).

Holy Faith, Oak Ridge, NJ; Redeemer, Westfield, NJ; Board of Directors, New Jersey District

4. Life Together

Ov. L4-57

To Stand with Faithful Child and Family Recognized Service Organizations Whose Actions May Be Compelled in Part by Law or Controlling Regulation

Preamble

The 2007 Synod convention, in its Resolution 6-03A, “To Care for Foster and Adoptive Children in a Pure and Undefined Way by Not Placing Children in Morally Ambiguous Contexts,” cited in its rationale an opinion of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (adopted May 2, 2006) that “On the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding homosexual behavior and about God’s will and design for marriage and the family as foundational units for society as a whole, it is the opinion of the CTCR that a policy of placing adopted or foster children into homosexual contexts would stand in opposition to the official doctrinal position of the LCMS” (2007 *Workbook*, 69). At least in part on this basis, it resolved that “LCMS organizations and LCMS recognized service organizations may not knowingly place adopted or foster children into any intrinsically sinful situations where individuals and families are not living in accordance with the Lord’s natural and revealed law (Bylaw 6.2.1).”

This has been interpreted reasonably to mean that any recognized service organization (RSO) found to be making such placements should lose status. In some cases, where RSOs have had *policies* or patterns of behavior affirming not just “morally ambiguous” but “intrinsically sinful” lifestyles, this determination has been—while we wish we could have instead brought the RSOs to “respect[] and not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod” (Bylaw 6.2.1)—clear and clearly appropriate. (Indeed, between August 2020 and August 2025, 49 RSOs were terminated, were denied status or renewal, or were encouraged to and did withdraw from the renewal process because they did not meet this standard [August 2025 LCMS RSO Office Briefing].) On the other hand, it is possible for an RSO to act in every respect and in hundreds of cases a year with the intention and resolve to respect and not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod, but to be legally compelled, in very few specific instances, to make a placement prohibited by the Synod’s 2007 resolution.

The Synod’s 2016 Res. 4-03B Task Force on Recognized Service Organizations noted that “[Mercy Service Organizations], to the extent they multiply the church’s inputs with public funds and to the extent they operate in publicly regulated fields of mercy work, operate under significant constraints. Child and family services, for example, may be faced with regulations requiring equal consideration of foster or adoption placements into immoral living situations” (2007 Res. 6-03A). (2019 Report R61, *Workbook*, 338). While an RSO so broadly compelled might not be able to continue service as such in its legal context, consider an RSO faced with a regulation requiring that birth parent relatives receive preferential placement. Such an RSO might have to choose between accepting many hundred court-assigned cases a year—the vast majority of which it is able to handle within its policies and intentions, consistent with Synod’s doctrine and practice—and giving all that up for the sake of avoiding a very small number of compelled placements to situations inconsistent with its own and the Synod’s position. (The LCMS RSO Office is presently faced with at least one RSO in renewal in this precise situation.) Certainly, this arena provides both Faustian bargains to be made, gaining the world’s support and losing the church’s soul, and pyrrhic moral purity victories to be “won,” the aggressive abhorrence of sin leading to doing nothing at all—the opposite of Luther’s “sin boldly.” Neither is right.

An extensive excursus to the noted report (2019 *Workbook*, 339) treated this and related matters. With regard to the 2007 resolution mentioned above, it explained:

Without disagreeing with the convention’s conclusion, the task force notes that there are significant jurisdictions in which organizations have had to choose between recognition by the Synod and the ability to carry on the volume of mercy work they hoped to perform—and where the choice has been to continue the work, the Synod has entirely lost whatever influence it had with its formerly recognized organizations.

Presently, public accommodation laws also challenge organizations providing low-income, elder care, or group housing to deal with client sexual orientation and gender identity and attendant living situations and expressions of identity which the church considers intrinsically sinful. The ability of such organizations to perform works of mercy

broadly in the community is increasingly contingent on their suffering some injury at the hands of regulation. Organizations whose work relies on funding or licensing that seems to be contingent on making the occasional such accommodation are questioning what it means, in such a context, to “not act contrary to the position of the Synod.”

Mercy is for sinners. Mercy work will always be messy. There is a scriptural difference between, on the one hand, extending mercy to sinners (in, one would hope, close proximity to and urging toward a forthright preaching of the Law and the Gospel) and, on the other, affirming, and confirming people in, their sin, or giving children over into it. What may be *suffered* as the “cost of doing mercy?” What must, on the other hand, be *condemned* as “pinch of incense” to the gods of this debased age? These are not uniformly easy questions, and the Church must not be too hasty to condemn those who *are truly wrestling with these matters* for not coming up with “easy” or “simple” or “pure” answers.

The mercy work of the church is, and has always been, directed toward sinners—mercy is, after all, extending not what is deserved but what is good, what is salutary. “If your enemy is hungry, feed him” (Rom. 12:20). Increasingly civic mores and law threaten the very existence of mercy by treating many sins as civic goods and demanding that goods be extended—not apart from or despite the sins—but on their account and as their justification. Thus, the government is used, against its God-given purpose, to bestow a sham dignity on acts that dishonor God. And that sham dignity militates against the true and free justification that God has worked in Christ, that He would impute by faith to repentant sinners. Regulation and economics condition the ability to multiply mercy on some degree of, if not deference, at least indifference toward this evil end. With regard to clients, to non-rostered staff, to staff dependents, for these organizations with one foot in the church and one foot in the public social work sphere, this all presents hard questions of conscience and law. Many organizations historically connected with the church are vulnerable to an erosion of identity by the wear and tear of these forces.

...

Here, the rephrased expectation that mercy organizations “facilitate the church’s extension of the divine mercy without compromising the church’s scriptural and confessional standards” is intended to clarify, without diminishing, the general requirement that RSOs “respect and not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.” Mercy is for sinners, and not every situation is the opportune time for direct confrontation of sinful behavior. Much discernment and careful conversation, scriptural and confessional study, and ethical reflection on the basis of the Scriptures and Confessions, is called for, in an active engagement of those organizations in challenged contexts with the Synod’s RSO Office (under the LCMS Office of National Mission), and with the Synod as a whole. ...

The task force’s work (adopted in 2019 Res. 4-06A and 4-07, *Proceedings*, 137–43) adopted language consistent with the above, intending to allow the stated “discernment and careful conversation, scriptural and confessional study, and ethical reflection on the basis of the Scriptures and Confessions [called for] in an active engagement of those organizations in challenged contexts,” but did not fully address the 2007 resolution, which still seems to force the granting office’s hand in the noted situations. Of course, even in the same 2007 resolution noted earlier, the convention resolved that “the members of [the Synod] commit themselves to pray for wisdom and guidance for those charged with placing adopted or foster children in light of the challenging circumstances presented to us by a fallen society” (2007 Res. 6-03A), indicating this is not so simple as identifying “impurity” and removing it. The noted CTCR report also spoke somewhat more reservedly than the resolution based on it, in condemning a “policy of placing adopted or foster children into homosexual contexts” rather than the mere fact of a *knowing* (but not necessarily *willing*) placement. All these—as well as the observation that if status is severed, the organization may be left without vital doctrinal and practical influence, simply to the ways of the world—speak to permitting a more careful and discerning approach. This is as envisioned by the task force report in its expectation of a “Tier II” mercy service organization, that it “faithfully and demonstrably weighs decisions about moral cost of being in a space versus moral cost of allowing the organization to be forced out of it [and] faithfully and demonstrably advocates for and maximally uses freedom to carry out mission in fidelity to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions” (2019 *Workbook*, 339).

This issue having been raised by the LCMS RSO Office, the Michigan District Board of Directors undersigned acknowledges the distinction between organizations promoting alternatives to or treating as a matter of indifference “the Lord’s natural and revealed law” (2007 Res. 6-03A) and organizations promoting and upholding the same in their policies and intentional work while being forced—at the option of losing their ability entirely to do their work within their jurisdiction—to cooperate with an occasional, state-compelled placement to a situation to which it otherwise would not consent. The district board of directors undersigned believes that it would best serve the “extension of the divine mercy” by the Synod and these organizations for the LCMS Office of National Mission not to be compelled to sever ties, instead allowing the Synod to stand with faithful but besieged organizations in their time of trial.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the final *resolve* of 2007 Res. 6-03A, namely, “that LCMS organizations and LCMS recognized service organizations may not knowingly place adopted or foster children into any intrinsically sinful situations where individuals and families are not living in accordance with the Lord’s natural and revealed law (Bylaw 6.2.1),” be rescinded; and be it further

Resolved, That the first *resolve* of the same be reiterated, namely, “that the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commit themselves to pray for wisdom and guidance for those charged with placing adopted or foster children in light of the challenging circumstances presented to us by a fallen society;” and be it finally

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission be directed as follows with regard to granting and maintenance of RSO status for organizations placing adopted or foster children:

1. It is the Synod’s expectation of every mercy service organization that it “respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod” (Bylaw 6.2.1), “facilitat[ing] the church’s extension of the divine mercy without compromising the church’s scriptural and confessional standards” (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]).
2. It is the Synod’s further expectation of every mercy service organization that it “faithfully and demonstrably weighs decisions about moral cost of being in a space versus moral cost of allowing the organization to be forced out of it [and] faithfully and demonstrably advocates for and maximally uses freedom to carry out mission in fidelity to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions” (2019 *Workbook*, 339).
3. An organization found in its policies, publications, or willing practices to be affirming alternatives to or treating as a matter of indifference the Lord’s will for the family shall not be granted, or permitted—after a reasonable period of admonition proves futile—to continue in, RSO status.
4. The fact that an organization is occasionally compelled by law or controlling regulation to facilitate placements contrary to the Lord’s will for the family—provided that where it acts *of its own volition* it does so consistent with 1 and 2 above—shall not necessitate denial or removal of RSO status.
5. The LCMS RSO Office is affirmed in and urged to continue its “much discernment and careful conversation, scriptural and confessional study, and ethical reflection on the basis of the Scriptures and Confessions, [as] called for, in [] active engagement of those organizations in challenged contexts” (2019 *Workbook*, 339).
6. The Board and Office of National Mission may, consistent with the above and Bylaw 6.2.2.1, adopt further program policy to guide the work of the LCMS RSO Office in this regard.
7. The LCMS RSO Office is directed to keep the LCMS Board of Directors apprised of legal and regulatory constraints on the service of recognized service organizations in the adoption and foster care space which may burden an RSO’s religious exercise, and the LCMS Board of Directors is encouraged to monitor this area for potential to stand with our organizations in the unfettered “extension of the divine mercy without compromising the church’s scriptural and confessional standards” (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]), to which they may be entitled under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or other laws protecting religious liberty.

Board of Directors
Michigan District

6. Pastoral Ministry and Seminaries

Ov. L6-89

To Commission a Study to Support Ethnic Ministry Pastors and Commissioned Workers

WHEREAS, The mission of the Synod is to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, The Synod recognizes the importance of ethnic diversity in ministry and the unique challenges faced by ethnic ministry pastors and commissioned workers, as demonstrated by the formation of the LCMS All Nations Council; and

WHEREAS, There is a need, as demonstrated by the formation of the All Nations Council, for a deeper understanding of the specific support required by ethnic ministry leaders to serve their congregations and communities effectively; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has previously engaged in discussions to address the challenges and opportunities of ethnic and intercultural ministry (as in the All Nations Council); and

WHEREAS, Supporting ethnic ministry leaders is essential for the health of the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Iowa West District memorialize the Synod in convention to commission a comprehensive study to identify effective ways to support ethnic ministry pastors and commissioned workers; and be it further

Resolved, That this study involve a wide range of stakeholders throughout the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the study examine best practices, resources, and educational support that can be implemented for the sake of the ministry of ethnic leaders; and be it further

Resolved, That the findings of the study be used to develop a strategic plan to provide ongoing support, mentorship, and resources for congregations, ethnic ministry pastors, and commissioned workers; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod allocate the necessary funds and resources to conduct this study and implement its recommendations, reaffirming its commitment to an ethnically diverse church body.

Iowa West District

7. University Education

Ov. L7-30

To Affirm and Retain Concordia University System as Synodwide Corporate Entity

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System (CUS) was established by the 1992 Synod convention (1992 Res. 6-04, “To Establish Concordia University System, Inc.,” *Proceedings*, 160–61), replacing the Board for Higher Education Services, to unify the universities of the Synod around the central mission to educate students for godly vocations in the Church and the world with a biblical foundation and the Lutheran confession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, 2023 Resolution 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod” (*Proc.*, 170–90), narrowed the role of CUS by relieving it of operational responsibilities, allowing it to focus on our universities’ Lutheran identity and mission; and

WHEREAS, CUS, in accordance with Bylaw 3.6.6.1, has implemented the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and engaged in both formal and informal visitations of our Concordia Universities, and

WHEREAS, The presence of CUS staff and visitation teams on our campuses has produced significant positive results in relationship building and the growth of trust; and

WHEREAS, CUS, as a synodwide corporate entity, has, through the visitation process, produced positive improvements in the focus on Lutheran identity and mission on our campuses as attested to by the formal visitation team reports and letters of determination; and

WHEREAS, The continued positive fruits of 2023 Res. 7-04B need to patiently revealed, and wholesale change in the governance of our Concordia Universities would not be beneficial to our Synodical union; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm and sustain CUS as a synodwide corporate entity; and be it further

Resolved, That the implementation of 2023 Res. 7-04B continue unabated; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the work of the CUS and our universities in carrying out their mission, pledging continued prayer, financial support, and encouragement.

Board of Regents
Concordia University Nebraska

8. Finance

Ov. L8-19

To Request Concordia Plans to Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for Concordia Retirement Plan

WHEREAS, God’s children serving as church workers in our congregations are the Synod’s most precious resources; and

WHEREAS, The inspired apostle Paul writes, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages’” (1 Tim. 5:17–18); and

WHEREAS, The Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP) is a wonderful benefit that has been managed well; and

WHEREAS, The CRP is offered to congregations with the counsel, “By offering a pension plan, you are making an investment in your workers’ future. After years of service to the LCMS community, this benefit helps provide the retirement income they will need” (Concordia Plan Services, “Pensions,” concordiaplans.org/employers/our-solutions/retirement-financial-benefits/pensions, accessed March 16, 2026); and

WHEREAS, The Concordia Plan Services (CPS) website further states, “Having a pension can make it easier for you to recruit and retain your workers. Whether you are a church calling a pastor, a school hiring a teacher or an RSO recruiting staff, offering the pension allows you to be competitive and help attract high-quality employees” (ibid.); and

WHEREAS, The CRP does not currently give cost-of-living increases to the one-time calculated pension benefits of retired workers; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, inflation has been a big concern, especially for retired people on fixed incomes, with the average inflation rate at 4.7 percent in 2021, 8.0 percent in 2022 (reaching a high of 9.0 percent in June, fred.stlouisfed.org/series/USACPALTT01CTGYM), and 4.1 percent in 2023 (fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FPCPITOTLZGUSA); and

WHEREAS, The cost of groceries in 2024 has been reported to be more than 25 percent higher than in 2019 (computed from fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CUSR0000SAF11); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Mid-South District Board of Directors memorialize the 2026 Synod convention to instruct the CPS leadership team to explore the feasibility of cost-of-living increases for CRP benefits (annually, biennially, or triennially), or a congregational option (with increased contribution rates) for a pension with periodic cost-of-living increases; and be it further

Resolved, That the rationale and feasibility for either offering cost-of-living increases/options or staying with the current plan options be promulgated by CPS to Synod workers as soon as possible, with a report to be submitted to the 2029 Synod convention.

Board of Directors
Mid-South District

OMNIBUS RESOLUTIONS

Responsibility Assigned to Others

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION A

WHEREAS, Certain overtures submitted to the convention for consideration request action for which the responsibility has been previously delegated to a board, office, individual, or commission; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be referred to the appropriate board, office, individual, or commission indicated below:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 1-07	To Study, and To Make Recommendations to Stop and Reverse, Long Decline in Synod Membership	Office of National Mission
Ov. 1-16	To Proactively Put in Place National Standards for Our Schools to Protect Students	Synod Board of Directors
Ov. 1-20	To Include Homeschool Enrollment in Statistical Reports of the Synod	LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services
Ov. 1-27	To Propose LCMS Men’s Ministry	Office of National Mission
Ov. 1-28	To Study and Recommend Strategies to Advance Congregation-based Older Adult Ministries	Office of National Mission
Ov. 2-04	To Promote Divine Call Opportunities for Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology Pastors	Board for International Mission
Ov. 2-05	To Amend Bylaws to Protect Divine Calls of Missionaries	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 2-07	To Thank God on the 60th Anniversary of the Inception of LCMS International Schools in Asia and Pray for God’s Guidance in Advancing Their Ministry and Mission	International Schools Task Force
Ov. 3-05	To Establish District Commission on Immigration and Immigration Resources	Office of National Mission
Ov. 3-08	To Define <i>Leadership</i> and Its Priority for Worker Wellness	Office of National Mission
Ov. 4-50	To Encourage Production of Sunday School Material for Very Small Congregations	Concordia Publishing House
Ov. 5-13	To Request Comprehensive Review When Call is Terminated or Self-Terminated	Council of Presidents
Ov. 5-14	To Study How to Amend Practice of Issuing “Divine Calls” to Positions Not in Direct Service of Proclamation of Gospel and Administration of Sacraments	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-15	To Encourage and Promote Sound Teaching on Eschatology or <i>Last Things</i>	Concordia Publishing House
Ov. 5-22	To Believe, Teach, and Confess <i>Missio Dei</i>	Commission on Theology and Church Relations in consultation with Council of Presidents
Ov. 5-24	To Urge Church of Christ to Stay and Do Her Duty	Office of President and Council of Presidents

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 5-25	To Publicly Acknowledge Theological and Ecclesial Errors in Church's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic	Office of President and Council of Presidents
Ov. 5-36	To Affirm Inspiration and Authority of Mark 16:9–20	Seminary Faculties
Ov. 5-40	To Address Release and Use of Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 5-42	To Amend Bylaw 3.3.1.1.2 (c) to Designate President's Director of Church Relations as His Primary Representative for Ecclesiastical Relations with Other Church Bodies	Office of the President and Commission on Constitutional Matters
Ov. 5-43	To Refer Some Assignments from CTCR to Seminaries	Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Ov. 6-75	To Encourage the Council of Presidents to Prioritize Assignment of Seminary Candidates to Sole Vacancies over Associate Positions	Council of Presidents
Ov. 6-81	To Mandate Continuing Education for Parish Pastors	Office of Pastoral Education
Ov. 6-82	To Encourage Congregations to Establish Sabbatical Policy for Church Workers	Office of National Mission
Ov. 6-83	To Encourage Ministry Sabbaticals for Church Workers	Office of National Mission
Ov. 6-85	To Standardize Vacancy Pastor Renumeration Guidelines	Council of Presidents
Ov. 6-88	To Affirm That Functions of Pastoral Office Belong to That Office	Council of Presidents
Ov. L6-89	Commission a Study to Support Ethnic Ministry Pastors and Commissioned Workers	Office of National Mission
Ov. 7-12	To Encourage Licensed Counselors Serving Recognized Service Organizations to Complete Director of Family Life Ministry Colloquy Program	Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry, Concordia University System Board of Directors
Ov. 7-28	To Conduct a Project Postmortem Examination of Concordia University Ann Arbor	Synod Board of Directors; Concordia University System Board of Directors
Ov. 7-29	To Request Transparency from Concordia University Wisconsin—Ann Arbor	Synod Board of Directors; Concordia University System Board of Directors
Ov. 8-03	To Affirm Concordia Plans and To Amend Bylaws to Require Annual ERISA-Comparable Transparency to Participants	Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans / Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services
Ov. 8-04	To Amend Bylaws to Ensure Sustainability of Concordia Plan Services by Its Working with Other Church Bodies	Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services, Synod Board of Directors, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters
Ov. 8-05	To Stabilize the Cost of Benefits Offered by Concordia Plan Services	Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services, Synod Board of Directors, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters
Ov. 8-16	To Encourage Synod Transparency and Unity regarding Concluded <i>HotChalk</i> Litigation	Synod Board of Directors and Legal Counsel

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Board, Office, Individual, Commission</u>
Ov. 8-18	To Encourage Transparency and Accountability in Legal Judgments and Settlements	Synod Board of Directors and Legal Counsel
Ov. L8-19	To Request Concordia Plans to Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for Concordia Retirement Plan	Concordia Plan Services
Ov. 9-12	To Restructure Mission Boards	Office of the President and Board of Directors
Ov. 9-13	To Revisit 2010 Restructuring	Office of the President and Synod Board of Directors
Ov. 9-14	To Revisit 2010 Restructuring	Office of the President and Synod Board of Directors
Ov. 9-18	To Reclaim Beneficial Understanding of Our Synodical Union	Office of the President
Ov. 9-41	To Provide Clarity about Amendments to Resolutions	Secretary of Synod
Ov. 9-49	To Clarify <i>Multipoint</i> and <i>Multicampus Parish</i>	Office of National Mission
Ov. 10-01	To Encourage Visitation by Synod and District	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-02	To Develop Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Supervision of Internet Accusations	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-03	To Address Use of Named or Anonymous Social Media Accounts to Create Strife and Division Within the Church	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-09	To Provide Pastoral Care for Congregations Affected by Major Disciplinary Actions	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-24	To Request Council of Presidents to Clarify Circumstances of Called Worker Removal or Resignation	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-25	To Request Council of Presidents to Clarify Circumstances of Called Worker Removal or Resignation from Roster	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-31	To Certify Accuracy and Trustworthiness of Call	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-32	To Allow Pastors to Opt Out of Pre-Call Interviews and/or Contact	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-34	To More Directly Oversee Service of Ordained Ministers to Congregations to Which They Have No Formal Call	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-35	To Encourage Pastors to Honor Their Own Call	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-36	To Call for Publication of Council of Presidents Manual	Council of Presidents
Ov. 10-37	To Provide Compensation for Circuit Visitors	District boards of directors

Issues Addressed by Previous Convention(s)

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION B

WHEREAS, A number of issues have been presented through overtures to which the Synod, in convention, has previously spoken; and

WHEREAS, After careful consideration of these matters, there appears to be insufficient rationale to change or alter the stated position of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That petitioners offering the following overtures be referred to previous convention action as indicated.

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Previous Action</u>
Ov. 1-11	To Inspire Training for Witness	2023 Res. 1-01A
Ov. 1-26	To Strengthen Christ Centered Homes Through Family Discipleship Work	2019 Res. 12-07B
Ov. 4-37	To Continue to Oppose Practice of Couples Living Together outside Marriage and To Support Pastors and Congregations Who Lovingly Call to Repentance, Give Absolution, and Help to Live in Harmony with God’s Word	2023 Res. 5-11
Ov. 5-10	To Encourage and Promote Biblical Teaching of Creation	1932 Report of Committee 20, adopted (“A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod”); 1967 Res. 2-31; 1973 Res. 3-01 (“A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles”); 2004 Res. 2-08A; 2019 Res. 5-09A
Ov. 7-08	To Encourage Congregations to Include in Annual Mission Budgets Support for Regional University of Concordia University System	2023 Res.7-06B
Ov. 7-25	To Appeal for Recognized Ecclesiastical Relationship with Luther Classical College	2023 Res. 7-04B
Ov. 9-34	To Strengthen Convention Participation of Ministers of Religion—Commissioned	Bylaws 3.1.5, 3.1.3.1; 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-35	To Strengthen Nonvoting Advisory Role of Commissioned Ministers at Synod Conventions	Bylaws 3.1.5, 3.1.3.1; 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-42	To Change to Four-Year Convention Cycle	Declination of 2023 Res. 9-09A
Ov. 9-43	To Amend Const. Art. VIII A 1 to Change to Four-Year Convention Cycle	Declination of 2023 Res. 9-09A
Ov. 9-50	To Adopt Dual Title of <i>Bishop and President</i> for District Presidents	1981 Res. 3-19
Ov. 9-51	To Authorize Title <i>Bishop</i> for Synod President and District Presidents	1981 Res. 3-19

Expressions of Encouragement and Gratitude

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION C

WHEREAS, Many requests for recognition of noteworthy labors of love are brought to the Synod's attention at every convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be received as expressions of encouragement or gratitude:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Encouragement / Thanks</u>
Ov. 1-31	To Give Thanks for and Offer Renewed Commitment to Work of Atlantic District	Thank God for 120 years of faithful Gospel service and mission work of the Atlantic District
Ov. 1-33	To Commend Family Discipleship Work of Concordia Center for the Family (CCF)	Thank God for the continued blessing of the work of CCF including its leaders, especially Rev. Dr. Todd A. Biermann
Ov. 7-26	To Give Thanks for the Board of Regents of Concordia College—New York	Thanks for diligent, fair, and faithful work

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

1. NATIONAL WITNESS

To Celebrate and Encourage All Nations Ministry in North America

RESOLUTION 1-01

Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overture 1-01 (*CW*, 277)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Great Commission: “Make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) and He gave the Holy Spirit so that His disciples would be “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, The Church Triumphant in Revelation 7 is shown to be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, redeemed and gathered in praise before God on His throne, and these passages have inspired Synod mission efforts in North America and around the world; and

WHEREAS, God’s Word calls us “to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24–25); and

WHEREAS, In this triennium, milestone anniversaries of mission in North America includes 90 years of Chinese ministry and 100 years of Hispanic ministry in 2026; 150 years of Black ministry in 2027; and 50 years of Hmong ministry in 2028; and these milestones serve as reminders of Christ’s faithfulness and opportunities to stir up one another toward love and good works; and

WHEREAS, The mission efforts have also resulted in the formation of an All Nations Council, made up of representatives of many ethnic ministries in North America, that has convened five times, learning from local ministers and districts, building capacity for collaboration, praying together and discerning opportunities for engagement together in mission. The All Nations Council includes entities such as:

- Black Ministries of the Southeastern District;
- Black Ministries of the Southern District;
- Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building;
- the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society in North America;
- the Evangelical Mekane Yesus Lutheran Fellowship in North America;
- the Hispanic Missionary League and National Hispanic Convention;
- the Hmong Mission Society;
- Messiah for Muslims;
- the Multi Asian Gathering;
- LCMS Native American ministries of the Northern Cheyenne and Navajo Nation;
- the Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society; and
- the Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society;

Therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations commemorate these milestone anniversaries by highlighting the encouraging news in various ways that the Synod is a church of every nation, of all peoples, tribes, and languages (Rev. 7:9); and be it further

Resolved, That congregations provide information to members about the Synod’s resources that make known the Law-Gospel faithfulness of Christ for all peoples and the Synod’s condemnation of racism and that provide guidance for outreach and witness to people who are not yet part of the church; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That LCMS Communications regularly spotlight the practical ways that congregations and districts are
2 witnessing across ethnic and language boundaries, especially in their own communities; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks for the work of Lutheran Heritage Foundation for the many catechetical
4 materials provided to support ministry among multiethnic communities and their work on the recent production of
5 *Himnario Luterano* (resources.lcms.org/general/himnario-luterano-spanish-lutheran-hymnal); and be it further

6 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with Concordia Publishing House (CPH) to prepare
7 materials to facilitate congregational and family ministry among people of many languages and cultures in the U.S., to
8 include exploring the potential of CPH worship material of its Spanish, Chinese, French, and other language hymnals
9 being made available in digital format through Lutheran Service Builder or another platform; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the ONM work with CPH to explore the potential of adding theologically-sound materials in English
11 that originated in Black/African American, Chinese, Hispanic, Hmong, and other traditions to the materials available in
12 digital format through Lutheran Service Builder or another platform; and be it finally

13 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention lift our hearts in gratitude and praise to God, standing to sing the doxology
14 in celebration of His mission in North America among people of all ethnicities and languages, giving thanks for the many
15 individuals who have served in these ministries.

16 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
17 *Committee, anticipate no incremental costs for the exploration of development of resources; preparation of materials*
18 *not scoped will have incremental cost not estimable at present (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

19 **To Proclaim 2029 the 500th Year of Luther’s Catechisms**

20 **RESOLUTION 1-02**

21 Reports R1, R1.1, R1.2.2, R33, R35, R58 (*CW*, 1–15, 19–28, 117, 119–20, 141–43); Overtures 1-22–23, 29–30 (*CW*,
22 289, 291–92)

23 WHEREAS, The year 2029 marks the 500th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther’s Small and Large
24 Catechisms; and

25 WHEREAS, Luther’s catechisms remain among the most significant and enduring treasures of the Evangelical Lutheran
26 Church, faithfully summarizing and teaching the doctrine of Holy Scripture for Christians of every age; and

27 WHEREAS, Luther’s catechisms have served for five centuries as foundational resources for evangelism, discipleship,
28 Christian vocation, prayer, mercy, and instruction in the Christian faith; and

29 WHEREAS, The Small Catechism continues to serve as a valuable resource for pastors, congregations, schools, and
30 heads of households in teaching the faith to children and adults; and

31 WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) has already made Luther’s Small Catechism available through digital
32 resources, including the online catechism platform at catechism.cph.org (funded through the offering from the 2023 Synod
33 convention), translations in multiple languages, and a mobile application available through major digital platforms, thereby
34 extending access to Luther’s catechisms for individuals, families, congregations, and mission settings throughout the
35 world; and

36 WHEREAS, The 500th anniversary of Luther’s catechisms provides a unique opportunity for renewed emphasis upon
37 catechesis throughout the Synod in a manner consistent with the spirit of the ancient catechumenate and the Church’s
38 historic commitment to forming disciples through the teaching of God’s Word and the Christian faith and doctrine within
39 congregations, schools, seminaries, universities, and homes; therefore be it

40 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention proclaim 2029 the 500th Anniversary Year of Luther’s Small and Large
41 Catechisms; and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That the President of the Synod be encouraged to establish a *Catechism500* initiative and invite CPH, the
43 seminaries, the universities, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Heritage Foundation, LCMS Communications, the Office
44 of National Mission, the Office of International Mission, districts, congregations, schools, and other appropriate entities
45 to participate in planning and promoting a coordinated synodwide observance of this anniversary; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the *Catechism500* initiative be encouraged to promote renewed catechesis throughout the Synod and
 2 develop resources and opportunities that highlight the enduring value of Luther’s catechisms for the Church’s mission of
 3 making disciples; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That congregations, schools, districts, campus ministries, recognized service organizations, and other
 5 entities of the Synod be encouraged to celebrate this anniversary and participate in *Catechism500* activities and initiatives;
 6 and be it finally

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention rise and sing “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” (*LSB* 865) in thanksgiving to
 8 God for the gift of Luther’s catechisms and in prayer that He would use them to strengthen the faith of future generations:

9 Lord, help us ever to retain
 10 The Catechism’s doctrine plain
 11 As Luther taught the Word of truth
 12 In simple style to tender youth.

13 Help us Your holy Law to learn,
 14 To mourn our sin and from it turn
 15 In faith to You and to Your Son
 16 And Holy Spirit, Three in One.

17 Hear us, dear Father, when we pray
 18 For needed help from day to day
 19 That as Your children we may live,
 20 Whom You baptized and so received.

21 Lord, when we fall or go astray,
 22 Absolve and lift us up, we pray;
 23 And through the Sacrament increase
 24 Our faith till we depart in peace.

25 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
 26 *Committee, anticipate the cost to incorporate Synod to be \$750,000 for the development of resources and promotional*
 27 *materials, gatherings, surveys, and generation of programmatic materials and events in conjunction with this initiative.*
 28 *It is anticipated that much of this program will be funded through gifts restricted for this purpose (estimate required by*
 29 *Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

30 **To Give Thanks to God for 150 Years of Black Ministry**

31 **RESOLUTION 1-03**

32 Overtures 1-02–03 (*CW*, 277–78)

33 WHEREAS, Christ our Lord commissioned His Church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20); and

34 WHEREAS, Revelation 5:9, 13:7, and 14:6 speak of salvation freely offered and the proclamation of the Gospel to
 35 “every nation and tribe and language and people”; and

36 WHEREAS, Many other passages of Holy Scripture testify to God’s love for all people and our obligation to likewise
 37 love our neighbors regardless of ethnic, geographic, or social background; and

38 WHEREAS, 2027 marks the 150th anniversary of LCMS Black Ministry with its establishment at Emmanuel Lutheran
 39 Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., at the 1877 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America;
 40 and

41 WHEREAS, The Synod created institutions to provide education for African Americans with Immanuel Lutheran
 42 College in Greensboro, N.C. (1903–1961) and Concordia College Alabama (1922–2018) which formed hundreds of church
 43 workers and led to the establishment and ongoing ministry of many congregations and schools; and

44 WHEREAS, Synod universities and seminaries continue to prepare workers of African descent for service in the church
 45 as future leaders following the pattern of both faithful servants who have gone before and those who continue to serve and
 46 lead in the Synod; and

1 WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission, in conjunction with Concordia Publishing House, is preparing a scholarly
2 book and supporting materials on the successes, struggles, and opportunities of the Synod’s ministry and outreach to
3 communities of color including an updated history of LCMS Black Ministry, which will be published for the
4 commemoration of the 150th anniversary (2023 Res. 11-03A, “To Love and Disciple Peoples of All Ethnicities,
5 Languages, and Skin Colors”); and

6 WHEREAS, The history of LCMS Black Ministry is one of both “roses and thorns” (Rev. Dr. Richard C. Dickinson,
7 *Roses and Thorns* [Concordia Publishing House, 1977]); therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod lament past failures to meet the scriptural standards of love for one another and reaffirm the
9 scriptural condemnation of racism in all its forms; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Synod remember with thanksgiving the legacy of faithful servants of the Gospel in LCMS Black
11 Ministry, celebrate those presently serving, and pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up countless more; and be it
12 finally

13 *Resolved*, That the Synod promote and support the 150th anniversary celebration of LCMS Black Ministry, scheduled
14 to be held in Charlotte, N.C., July 7–10, 2027.

15 **To Give Thanks for 130 Years of Deaf Ministry**

16 **RESOLUTION 1-04**

17 President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:26)

18 WHEREAS, The Synod has been engaged in organized ministry among deaf individuals and communities since the
19 nineteenth century, and the Synod formally adopted “Deaf Missions” as an official mission program in 1896; and

20 WHEREAS, For approximately 130 years, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed among deaf individuals
21 through preaching, teaching, catechesis, mercy, Lutheran education, and the administration of the Means of Grace; and

22 WHEREAS, The Synod gives thanks for the faithful service of pastors, teachers, deaconesses, interpreters,
23 congregations, missionaries, recognized service organizations (RSOs), and lay leaders who have served deaf individuals
24 and communities throughout these years; and

25 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Deaf Mission Society and other ministry partners continue to support evangelism, catechesis,
26 leadership development, church worker formation, and congregational outreach among deaf individuals and their families;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Opportunities remain for continued outreach, pastoral care, catechesis, and incorporation of deaf
29 individuals and families into the life of Christ’s Church; therefore be it

30 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to Almighty God for 130 years of deaf ministry and for the faithful
31 servants through whom He has blessed His Church; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That congregations, districts, RSOs, and other ministry partners be encouraged to support and strengthen
33 ongoing deaf ministry efforts throughout the Synod; and be it finally

34 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention recognize with thanksgiving the faithful witness of deaf Christians, pastors,
35 church workers, congregations, RSOs, and other ministry partners who have served and continue to serve among deaf
36 communities.

37 **To Prioritize Revitalization Work**

38 **RESOLUTION 1-05**

39 Report R1 (*CW*, 1–5); Overture 1-08 (*CW*, 281)

40 WHEREAS, The Synod has prioritized revitalization of its congregations; and

41 WHEREAS, Many existing Synod congregations have plateaued or are declining in membership or worship attendance;
42 and

43 WHEREAS, Congregational revitalization is centered in the new life that is found in God’s Word being proclaimed in
44 purity and His Sacraments being rightly administered; and

1 WHEREAS, The 2013 and 2016 Synod conventions approved the increased focus on revitalization and the expansion
 2 of *re: Vitality* from the Office of National Mission (ONM) (2013 Res. 3-08A, “To Reaffirm Faithful Church Revitalization
 3 as a Priority of the Office of National Mission,” *Proceedings*, 118; 2016 Res. 1-03, “To Expand the Work of Revitalization
 4 and Encourage the Use of *re: Vitality* Program,” *Proc.*, 132–33); and

5 WHEREAS, Congregations are encouraged to make use of revitalization resources as these are made available; therefore
 6 be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention pray to almighty God for those congregations in need of revitalization and
 8 give thanks for the ongoing revitalization efforts across the Synod; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention direct the ONM to collaborate with district personnel to review and expand
 10 the revitalization resources and strategies available for congregations and circuits; and be it finally

11 *Resolved*, That congregations be encouraged regularly at the district and circuit levels to engage in biblically based,
 12 confessionally faithful best practices concerning planning for the future, outreach to the community, caring for inactive
 13 members and intentionally incorporating current members into the life of the church (Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 3:6; 14:40).

14 **To Support Lutheran Congregations and Schools in Urban Contexts**

15 **RESOLUTION 1-06**

16 Overtures 1-9–10 (*CW*, 281–82)

17 **Rationale**

18 Throughout its history, the Synod has had congregations and schools in urban contexts. Many of these congregations and
 19 schools have ceased operations or have greatly curtailed ministries due to shifts in demographics, even as more people live
 20 in urban contexts in the United States. Unfortunately, the urban congregations that exist tend to be small and lacking funds
 21 and expertise. Assisting with parish operation and governance, developing sustainable funding models, encouraging
 22 networking for mutual conversation and consolation, and encouraging workers to serve in urban contexts would be ways
 23 to invest in urban contexts so that people may continue to hear the Good News about Jesus, and so that existing
 24 congregations and schools may be supported and new congregations and schools may be planted.

25 Therefore be it

26 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks for congregations and schools in urban contexts; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with districts to enhance networking for congregations,
 28 schools, and workers in urban contexts throughout the Synod for the sake of sharing resources and best practices and grant
 29 opportunities; and be it further

30 *Resolved*, That the ONM work with districts to collaborate on ways to provide congregations and schools in urban
 31 contexts with administrative assistance for governance that could include payroll services, sharing a bookkeeper, insurance
 32 recommendations, strategic planning, and the like; and be it finally

33 *Resolved*, That demographic resources from the ONM; LCMS Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services; Lutheran
 34 Church Extension Fund; Lutheran Hour Ministries; Concordia Plan Services; and other data-collecting entities be
 35 encouraged to share with congregations, schools, and workers in urban contexts so that plans for outreach to people in
 36 urban contexts may be developed locally.

37 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
 38 *Committee, anticipate an annual cost to incorporate Synod of \$30,000 in contract labor to support coordination,*
 39 *visitation, etc.; cost to districts in collaboration would be additional (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

40 **To Increase Church Planting at the Parish Level**

41 **RESOLUTION 1-07**

42 Overture 1-06 (*CW*, 280)

43 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ wants all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and has commanded His Church to make
 44 disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:19); and

1 WHEREAS, Acts 2:42 shows that the Church of baptized believers gathered around the ministry of the Word and the
2 Sacraments, which are foundational to the life and mission of the Church both in function and in goal; and

3 WHEREAS, The early Christians, having been gathered around Word and Sacrament, were sent into the world and
4 established new churches as they went; and

5 WHEREAS, This historic pattern of Word and Sacrament expansion allows the local congregation (uniquely suited as
6 the front-line mission outpost) to be the driving force in church planting; and

7 WHEREAS, Through the generous support of private foundations (such as the Bolick Foundation) the Office of
8 National Mission (ONM) is able to support church planting across the Synod through training, networking, and church
9 planting grants of up to \$100,000; and

10 WHEREAS, The ONM is currently working with 33 active church plants from all regions of the Synod, and has
11 distributed \$590,000 in grants and anticipates distributing an additional \$2,080,000 as those church plants work through
12 the LCMS Church Planting process (Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff, verbal update to floor committee, May 29, 2026); and

13 WHEREAS, The ONM, in partnership with districts, has identified 64 additional church planting sites for which
14 additional grant funding will be necessary (Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff, verbal update to floor committee, May 29, 2026);
15 and

16 WHEREAS, The LCMS Church Planting process includes six phases: concept, feasibility, planning, start-up, formation,
17 and expansion (“What does LCMS Church Planting have to offer?” *lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/church-planting*,
18 accessed May 31, 2026) and is intended to support the difficult, yet God-pleasing work of church planting with guidance
19 and ongoing support; and

20 WHEREAS, Planting new congregations is an important strategy for addressing the long-term membership decline in
21 the Synod because new church plants intentionally reach the unchurched and dechurched, especially in regions without a
22 local confessional Lutheran presence, including many urban contexts; and

23 WHEREAS, The planting of new, sustainable Word and Sacrament ministries is a priority of the Synod for both the
24 Office of International Mission and the ONM; therefore be it

25 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage districts, circuits, and congregations to plant churches through preaching stations
26 supported by existing congregations and their pastors; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod direct the ONM to continue to partner with districts to identify locations at the parish level
28 and support the planting of Synod congregations; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the ONM continue to work with districts to establish a numerical goal for planting new congregations
30 over the coming triennium; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage districts to continue to fund the planting of new congregations in a way that
32 multiplies the impact of the grant from the ONM; and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That special attention be given to planting congregations in regions where people do not have access to the
34 pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and be it finally

35 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend the LCMS Church Planting process as a faithful approach to fulfilling Christ’s
36 command to make disciples of all nations, while respecting the role of districts to use models that are beneficial to their
37 local contexts.

38 To Educate Young People

39 RESOLUTION 1-08

40 Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overtures 1-10, 15, 17–19, 23 (*CW*, 282, 285–87, 289)

41 WHEREAS, The LORD commands us to teach our children the Word of God diligently (Deuteronomy 6); and

42 WHEREAS, the Large Catechism states, “... if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church
43 leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God
44 and the world” (LC I 172–73); and

45 WHEREAS, Christian parents are to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord so that their children
46 may live as faithful, responsible, and God-fearing citizens in the world; and

1 WHEREAS, Lutheran schools in urban, suburban, and rural contexts, as extensions of Lutheran congregations, promote
2 this God-pleasing end; and

3 WHEREAS, The Synod has more than 1,700 schools (*LCMS.org/school-ministry*, accessed May 30, 2026) with
4 curricula informed by the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions (see *lutheranschools.org*), served by thousands of
5 educators who go above and beyond in nurturing students academically, emotionally, and spiritually, even amidst cultural
6 shifts and economic strains; therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod affirm the God-given vocation of parents as the primary educators of their children; and be
8 it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod thank God for Lutheran schools and homeschools, and for those who learn and work in
10 them, and encourage them as they use doctrinally-sound curricula and books; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) work with districts to foster networking for congregations,
12 schools, and workers, especially in urban and rural contexts, to maintain robust ministry presence; and be it finally

13 *Resolved*, That the ONM work with districts to identify and provide resources to plant new congregations and schools
14 in areas that are underserved.

15 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
16 *Committee, anticipate no incremental costs as this activity is covered in the current budget and scope of the Office of*
17 *National Mission (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

18 **To Promote Ministry Among Youth and Young Adults**

19 **RESOLUTION 1-09**

20 Report R1.2.1 (*CW*, 16–19); Overtures 1-13, 21 (*CW*, 284, 288)

21 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and
22 teaching the baptized (Matt. 28:19–20), and to raise up successive generations in the faith; and

23 WHEREAS, The Church has the responsibility to understand and live out the variety of gifts given to the Body of Christ
24 (1 Cor. 12:4–31); and

25 WHEREAS, Even in the face of many challenges, the Lord assures His Church that “faith comes from hearing, and
26 hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17), and that “[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the
27 knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4); and

28 WHEREAS, The Synod, through the Office of National Mission (ONM) (LCMS Youth Ministry in particular), has
29 conducted research to help congregations better understand and retain Millennials, notably publishing *Relationships*
30 *Count: Engaging & Retaining Millennials* (Concordia Publishing House [CPH], 2020), a three-phase research project that
31 used surveys and focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of retention rates of young people in the Synod which
32 informed the creation of the *Seven Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry* (which provides resources and encouragement
33 [*youthesource.com/seven-practices*]) to families, LCMS congregations, and church workers; and

34 WHEREAS, Broader, nationally representative research shows important context about the religious lives of American
35 adolescents: as of a 2020 Pew Research Center study, about 63 percent of U.S. teenagers (ages 13–17) identify as Christian,
36 compared with a higher share (72 percent) among their parents; a small set (4 percent) of U.S. teenagers (ages 13–17) are
37 affiliated with non-Christian faiths; and fully a third (32 percent) of U.S. teenagers are religiously unaffiliated; additionally,
38 Pew found that roughly four in ten U.S. teens report attending religious services at least once or twice a month, with about
39 one-third reporting weekly attendance, and that the attendance of both teenagers and their parents is mostly identical,
40 percentage-wise; this data highlights both the continuing presence of faith among many teenagers and the pastoral
41 challenge of forming regular worship and faith practices among them and their families (“Religious affiliation among
42 American adolescents,” *pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/religious-affiliation-among-american-adolescents*,
43 accessed March 20, 2026); and

44 WHEREAS, A new generational cohort, commonly labeled Generation Alpha (roughly children born beginning around
45 2010), is coming of age in cultural and technological circumstances that differ from Millennials and Generation Z; and
46 understanding Generation Alpha’s particular formation patterns, media ecosystems, family structures, and religious
47 orientations will help the Synod equip pastors, teachers, and other church workers to help them and their families to grow
48 in the Christian faith and piety; and

1 WHEREAS, The Barna Group reported in the fall of this past year a significant, surprising resurgence in Christian faith
2 and church attendance led by young adults (“New Barna Data: Young Adults Lead a Resurgence in Church Attendance,”
3 Barna, Sept. 2, 2025, *barna.com/research/young-adults-lead-resurgence-in-church-attendance*); and

4 WHEREAS, Many of these reports point to cultural circumstances possibly accounting for the resurgence, including a
5 stronger sense of mortality after the pandemic; the desire for meaningful community in the face of increased cultural
6 isolationism; valuing clear moral frameworks; and seeking structure, authenticity, and purpose amidst societal uncertainty;
7 therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for the young men and women in the church
9 and cherish them as among those who are carrying on the saving faith on earth; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the faithful service of pastors, teachers, other church
11 workers, youth workers, congregational leaders, and volunteers throughout the Synod, and commend to the church’s
12 continued prayer and support those who labor to bring the Gospel to our young people and to form them in the life of the
13 church; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the work of Synod districts, LCMS Youth Ministry,
15 Synod camps, CPH, Higher Things, and other entities serving young men and women; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod direct the ONM, through LCMS Youth Ministry and in cooperation with LCMS Rosters,
17 Statistics, and Research Services, Synod’s congregations, schools, families and assisted by applicable partners
18 and RSOs, to undertake or commission a focused, methodologically rigorous study of the Millennials, Generation Z, and
19 Generation Alpha that identifies (1) patterns of religious identity and practice, and (2) formative influences (i.e., family,
20 school, digital media, peers); and be it finally

21 *Resolved*, That the ONM then publicize a summary of findings, along with a set of practical resources and concrete
22 strategies that prioritize catechesis, regular worship participation, Lutheran doctrine and practice, parental support, and
23 joyful involvement in the life of the Body of Christ, so that congregations and schools of all sizes may apply the findings
24 in local ministry contexts.

25 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
26 *Committee, anticipate that the potentially significant incremental costs to incorporate Synod of a study, publications, and*
27 *resources not yet scoped are difficult to estimate at this time (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

28 **To Confront Increased Idolatry of Our Culture with Clear Confession of Love of Christ**
29 **and Lutheran Resources in Christian Apologetics**

30 **RESOLUTION 1-10**

31 Report R1 (CW, 1–5); Overtures 1-12, 22 (CW, 283–84, 289)

32 WHEREAS, The Ten Commandments begin with, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7); and

33 WHEREAS, The sinful nature leads people to the deceptions of self-sufficiency and relativism as described in Judges
34 21:25: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”; and thus, people become like the idols they trust (Psalm 115:8);
35 and

36 WHEREAS, The Church is commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ to conduct both evangelism and apologetics, to give
37 an answer or defense, and to contend for the faith (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3); and

38 WHEREAS, Christian apologetics properly employed by the Church serves the saving Gospel, especially when it is
39 used to demonstrate the futility of worldviews contrary to the Gospel and the importance of rejecting false faiths on the
40 one hand, and when it supports the historical and empirical status, objective truth, and urgency of the Gospel itself on the
41 other; and

42 WHEREAS, Constitution Article III 6 states that the Synod shall “aid congregations by providing a variety of resources
43 and opportunities for ... defending their confessional unity in the true faith”; and

44 WHEREAS, It is evident that the current cultural tsunami of idols includes not only false religions (such as Islam,
45 Buddhism, Hinduism, animism, Paganism, etc.) and atheistic philosophies, but also blatant expressions of Satanism,
46 demonic witchcraft, and hedonism; furthermore, there are a host of idols that have permeated our culture, including the
47 use of technology, the magnification of artificial intelligence, the worldly priority of career and success, the promotion of

1 addictive states, the wholesale affirmation of separating what is created from the Creator, and the idol of power, especially
2 when it confuses the two kingdoms; and

3 WHEREAS, The Church must serve and love the other two estates of the family and the state through God’s protection
4 from and empowerment “against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11) and “against the rulers, against the authorities,
5 against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph.
6 6:12), while forming solid theological minds grounded in the evangelical, catholic, and reforming tradition of the Augsburg
7 Confession in Synod congregations and schools; therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) survey the details of the forms of idolatry common in the
9 American landscape and identify and promote resources and expertise already available for use within our fellowship; and
10 be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the ONM work with Concordia Publishing House, our seminaries and universities, Lutheran Hour
12 Ministries, and our recognized service organizations to develop resources in Christian apologetics, as appropriate to their
13 purviews, for alerting the Church to cultural idols confronting Christians in this century so that congregations, schools,
14 and individuals in the Synod may use these resources to witness to Christ and defend the faith; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the seminaries and universities of the Synod take up the issue of apologetics whenever possible; and
16 be it finally

17 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention urge all pastors, commissioned ministers, and congregations of the Synod to
18 pray for the Church as she is confronted by the cultural idols of our day, that she discern what these idols are, and how the
19 Word of Christ supplies all we need to be alerted to, protected from, and equipped for facing our cultural idols.

20 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
21 *Committee, anticipate that the development of resources and study may require incremental costs to corporate Synod*
22 *that are difficult to estimate at this time (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

23 **To Confess God’s Design for the Family**

24 **RESOLUTION 1-11**

25 Overtures 1-24–25, 1-32 (*CW*, 289–291, 293)

26 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod upholds the scriptural mandate for families and the church to
27 nurture faith in the home: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your
28 children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road” (Deut. 6:6–7 NIV); and

29 WHEREAS, Luther declares, “let everyone know that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his
30 children in the fear and knowledge of God above all things [Proverbs 1:7]” (LC I [Fourth Commandment] 174); and

31 WHEREAS, The Fourth Commandment, as explained in the Large Catechism, places all authority over a child on the
32 parents of that child, so that we confess, “For all authority flows and is born from the authority of parents. Where a father
33 is unable alone to educate his ... child, he uses a school master to teach the child. ... So all whom we call ‘masters’ are in
34 a place of parents and must get their power and authority to govern from them” (LC I [Fourth Commandment] 141–42);
35 and

36 WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission (ONM) and organizations that support those seeking to live according to
37 God’s design for the family, such as Concordia Center for the Family, are great blessings to this work in the church; and

38 WHEREAS, Government in our society—at federal, state, and local levels—has attempted or may attempt to step
39 between children and their parents (impeding the parents’ duty to raise their children in the faith and life of the Christian
40 confession) in various ways, including but not limited to:

- 41 • laws that allow, recommend, or give children sex change operations or medical procedures for “transitioning”
42 minors without parents’ approval;
- 43 • laws that permit minors to get an abortion without parents’ approval;
- 44 • laws that label parents who refuse their minor children sex change operations and procedures, or abortions, as
45 engaging in child abuse;

- 1 • laws that remove children from the custody of parents who refuse their minor children sex change operations and
2 procedures, or abortions;
- 3 • school policies that encourage children to “transition,” use gender-confusing language, or introduce sexual or gender
4 identities that do not conform with the child’s birth sex without parents’ approval;
- 5 • school policies that promote various anti-scriptural social agendas without parents’ approval;

6 Therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention plainly state our religious objection to government interference in Christian
8 parents’ duty to raise their children in the faith and life of the Christian confession; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage all Synod congregations, pastors, commissioned workers, and lay leaders to make
10 use of training and resources (such as those from the Family Ministry Office and Concordia Center for the Family); and
11 be it further

12 *Resolved*, That the ONM be prepared to inform congregations about public resources (such as the Alliance Defending
13 Freedom) available to support their biblical convictions; and be it finally

14 *Resolved*, That we urge our congregations and schools boldly to confess and witness to the truth in the public square.

15 **To Support Campus Ministry**

16 **RESOLUTION 1-12**

17 Reports R1.2.1, R6, R14.1, R25, R31, R35, R53, R55 (*CW*, 16–19, 53–54, 86–89, 109–10, 115–16, 119–20, 136–39);
18 Overtures 1-04–05, 13, 21 (*CW*, 278–80, 284, 288)

19 WHEREAS, Young men and women continue attending colleges and universities throughout the nation in significant
20 numbers, and these campuses are to be regarded as mission fields for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

21 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has a long and faithful tradition of campus ministry
22 through congregations, Lutheran Student Fellowship, LCMS U chapters, and other ministries that connect students and
23 scholars with Word and Sacrament ministry; and

24 WHEREAS, There are currently 165 LCMS U chapters ([lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/campus-ministry/lcms-u-](https://lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/campus-ministry/lcms-u-chapter-map)
25 [chapter-map](https://lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/campus-ministry/lcms-u-chapter-map)) and many congregations engaged in some form of campus ministry throughout the Synod; and

26 WHEREAS, 95 percent of the Synod’s congregations are located within a 45-minute drive of a college or university
27 campus (LCMS Youth Ministry, youthsource.com/2021/09/starting-a-campus-ministry/); and

28 WHEREAS, College and university students often experience significant spiritual challenges and temptations during
29 these formative years of life, while many others arrive on campus with little or no knowledge of Christ and His Gospel;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Research indicates both increasing religious disaffiliation among college-age adults and growing openness
32 among many young adults to serious conversations regarding faith, truth, purpose, and the Christian life; and

33 WHEREAS, The nation’s colleges and universities also provide significant mission opportunities among international
34 students, many of whom come from nations where Christianity is a minority faith or where Christian witness is restricted;
35 and

36 WHEREAS, Campus ministry provides opportunities both to sustain and strengthen Christian students in the faith and
37 to proclaim Christ to those who do not yet know Him; and

38 WHEREAS, Campus ministry serves as an important setting for identifying, mentoring, and encouraging future pastors,
39 teachers, deaconesses, directors of Christian education, and other church workers; therefore be it

40 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to almighty God for the faithful church workers, congregations,
41 LCMS U chapters, and others engaged in campus ministry throughout the Synod; and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage continued investment in campus ministry as a significant mission priority and
43 that the Synod Board of Directors reinstate, through the Office of National Mission, a full-time staff position for supporting
44 campus ministry.

1 WHEREAS, Continued cooperation between LHM and the Synod provides opportunities to strengthen Gospel outreach
2 and exercise faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted by God to His Church; therefore be it

3 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to almighty God for the more than 100 years of faithful witness
4 and service of LHM and commend its ongoing work of proclaiming Christ to the world; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the Synod request LHM and the Chief Mission Officer of the Synod to identify opportunities for
6 strategic collaboration and to work towards enhanced partnership for the faithful stewardship of resources in support of
7 their shared mission.

8 **To Respectfully Decline Overtures**

9 **RESOLUTION 1-15**

10 Overture 1-14 (*CW*, 284–85)

11 WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons,
12 that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

13 *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 1-14	To Encourage Armed Security at All Synod Schools	The Synod does not have this authority; it is the responsibility of schools and congregations to develop appropriate security policies

2. INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

To Give Thanks for LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

RESOLUTION 2-01

Overtures 2-06 (*CW*, 296–97)

WHEREAS, From the Civil War through both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and more recent areas of conflict, Synod pastors, serving honorably and with distinction as military chaplains, bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those protecting our great nation; and

WHEREAS, Some chaplains serve on forward bases in harm's way; others, onboard ships maintaining vigilant watch over the seven seas; yet others walk the flight line on isolated air bases, engaging airmen on matters of faith and family as they load fighter aircraft for combat operations; and

WHEREAS, These “pastors in uniform” provide Word and Sacrament ministry while enduring hardship, constant peril, and danger; and

WHEREAS, These chaplains meet the needs of military personnel and their families stationed around the world and provide a vital link to home; and

WHEREAS, Synod chaplains have been recognized for their excellence in theology and pastoral care by their peers and frequently called to significant leadership posts within the U.S. Department of War at the Pentagon; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) supports almost 125 chaplains representing the church on active duty; in the Reserves, National Guard, Civil Air Patrol, and Coast Guard Auxiliary; as Directors of Religious Education; and in the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, MAF assists and trains congregations through Operation Barnabas, working to equip and encourage local pastors and congregations of the Synod in compassionate care and witness by training them for outreach to all military-connected people (active, reserve, retired, veterans, and their loved ones); and

WHEREAS, The Synod cares deeply for those who currently serve, for those who have donned the cloth of our nation in uniform, and for those who served our nation and live in our communities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its congregations to intentionally recognize and care for current and former military members, veterans, and family members in their midst by joining the network of care provided through Operation Barnabas; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for MAF, Operation Barnabas, and MAF leadership, including its director, the Rev. Craig Muehler, and assistant director, the Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana.

To Direct Districts and Encourage Congregational Participation in Global Mission through Prayer, Partnership, and Support

RESOLUTION 2-02

Overtures 2-01–02 (*CW*, 295)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, The Lord exhorts His people to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38), and assures His Church that He “is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20); and

WHEREAS, The Church is called to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3), including fellowship and cooperation in the work of the Gospel across nations and cultures; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has long carried out this mission through the sending of missionaries and the support of partner churches throughout the world; and

1 WHEREAS, The Synod presently carries out its support of missionaries through the significant contributions of agencies
2 like Mission Central (an extension of LCMS Mission Advancement), the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, and
3 others; and

4 WHEREAS, The FORO model aligns congregations, districts, and the Synod in Lutheran missiology (spreading the
5 Gospel, planting Lutheran churches, and showing mercy), keeping funding and accountability unified in mission together;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The Synod has established structures, including the Network Supported Missionary (NSM) model, which
8 aids missionaries, as well as—through partnerships that foster prayer, financial support, and active participation in Synod
9 mission projects among districts, recognized service organizations, congregations, and other Synod entities—the FORO
10 model; and

11 WHEREAS, 2023 Resolution 2-07A encouraged the use, attendance, and expansion of the FORO model in all four
12 regions of the Office of International Mission (OIM); and

13 WHEREAS, During the last triennium, the OIM has expanded the number of FOROs from 11, in one region, to 20,
14 across all four regions; and

15 WHEREAS, Some congregations have not yet been connected to specific mission efforts, whether through financial
16 limitations or lack of awareness, and thus may be missing opportunities to participate more fully in the Lord’s mission;
17 therefore be it

18 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the many blessings that have come forth from the
19 FOROs in Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Belize, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru,
20 Uruguay, Bolivia, Cuba, Germany, Spain, South Africa, Malawi, Eritrea, Rwanda, and the Philippines, with more in
21 development; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That Synod in convention direct each district to assess the feasibility of adopting a FORO partnership and
23 present it for consideration at their next district convention; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to include regular prayers in corporate worship and in
25 their life together for the Lord’s mission, for His Church throughout the world, and for the raising up and sustaining of
26 faithful workers in the harvest; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That all Synod congregations be encouraged to actively participate in LCMS international mission through
28 the FORO model, as faithful stewards of the Gospel and all of God’s gifts; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That congregations be encouraged, where possible, to adopt and support one or more missionaries of the
30 Synod through the NSM model, committing themselves especially to faithful prayer and, as they are able, to financial
31 support; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That the OIM continue to expand opportunities for congregations to be connected meaningfully to mission
33 work—whether through missionary support, FORO partnerships, or other faithful means; and be it finally

34 *Resolved*, That these opportunities be commended to all congregations of the Synod for prayerful consideration, that
35 they may participate more fully in the Lord’s work of gathering His Church from all nations.

36 **To Give Thanks to God for Missionary Care Provided by the Office of International Mission**

37 **RESOLUTION 2-03**

38 Reports R1.2.2, R7 (*CW*, 19–28, 54–55); Overture 2-03 (*CW*, 295–96)

39 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ commands His Church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20), and the
40 Synod carries out this work through the sending of missionaries around the world; and

41 WHEREAS, The Office of International Mission (OIM) strives to deploy and sustain physically, emotionally, and
42 spiritually healthy missionary families for faithful, enduring service in the spreading of the Gospel, the planting of Lutheran
43 churches, and the showing of mercy in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry; and

44 WHEREAS, The OIM begins its comprehensive approach to missionary care already in recruitment and discernment,
45 carefully evaluating the suitability of missionary households and seeking appropriate placement for their well-being and
46 effective service; and

1 WHEREAS, The OIM provides extensive pre-deployment training and support for missionaries, spouses, and
 2 children—equipping them with the theological, cultural, and practical preparation, while also offering care, resources, and
 3 clarity during a time often marked by uncertainty and transition; and

4 WHEREAS, The OIM continues its care on the mission fields through regionally-based care circles, pastoral support,
 5 regular care conversations, language and cultural training, appropriate housing, educational benefits for children,
 6 healthcare, opportunities for rest and continuing education, and other resources directed toward the whole person—body,
 7 mind, and spirit; and

8 WHEREAS, The OIM intentionally supports missionaries and their families at the end of their service through
 9 reintegration into life in the United States, providing transitional resources, intentional time for reflection and adjustment,
 10 and opportunities for the Church to give public thanks for their service; and

11 WHEREAS, This comprehensive care has led to a more than doubling of the five-year and ten-year retention rate of
 12 missionaries, resulting in a more robust and consistent missionary presence in the field; and

13 WHEREAS, Our recruiting efforts are resulting in an increase in the number of missionaries that we have in the field,
 14 currently 120 Synod and Alliance missionaries and their families—for a total of at least 349 people in need of pastoral
 15 care; and

16 WHEREAS, This comprehensive care is carried out through the collaborative work of the Global Care Team and
 17 regional care circles, reflecting synodwide commitment to the well-being of those sent in Christ's name; therefore be it

18 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for the faithful and compassionate care provided
 19 to missionaries and their families through the OIM; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend and support the OIM's ongoing efforts to care for missionaries holistically, so
 21 that they may serve with endurance, faithfulness, and joy; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That the OIM establish a full-time chaplaincy in each region by the 2029 Synod convention to expand our
 23 pastoral care for our missionaries; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the congregations, districts, and all members of the Synod be encouraged to pray for the Synod's
 25 missionaries and their families, to engage with them in mutual encouragement, and to support the mission of the Gospel;
 26 and be it finally

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod rejoice that through the faithful service of missionaries, supported by the OIM, the saving
 28 Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

29 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
 30 *Committee, anticipate the annual cost to be \$800,000, including adding a chaplain in each region and associated costs.*
 31 *Historical success at fully funding missionaries is expected to continue and apply to these positions, so that that this*
 32 *would not add incremental burden on the unrestricted resources of the Synod (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

33 **To Amend Bylaws 1.7.3, 2.11.1, 3.8.3, 3.8.3.8, and 4.4.4–5 to Establish a Framework for**
 34 **Ecclesiastical Supervision and Pastoral Care for Independent International Congregations**

35 **RESOLUTION 2-04**

36 Overture 2-03 (CW 295–96)

37 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has had a long history of working with independent
 38 Lutheran congregations located in international areas and served by member clergy of the LCMS; and

39 WHEREAS, The provision of ecclesiastical supervision is an essential part of carrying out the task of sending and
 40 providing proper care for our members serving in international context; and

41 WHEREAS, The 2023 Synod convention adopted Resolutions 2-03 and 2-06A (*Proceedings*, 124–26), which addressed
 42 matters related to ecclesiastical supervision and pastoral care of missionaries and Synod membership for international
 43 congregations; and

44 WHEREAS, The Board for International Mission (BIM) was tasked to work in consultation with the Council of
 45 Presidents to study the Synod's relationship with independent Lutheran congregations in international areas; and

1 WHEREAS, The BIM has already invested significant time studying the possibility and advisability of such
2 arrangements and has determined that reasonable pathways exist; and

3 WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.7.3 allows for district presidents to permit ministers of religion, ordained and commissioned, to
4 serve congregations that do not hold membership in the Synod provided that they honor its confession, rules, and
5 regulations; and

6 WHEREAS, This provision is currently the best option to allow these independent Lutheran congregations located in
7 international areas and served by Synod ministers of religion, ordained and commissioned, to strengthen ecclesiastical
8 supervision and pastoral care under our confession, Constitution, and Bylaws; therefore be it

9 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 1.7.3 be amended as follows:

10 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

11 **1.7 Agreements**

12 ...
13 1.7.3 The Synod expects congregations that have not been received into membership, but are served by Synod,
14 and whose ministers of religion, ordained and commissioned, hold membership in the Synod, to honor its
15 ~~rules, and regulations~~ confession, Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of Synod in convention. Individual
16 members of the Synod serving such congregations may remain on the roster of the Synod as active members,
17 provided that:

18 (a) the “served non-member congregation” is not a member of any other church body; agrees to honor
19 the Synod’s confession, Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of Synod in convention; and has as its
20 head or sole pastor (or is calling to be its head or sole pastor) a member of the Synod.

21 (b) if a domestic congregation, the service is as approved (on the basis of policies adopted by the Council
22 of Presidents) by the president of the district in which the congregation is located.

23 (c) if a foreign congregation, the service is approved (on the basis of policies adopted by the Board for
24 International Mission, with the concurrence of the President of the Synod), upon the recommendation
25 of the Office of International Mission, by the Board for International Mission, with the concurrence
26 of the President of Synod and the district president having ecclesiastical supervision of the pastor.

27 (d) the congregation understands and agrees that:

28 (1) it, not the Synod nor the district, would be the calling body for any serving worker;

29 (2) its called workers remain under the ecclesiastical supervision of the district president of the
30 Synod as determined by Bylaw 2.12; and

31 (3) an approving officer and/or board may at any time withdraw approval for such service to be
32 considered active service in the Synod.

33 and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 2.11.1 be amended as follows:

35 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

36 **Active Members**

37 2.11.1 To remain on the roster of the Synod as an active member, an ordained or commissioned minister of religion
38 must be a communicant member of a congregation which is a member of the Synod (except as provided in
39 paragraph [c] below) and be regularly performing the duties of one of the following:

40 ...

41 (c) An ordained or commissioned minister serving a congregation that is not a member of the Synod, as
42 approved (on the basis of policies adopted by the Council of Presidents) by the president of the district
43 in which the congregation is located as further described in Bylaw 1.7.3.

44 ...

45 and be it further

46 *Resolved*, That Bylaws 3.8.3 and 3.8.3.8 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Board for International Mission**

3.8.3 The Board for International Mission is charged with developing and determining policies in support of mission and ministry in foreign countries for the office of International Mission (Bylaw 1.2.1[n]). These policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention. Under the leadership of the President of Synod pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall assist in identifying the specific goals for the Office of International Mission. Policies determined by the board (implemented by the staff) may include but not be limited to:

- strong mission leadership
- training of missionaries
- ministry for all of the Synod's military personnel
- safeguarding the rights of partner churches
- ministry for all civilians and their dependents overseas
- international human care
- liaison with the colleges, universities, and seminaries of the Synod
- liaison with the chief ecumenical officer of the Synod
- international schools
- providing district presidents liaison with foreign congregations and individual members serving in the foreign mission areas of the Synod, as further described in Bylaw 3.8.3.8

Upon the recommendation of the Office of International Mission, the board shall serve as the only sending agency through which workers and funds are sent to the foreign mission areas of the Synod, including the calling, appointing, assigning, withdrawing, and releasing of missionaries (ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned) and other workers for the ministries in foreign areas.

...

Office of International Mission

...

3.8.3.8 The Office of International Mission may, subject to policies jointly developed by the Board for International Mission and Council of Presidents, provide district presidents liaison with:

- foreign congregations served by members of the Synod under Bylaw 1.7.3 (c), and
- individual members of the Synod serving non-member congregations in the foreign mission area of the Synod, supporting the district president's ecclesiastical supervision, as described in Bylaw 4.4.5 (b).

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 4.4.4–5 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

4.4.4 The district president shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Synod, in his ministry of ecclesiastical supervision visit the congregations of the district.

...

(f) The jurisdiction of the district president shall include non-member congregations whose pastors are members of the Synod within his district. However, for the purpose of official visits in such a congregation the consent of the congregation shall first be secured. ~~The~~ For domestic congregations, the district president may appoint the circuit visitor in whose circuit such a congregation is located to be his official representative. For foreign congregations, the district president may appoint staff of the Office of International Mission, as agreed to by that office, under policies jointly developed by the Board for International Mission and Council of Presidents.

4.4.5 Each district president, in accordance with the Constitution of the Synod, shall supervise the doctrine, the life, and the official administration on the part of the ordained or commissioned ministers who are members through his district or are subject to his ecclesiastical supervision, and shall inquire into the prevailing spiritual conditions of the congregations of his district.

(a) As often as possible he shall attend the conferences of ordained and commissioned ministers held in his district, advise the congregations of his district as to the calling of ordained and commissioned ministers, give counsel, and respond to requests and inquiries.

(b) He may call upon circuit visitors to assist him, or, in the case of individuals members serving in the foreign mission areas of the Synod (including service to foreign congregations), staff of the Office of International Mission, as agreed to by that office, under policies jointly developed by the Board of International Mission and Council of Presidents.

and be it finally

Resolved, That Board for International Mission and Council of Presidents jointly develop and implement the necessary policies and procedures in coordination with the Office of International Mission and report them to the 2029 Synod Convention.

To Give Thanks to God for 125 Years of Gospel Ministry, Partner Churches, and Mission in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

RESOLUTION 2-05

Report R1.2.2 (CW, 19–28)

WHEREAS, The Office of International Mission (OIM) carries out the Church’s Christ-given task to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, and show mercy among the nations, grounded in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The year 2025 marked the historic milestone of 125 years since The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) began its vital mission work in Brazil, establishing a long legacy of planting the Gospel seed across the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region; and

WHEREAS, Through the power of the Holy Spirit, missionary church planting has led to recognized fellowship with ten church bodies across the LAC region, specifically *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Argentina* (Argentina), *Iglesia Cristiana Evangélica Luterana de Bolivia* (Bolivia), *Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil* (Brazil), *Iglesia Luterana Confesional de Chile* (Chile), *Iglesia Luterana en Guatemala* (Guatemala), *Église Évangélique Luthérienne d’Haiti* (Haiti), *Sinodo Luterano de Mexico* (Mexico), *Iglesia Evangélica Luterana del Paraguay* (Paraguay), *Iglesia Luterana San Pablo* (Uruguay), and *Iglesia Luterana de Venezuela* (Venezuela); and

WHEREAS, Our missionaries directly and indirectly support church planting across ten countries, prioritizing the faithful preparation of local pastors to gather believers around Word and Sacrament where Jesus promises to give His life-giving forgiveness; and

WHEREAS, The Lord has graciously provided faithful alliance missionaries from our partner churches who, with their families, leave their homes to teach and plant churches alongside LCMS missionaries; and

WHEREAS, The Gospel mission in Hispanic contexts is being strengthened through extensive theological education, church planting, and mission support through FORO partnerships across the region; and

WHEREAS, The VDMA (*Verbum Domini manet in aeternum*) project provides orthodox Lutheran theological resources in Spanish and Portuguese to pastors and seminarians in 22 countries, with more than 420 recipients and over 54 titles distributed, greatly expanding access to Lutheran teaching where previously resources were scarce; and

WHEREAS, Spanish-language theological resources have grown significantly, including the full *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics* published by Luther Academy in Spanish and the development of accessible materials such as the Spanish hymnal, *Himnario Luterano*, for use in mission settings; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran theological education in Hispanic contexts continues to expand through seminaries such as the Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic (CMSCR), which is forming pastors (since 2017, 44 graduates from 12 countries, 99 deaconesses from 5 countries) and preparing future church leaders (currently 34 seminarians from 13 countries and 68 deaconess candidates from 11 countries), for Spanish-speaking communities; and

WHEREAS, CMSCR has become a source of joy, unifying the Hispanic churches as pastors are prepared for Word and Sacrament Ministry; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran church planting continues to grow among Hispanic populations, with new congregations established in multiple countries including Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic; and

1 WHEREAS, The Church's mission among Hispanic peoples reflects the incarnational and ecclesial nature of the Gospel,
2 bringing Word and Sacrament ministry into local communities and forming faithful Lutheran congregations; therefore be
3 it

4 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the 125 years of faithful work being carried out in
5 Brazil and among Hispanic populations through the OIM, offering highest praise for the continuous growth of the Gospel
6 across the LAC region; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod formally express its deep gratitude for our ten partner churches in LAC; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod express its profound thanks to the Lord of the harvest for the dedicated alliance missionaries
9 and their families, who faithfully serve under our supervision and support; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend and encourage continued expansion of Spanish-language theological resources,
11 pastoral formation programs, and church planting efforts in Hispanic contexts; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, That districts, congregations, recognized service organizations, and individual members be encouraged to
13 support the LAC mission fields and international Hispanic ministry through fervent prayer, financial contributions,
14 stewardship, short-term teams, and participation in FORO partnerships; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Synod reaffirm its commitment to planting and strengthening faithful Lutheran churches among
16 Hispanic populations worldwide, so that the pure Gospel may be preached, the Sacraments rightly administered, and Christ
17 confessed among all nations; and be it finally

18 *Resolved*, That all glory be given to God for the continued spread of the Gospel and the life-giving signs and gifts of
19 Christ shared throughout the region, trusting that His Word will not return empty but accomplish His saving purpose.

3. MERCY

To Commend and Encourage Life Ministry Efforts of Congregations, Schools, Districts, and Recognized Service Organizations

RESOLUTION 3-01

Report R1.2.1 (CW, 17); Overture 3-02 (CW, 299)

WHEREAS, God has created every human life (Job 10:9–11; Psalm 139:13–16; Jer. 1:5), and people are taught by Holy Scripture to love those in need in every stage of life, from conception to death, with not only our words but also our actions (1 John 3:16–18; James 1:22–27); and

WHEREAS, Increasing numbers of Lutherans are planning and participating in pro-life marches (such as the National March for Life), and other advocacy events across the United States; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry has awarded Million Dollar Life Match grants to Synod congregations and districts to support and expand beginning-of-life care projects, sanctity of life education and pro-life advocacy work that upholds the value of all human life, having assisted during the past triennium some 38,100 people while coordinating with 2,512 volunteers; and

WHEREAS, Through the Million Dollar Life Match initiative, LCMS congregations and districts have dedicated \$500,496.75 toward life-affirming ministries, which has been matched by \$618,083.12 from the LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM), resulting in a total investment of \$1,115,579.87 in support of these efforts; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry has created new resources that proclaim the Gospel and equip the saints for pro-life efforts that serve the neighbor and witness to Christ (many such resources to be found in the LCMS Life Ministry Library online at resources.lcms.org/reading-study/life-library); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the ongoing and increasing witness to the sanctity and dignity of every human life by Synod congregations, schools, districts, recognized service organizations (RSO), and by LCMS Life Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry, the ONM, the Office of the President, and district staff members be encouraged to participate in not only Synod efforts, but also other peaceful and law-abiding ecumenical and civic pro-life organizations and events, when and where appropriate; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Life Ministry continue to create resources, offer educational events such as conferences and webinars, and advise congregations, schools, districts, and RSOs in their pro-life work; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations, schools, and districts of the Synod, as well as RSOs, continue to promote and encourage both church workers and congregation members to be involved in pro-life efforts, such as advocating state and federal lawmakers to protect and defend human life from conception until natural death, educating congregation members and school families about the God-given sanctity and dignity of human life, and finding myriad ways to care for the body and soul needs of fathers, mothers, babies, and whole families.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as resources commended are understood to be presently in existence and activities described are already within scope and budget (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Promote Awareness of Christian Adoption and Fostering Needs

RESOLUTION 3-02

Overture 3-01 (CW, 299)

WHEREAS, Adoption figures prominently in Holy Scripture (Gal. 4:5) and the baptismal theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, Christians have an historical legacy of enacting this Gospel by undertaking and coordinating care for “orphans and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27); and

1 WHEREAS, In the United States, The Synod, her congregations, and recognized service organizations (RSOs) have
2 especially exemplified these concerns and embodied this mercy; and

3 WHEREAS, Some 117,000 children nationwide are awaiting families and homes through adoption this year
4 (www.adoptuskids.org/meet-the-children/children-in-foster-care/about-the-children, accessed May 30, 2026); and

5 WHEREAS, In many jurisdictions, state involvement in adoption imposes restrictions that result in a significant
6 proportion of these children receiving placements in situations contrary to the heavenly Father’s design and intention for
7 sexuality and marriage and without regard for their eternal welfare; and

8 WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has not explicitly spoken about the connection of adoption to our doctrine and
9 our vocation to serve these neighbors in need; therefore be it

10 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention, in grateful response to our own baptismal adoption as children of God through
11 our Lord Jesus Christ, affirm our Christian privilege and responsibility to advocate and undertake protecting and providing
12 for children awaiting adoption and fostering, particularly that they might enter His kingdom by Baptism and belief in His
13 saving name; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That we recognize and commend RSOs engaged in these services with our prayers, our advocacy, and our
15 contributions to further their labors among us and on our behalf; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention encourage our Synod and district leaders and congregations to promote
17 awareness of Christian adoption and its Christ-pleasing benefits and promote awareness of Christian adoption and fostering
18 needs, agencies, and opportunities; and be it finally

19 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention recognize and commend the RSOs engaged in these services with our prayers,
20 our advocacy, and our contributions to further their labors among us and on our behalf.

21 **To Thank God for Work of LCMS Disaster Response and Human Care Partners** 22 **and To Require Districts to Appoint Disaster Response Coordinators**

23 **RESOLUTION 3-03**

24 Overtures 3-03–04 (*CW*, 299–300)

25 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and
26 to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and the Lord calls His Church to works of mercy that flow from His
27 mercy given to us in Christ Jesus; and

28 WHEREAS, Since its current organizational structure was established in 2005, LCMS Disaster Response has faithfully
29 equipped the church for acts of mercy in times of crisis, trained and coordinated Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT)
30 volunteers, trained leaders, and supported congregations and districts in times of disaster; and

31 WHEREAS, LCMS Disaster Response currently works through 104 key leaders across 35 districts and six recognized
32 service organizations (RSO), supporting a network of more than 9,200 trained LERT volunteers and more than 80 pieces
33 of specialized disaster equipment, enabling faithful and compassionate response; and

34 WHEREAS, In the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response provided \$3,427,748 in national disaster relief grants,
35 mobilized 6,630 LCMS responders who collectively contributed 77,350 hours of service across training and deployment,
36 with 4,755 LCMS responders completing training during this same period (Mary Henrichs, “‘Gospel at the center’: LCMS
37 Disaster Response update,” *Reporter Online*, January 28, 2026, reporter.lcms.org/2026/gospel-at-center-disaster-response-update); and

39 WHEREAS, In the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response and its volunteers have responded to disasters in the United
40 States (including hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, tornadoes, floods, wildfires, and other emergencies) and have
41 provided enhancements with new training options for LERT volunteers and trainers, showing Christ’s mercy in tangible
42 acts of service and bringing the comfort of the Gospel with pastoral care to thousands of survivors; and

43 WHEREAS, LCMS Disaster Response also extended Christ’s mercy internationally in the past triennium, distributing
44 \$1,082,873 in international grants, including response to the 2024 floods in Brazil, where eight churches were rebuilt, 200
45 pastors and lay leaders were trained in disaster response, thousands of confessional materials were replaced, and more than
46 2,200 families received assistance; and response to the 2024 wildfires in Chile, where construction materials were provided
47 to rebuild homes, over 30,000 meals were distributed, and more than 8,000 people were served through preaching,
48 teaching, mercy care, and spiritual support (*ibid.*); and

1 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a rich history of caring for the most vulnerable, and in the past
2 triennium this has included disaster relief and support for legal immigrants and refugees through LCMS Disaster Response
3 and various RSOs; and

4 WHEREAS, The congregations and members of the Synod have generously contributed their time, resources, and
5 prayers to sustain these vital ministries of mercy; therefore be it

6 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks and praise to God for His mercy and provision through the
7 ongoing work of LCMS Disaster Response and its human care partners, especially for the witness and service offered
8 through LERT volunteers, districts, and RSOs; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage continued support and prayer for those affected by natural disasters, and for legal
10 immigrants, refugees, and other vulnerable neighbors, and for those who serve faithfully in times of crisis; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That each district appoint a district disaster response coordinator to work directly with LCMS Disaster
12 Response and offer LERT training modules in the district; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend LCMS Disaster Response, its staff, leaders, and volunteers, to the Lord's
14 continued care, asking Him to strengthen their work in mercy and to bless their proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus
15 Christ in word and deed; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks for these efforts and seek additional ways to extend Christ's mercy to those in
17 need, so that the church at large may continue to bear witness to the love of Christ through acts of mercy and service; and
18 be it finally

19 *Resolved*, That the Synod joyfully confess that every act of mercy flows from Christ Himself, "who comforts us in all
20 our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (2 Cor. 1:4), to the glory of God and the
21 comfort of His people.

22 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
23 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be covered by the*
24 *present budget; districts may incur costs for establishing coordinators if not already in service (estimate required by*
25 *Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

26 **To Encourage Use of Counseling and Telehealth Services**
27 **for Care and Retention of Church Workers**

28 **RESOLUTION 3-04**

29 Overture 3-07 (CW, 301–2)

30 WHEREAS, Church workers of the Synod experience unique vocational stressors inherent to ecclesial callings,
31 including isolation, heavy workloads, public scrutiny, financial strain, and relational pressures; and

32 WHEREAS, Research within and outside the Synod demonstrates increasing rates of burnout, depression, anxiety,
33 suicidality, marital distress, loneliness, financial uncertainty, and certain addictive behaviors among pastors and other
34 church workers; and

35 WHEREAS, Professional counseling, including counseling delivered via telehealth, has demonstrated efficacy in
36 treating burnout, depression, anxiety disorders, trauma-related distress, marital and family conflict, financial stress, and
37 certain addictive behaviors; and

38 WHEREAS, Church workers of the Synod will benefit from Christ-centered, clinically competent counseling services
39 that are confessionally aligned with the doctrine and practice of the Synod and are well positioned to serve church workers
40 confidentially whether in-person or via telehealth; therefore be it

41 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention encourage its workers to view the use of professional counseling services as
42 faithful stewardship of the gifts of body and mind entrusted to them by God; and be it further

43 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend telehealth counseling services as trusted resources for addressing burnout,
44 depression, anxiety, suicidality, marital and family distress, financial stress, and certain addictive behaviors among church
45 workers; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That districts, congregations, schools, and recognized service organizations be encouraged to become
 2 familiar with existing and available counseling and telehealth services that are confessionally aligned with the doctrine
 3 and practice of the Synod and to share such information as part of a culture of care and support for church workers; and
 4 be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the Synod affirm that timely access to counseling services may assist church workers in remaining in
 6 their calls and continuing faithful service to Christ’s Church through the proclamation of the Gospel; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod and districts be encouraged in the upcoming triennium to consider how to address the acute
 8 and growing need for more capacity in counseling and telehealth services that are confessionally and doctrinally aligned
 9 with the Synod in light of future advancements in telehealth services and the growing acceptance of these counseling
 10 services as beneficial to worker wellness; and that such encouragement be offered in a manner that respects Christian
 11 freedom, confidentiality, and pastoral discretion, without mandate or compulsion; and be it finally

12 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission, in cooperation with Concordia Plan Services and other appropriate
 13 Synod entities, be directed to study the feasibility of establishing a synodwide telehealth counseling network staffed by
 14 licensed mental health professionals who are confessionally committed to the doctrine and practice of the Synod, with
 15 particular attention to ensuring affordability, confidentiality, and accessibility for church workers and their families across
 16 all districts.

17 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
 18 *Committee, note a feasibility study not yet scoped to the point of estimating potential cost (estimate required by Bylaw*
 19 *3.1.7 [g]).*

20 **To Commend Efforts to Serve Worker Wellness and Encourage Participation** 21 **in Concordia Plan Services**

22 **RESOLUTION 3-05**

23 Overture 3-06 (*CW*, 301)

24 WHEREAS, It is a mission priority of the Synod to promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-
 25 being of pastors and professional church workers; and

26 WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents (COP), LCMS Worker Wellness, and Concordia Plan Services (CPS) have
 27 collaborated to create a strategic plan that has been disseminated to district presidents and established by district boards of
 28 directors pursuant to 2023 Resolution 1-06A, “To Direct Districts and Council of Presidents to Provide Strategic Plan for
 29 Addressing Wellness of Church Workers”; and

30 WHEREAS, The strategies involve the efforts of both professional church workers and the congregational lay leaders
 31 and ministry leaders; and

32 WHEREAS, Soldiers of the Cross has provided \$241,705 of financial assistance to 98 rostered church workers this past
 33 triennium, and Veterans of the Cross has provided \$717,751 to 30 recipients in the same period, demonstrating both the
 34 generosity of the church and the real and ongoing burdens borne by its servants; and

35 WHEREAS, Approximately 20 percent of rostered church workers are not covered by the CPS health plans; and

36 WHEREAS, The Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross crisis financial grants offered to church workers
 37 demonstrate that workers who are not covered by CPS health plans are vulnerable to significant adverse financial impact
 38 when there are serious health and medical needs of the workers and their family members; and

39 WHEREAS, The CPS mission statement is to “Serve ministries ... Care for workers ... So that the Word of God
 40 spreads” (“Purpose and Values,” concordiaplans.org/who-we-are/careers, accessed May 30, 2026); and

41 WHEREAS, CPS’s ability to fulfill its mission and hold down the rising costs of health insurance for workers is
 42 enhanced by its worker wellness programs and by increasing the number of workers enrolled in CPS; and

43 WHEREAS, The business practices, ethical posture, and church-worker wellness programs of CPS are governed by the
 44 Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; and

45 WHEREAS, CPS health plans are customized for the needs of church workers, the assets of the health plans are designed
 46 to bear the health burdens of the members (Gal. 6:2), and the health plans have varied financial options for Synod
 47 ministries; therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, That the COP, LCMS Worker Wellness, and CPS be commended and thanked for their work to provide
2 leadership and a strategic plan, and for their collaboration on Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross grant
3 programs; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That districts, congregations, schools and ministries not enrolled in a CPS health plan be encouraged to
5 annually consider and compare their current health plan with those available through CPS; and be it finally

6 *Resolved*, That the lay leaders of Synod congregations, schools, and recognized service organizations be advised and
7 encouraged to make use of resources, programs, and plans created by the districts, CPS, and LCMS Worker Wellness, and
8 endeavor to form the local culture to be supportive of and caring for the holistic well-being of church workers, members,
9 and visitors.

10 **To Encourage Synod to Respond to the Growing Addiction Crisis**

11 **RESOLUTION 3-06**

12 Overture L3-09 (*TB*, 1:45–46)

13 WHEREAS, Addiction started with the original sin and the continuing temptation by Satan: “For God knows that when
14 you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5 NIV; see also Prov.
15 25:28, Matt. 26:41, Heb. 4:14–16); and

16 WHEREAS, The apostle Paul warns not to sin against one’s body (1 Cor. 6:12–20), Christians are called to obey civil
17 law, including not purchasing or using illegal drugs (Rom. 13:1–7, 1 Peter 2:13–17), and this warning was also given by
18 James: “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” (James 4:17); and

19 WHEREAS, Deaths related to drug overdoses totaled almost 80,000 people in the U.S. in 2024, according to the Centers
20 for Disease Control and Prevention. At least two-thirds of drug overdose deaths were linked to opioids (CDC,
21 [cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db549.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db549.htm)); and

22 WHEREAS, More Americans died in 2024 due to opioid-related overdoses than the highest number of Americans killed
23 in a single year (CDC, [cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20250514.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20250514.html)):

- 24 • by gun violence (48,830 in 2021 [CDC, [cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/firearms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/firearms.html)]);
- 25 • by vehicular death (54,589 in 1972 [Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Rates, 1899–2023,
26 [cdan.dot.gov/tsftables/Fatalities%20and%20Fatality%20Rates.pdf](https://www.cdan.dot.gov/tsftables/Fatalities%20and%20Fatality%20Rates.pdf)]);
- 27 • by HIV/AIDS (50,000 in 1995 [CDC, [cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046531.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046531.htm)]);
- 28 • in the combined Vietnam and Iraq Wars (62,651 casualties [Defense Casualty Analysis System,
29 dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/conflictCasualties]);

30 and

31 WHEREAS, In addition to opioid-related addictions there is an increase in the use of other highly addictive street drugs
32 such as methamphetamine. At the same time, legally obtainable substances are proving addictive. While alcohol use
33 disorder remains high (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, [niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-
34 health/alcohol-topics/alcohol-facts-and-statistics/alcohol-use-disorder-aud-united-states-age-groups-and-demographic-
35 characteristics](https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/alcohol-topics/alcohol-facts-and-statistics/alcohol-use-disorder-aud-united-states-age-groups-and-demographic-characteristics)), addiction to products such as inhalers and cough medicines, and other over-the-counter substances is
36 increasing. There is also a trend in the availability of Narcan-resistant drugs (Brian Mann, “Historic decline in U.S.
37 overdose deaths threatened by changing street drug supply,” *NPR*, April 14, 2026, [npr.org/2026/04/14/nx-s1-
38 5783750/overdose-fentanyl-medetomidine-xylozine](https://www.npr.org/2026/04/14/nx-s1-5783750/overdose-fentanyl-medetomidine-xylozine)); and

39 WHEREAS, While addiction harms personal mental wellness, and physical well-being, addiction also negatively
40 impacts families and communities, according to the Center for Addiction Research and Effective Solutions (AIR,
41 [air.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Big-Ideas-Housing-Social-Determinants-of-Addiction-August-2022.pdf](https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Big-Ideas-Housing-Social-Determinants-of-Addiction-August-2022.pdf)). Substance
42 abuse and addiction are significant contributing causes for homelessness and incarceration (National Institute on Drug
43 Abuse, [nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice](https://www.nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice)); and

44 WHEREAS, Christians are vocationally called to minister to brothers and sisters in Christ struggling with sin (Gal. 6:1–
45 2, James 5:19–20). God gives hope to all Christians who are struggling, including those dealing with addiction (1 Cor.
46 10:13, 1 John 2:15–17); and

1 WHEREAS, Recovery after years of addiction can be a long process; many in recovery often need job training, housing,
2 healthcare, and guidance to obtain work; therefore be it

3 *Resolved*, That the Office of National Mission (ONM) investigate ways churches and recognized service organizations
4 can support restoring the hope of Christ to those impacted by addiction (Heb. 6:19–20). The ONM shall make
5 recommendations based on its investigation and report to the 2029 Synod convention; and be it further

6 *Resolved*, That the ONM encourage each district to establish at least one new partnership with a faith-based care
7 ministry for those suffering from addiction by the 2029 Synod convention; and be it finally

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention pray for those suffering from substance abuse and addiction (Rom. 12:11–
9 12; Phil. 4:13).

10 **To Give Thanks to God for Synod Congregations Engaging in Mercy Ministries**

11 **RESOLUTION 3-07**

12 Reports R1.2.1, R60 (*CW*, 16–19, 161); Overture 3-04 (*CW*, 300)

13 WHEREAS, God the Father has extended His great mercy to all people through the death and resurrection of His Son,
14 Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4–5; Eph. 2:4–5); and

15 WHEREAS, God the Holy Spirit leads us to respond to God’s mercy by extending mercy to our neighbor (Luke 6:36;
16 2 Cor. 1:3–4); and

17 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture describes such mercy as Christians serving in their vocations, meeting their neighbors’
18 bodily and spiritual needs (Matt. 25:31–40; Gal. 6:2; 1 Tim. 2:4); and

19 WHEREAS, Synod congregations corporately carry out works of mercy in their communities through such services as
20 women’s shelters, food pantries, counseling and prison ministries, wellness ministries, and disaster response; and

21 WHEREAS, Such mercy ministries provide opportunities to witness Christ to our neighbor and invite our neighbor to
22 Word and Sacrament ministry in local congregations; therefore be it

23 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for congregations that intentionally send members into
24 their vocations to extend God’s mercy to their neighbors; and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That we praise our heavenly Father for all Synod congregations that corporately engage in mercy ministries
26 in their communities; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to the Office of National Mission and its various ministries for
28 providing invaluable inspiration and support for congregational mercy ministries; and be it finally

29 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give all honor and praise and glory to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy
30 Spirit for cultivating within Synod congregations the desire to extend mercy to one another and to their neighbor.

4. LIFE TOGETHER

To Establish *Tell the Next Generation* as Synod Mission and Ministry Emphasis

RESOLUTION 4-01

Overtures 4-02–07, 09 (CW, 303–7)

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention (2023 Res. 4-02, “To Affirm and Continue *Making Disciples for Life* as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–2026 Triennium”) instructed the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission to recommend a new mission and ministry emphasis for consideration at the 2026 Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, The two mission boards have consulted with the district presidents, the Office of National Mission, and the Office of International Mission in an extensive series of fraternal discussions toward seeking input for the development of the triennial mission and ministry emphasis; and

WHEREAS, The two mission boards, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, have unanimously agreed to recommend to the Synod in convention a triennial mission and ministry emphasis that captures the desire to spread the Gospel and the full counsel of God’s Word to those who do not know Christ, as well as the generations of church members that will follow us; and

WHEREAS, The theme for the 2026–2029 National Offering has been established as “Christ Is Risen! Tell the Next Generation,” reflecting this desire to spread the Gospel and the full counsel of God’s Word to those who do not know Christ and to the generations to come; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod adopt *Tell the Next Generation* as her mission and ministry emphasis for the 2026–2029 triennium.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod except for the development of new promotional materials, etc., as may be occasioned, which are anticipated to be within planned budget (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Amend Bylaws to Refine Process for Creating Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphases

RESOLUTION 4-02

Overture 4-12 (CW, 307–9)

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention (2023 Res. 4-02, “To Affirm and Continue Making Disciples for Life as Mission and Ministry Emphasis for 2023–26 Triennium”) instructed the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission to offer a recommendation to the 2026 Synod convention for refining the process for adopting triennial mission and ministry emphases; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws require the Synod in convention to approve triennial mission and ministry emphases with a process that requires input from every circuit and district of the Synod (Bylaws 3.8.2.2, 3.8.3.2; 4.2.1 [b, d]; 5.2.3 [g], 5.3.1 [a][5]); and

WHEREAS, The mission boards of the Synod conducted extensive fraternal discussions with every district of the Synod over the past triennium about the work of the Synod and the triennial mission and ministry emphasis, including the procedure for developing triennial mission and ministry emphases; and

WHEREAS, These fraternal discussions with the districts concluded that the current procedure for developing triennial mission and ministry emphases has proven to be cumbersome and unworkable; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s mission boards and the Council of Presidents are to assist the President of the Synod in establishing the goals for mission and ministry of the Synod (Bylaws 3.3.1.1.1 [a], 3.8.2, 3.8.3); therefore be it

Resolved, That the two mission boards, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, and in continued fraternal dialogue with the districts, be charged with recommending to the Synod in convention triennial mission and ministry emphases for adoption; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.3.1.3 be amended as follows:

2 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3 *Powers and Duties – Ecclesiastical and Administrative*

4 3.3.1.3 The President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative.

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...

6

(g) He shall collaborate with the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission in assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases.

7

8 and be it further

9

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.8.2 and 3.8.2.2 be amended as follows:

10

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

11

Board for National Mission

12

3.8.2 The Board for National Mission is charged with developing and determining policies for the coordination of and in support of district ministries which support congregations and schools (Bylaw 1.2.1 [n]). ~~These policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention.~~ Under the leadership of the President of the Synod, pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall assist in identifying the specific goals for the Office of National Mission. Policies determined by the board (implemented by staff) may include but not be limited to:

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3.8.2.2 The Board for National Mission shall, during the course of each triennium between national conventions of the Synod, work with the Board for International Mission to gather pertinent and sufficient information from the Synod's members that will facilitate the boards' assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases, and shall, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, after fraternal dialogue with the districts, develop accordingly a joint overture to the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto. ~~The boards shall also provide a joint report in advance of the Synod's district conventions, offering ideas and guidance for proposing triennial mission and ministry emphases to the national convention.~~

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.8.3 and 3.8.3.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

31

Board for International Mission

32

3.8.3 The Board for International Mission is charged with developing and determining policies in support of mission and ministry in foreign countries for the Office of International Mission (Bylaw 1.2.1 [n]). ~~These policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention.~~ Under the leadership of the President of the Synod, pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall assist in identifying the specific goals for the Office of International Mission. Policies determined by the board (implemented by staff) may include but not be limited to:

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3.8.3.2 The Board for International Mission shall, during the course of each triennium between national conventions of the Synod, work with the Board for National Mission to gather pertinent and sufficient information from the Synod's members that will facilitate the boards' assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases, and shall, in collaboration with the President of the Synod, after fraternal dialogue with the districts, develop accordingly a joint overture to the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto. ~~The boards shall also provide a joint report in advance of the Synod's district conventions, offering ideas and guidance for proposing triennial mission and ministry emphases to the national convention.~~

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.2.1 be amended as follows:

1 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2 **4.2 District Conventions**

3 4.2.1 Conventions of the districts shall afford opportunities for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the
4 communication of vital information. They are the principal legislative assemblies, which amend the district’s
5 Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, consider and take action on reports and overtures, and handle
6 appropriate appeals.

7 (a) The conventions of the districts shall be governed by the bylaws adopted by the Synod for its
8 conventions, insofar as these may be applicable.

9 ~~(b) The district convention is the instrument to receive overtures (Bylaw 3.1.6.2), including overtures
10 and recommendations for synodwide mission and ministry emphases submitted by member
11 congregations and adopted by a circuit forum.~~

12 ~~(e)~~ Following in-depth study and discussion, the district convention shall act on the overtures and may,
13 as determined by the convention, submit overtures to the national convention.

14 ~~(d) The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two
15 or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention.~~

16 ~~(e)~~ Each district may adopt other regulations, provided these are not contrary to the Constitution and
17 Bylaws of the Synod.

18 ...

19 and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 5.2.3 be amended as follows:

21 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

22 **5.2 Circuit Visitors**

23 ...

24 5.2.3 Each circuit visitor shall assist the district president within the circuit.

25 ...

26 (f) He shall seek to strengthen the spirit of cooperation among pastors, commissioned ministers, and
27 congregations.

28 ~~(g) He shall assist in the development and attainment of Synod wide mission and ministry emphases.~~

29 ~~(h)~~ He shall assist the district president, as requested, in promoting and obtaining unanimous
30 participation by congregations in the submission of annual statistical reports.

31 ...

32 and be it finally

33 *Resolved*, That Bylaw section 5.3 be amended as follows:

34 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

35 **5.3 Circuit Forums**

36 5.3.1 The circuit forum is the group which aids the process of keeping congregations, particularly the lay leaders,
37 commissioned ministers, and pastors, supportive of one another in their common confession and mutually
38 active in developing programs for the good of member congregations, in considering and recommending new
39 work, and in suggesting improvements for services and programming at the national and district levels and
40 is encouraged to meet at least twice a year.

41 (a) The circuit visitor shall endeavor to provide resources, opportunities, and assistance so God’s people
42 can grow in their faith.

43 (b) Among the functions which the circuit forum may perform are the following:

44 (1) To study the Scriptures and the Confessions in order to promote an evangelical spirit in our
45 walking together.

46 ...

47 (5) To serve as a setting to review and evaluate programs, plans, and long-range directions of the
48 district and the Synod ~~and thus participate in the triennial process of suggesting, developing, and
49 attaining the Synod’s priorities and goals.~~

50 ...

1 ~~5.3.4~~ ~~The circuit forum may also participate in the triennial process of suggesting, developing, and attaining the~~
 2 ~~Synod's priorities and goals.~~

3 5.3.5 The circuit forum shall be qualified to submit overtures to national and district conventions.

4 **To Commend and Sunset Synod Mission Priorities**

5 **RESOLUTION 4-03**

6 Overture 4-01, 08, 10–11 (*CW*, 303, 306–07)

7 WHEREAS, The 2023 Synod convention instructed the Board for National Mission and Board for International Mission
 8 to recommend possible revisions to the mission priorities and possible bylaw revisions that would articulate both the
 9 process for developing mission priorities and how those priorities would function in the mission and ministry of the Synod
 10 (Resolution 4-03, “To Affirm and Continue Mission Priorities for 2023–26 Triennium”); and

11 WHEREAS, The two mission boards have had extensive fraternal conversations with every district pertaining to the
 12 Synod’s mission priorities and their effectiveness for the work of each district; and

13 WHEREAS, The districts expressed general agreement with the doctrine and practice articulated in the current mission
 14 priorities, yet found them less than helpful for the specific priorities and work of their districts; and

15 WHEREAS, Many districts have established their own mission priorities under the Synod’s triennial mission and
 16 ministry emphasis; and

17 WHEREAS, Every priority of the current list of seven mission priorities is already articulated in the objectives of Synod
 18 (Const. Art. III); and

19 WHEREAS, Conversations with the districts by the two mission boards indicated no particular desire to retain the
 20 current mission priorities, or establish an elaborate procedure for creating mission priorities in the future; therefore be it

21 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention commend and identify the Synod objectives (Const. Art. III) as the mission
 22 priorities of the Synod and a faithful articulation of its work; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend the district presidents and their districts for the constructive fraternal
 24 conversations they have had with the mission boards over the last triennium; and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks for how the original mission priorities helped shape the work of national and
 26 international mission during the early years after restructuring; and be it finally

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod reaffirm the responsibility of the respective mission boards (Bylaws 3.8.2–3), under the
 28 leadership of the President and pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, to assist in identifying the specific goals and priorities for
 29 national and international mission work.

30 **To Clarify Oversight and Revitalize Role of Registered Service Organizations**

31 **RESOLUTION 4-04**

32 Report R1 (*CW*, 1–5); Overtures 4-32–35 (*CW*, 319–22); President’s Report, Part 2, (*TB*, 1:28); Overture L4-57 (*TB*,
 33 1:46–48)

34 WHEREAS, The 2016 Synod convention created a task force to review the current structure and recommend the best
 35 model for the Synod’s relationship to recognized service organizations (RSOs) (Res. 4-03B, “To Convene Task Force to
 36 Review Recognized Service Organization Program and Bylaws,” *Proceedings*, 146–47); and

37 WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention adopted the recommendation of the task force in Resolution 4-06A, “To
 38 Amend Bylaw Section 6.2 to Revitalize Synod’s Recognized Service Organization Program” (*Proc.*, 137–42), and began
 39 implementing the vast new recommendations; and

40 WHEREAS, 2019 Resolution 4-06A (*ibid.*) granted RSOs numerous privileges, under the ecclesiastical oversight of
 41 district presidents who report any concerns to Synod’s mission offices (Office of International Mission or Office of
 42 National Mission) (Bylaw 6.2.1 [b–c]); and

43 WHEREAS, The Synod Board of Directors (BOD), Board for International Mission, and Board for National Mission
 44 were charged with creating policy for RSO oversight, and implementation delegated to staff; and

1 WHEREAS, “Over the past five years, 115 organizations have been granted RSO status; in the same period, 77 have
2 been terminated, denied or withdrawn. Of those 77, 49 organizations did not represent LCMS doctrine and practice
3 adequately and RSO status was ended.” (President’s Report, Part 2, *Today’s Business*, 1:28); and

4 WHEREAS, Some mercy service organizations (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]), such as adoption agencies, have been compelled by
5 law or controlling regulation, on occasion, to facilitate actions contrary to the Word of God; and

6 WHEREAS, Other organizations intentionally promote and facilitate actions contrary to the Word of God; and

7 WHEREAS, The role of and faithful work of RSOs are to be commended, celebrated, and encouraged; therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod remain patient as the RSO office and Synod staff continue implementing all the revisions
9 from the 2016 task force and 2019 resolution that resulted in the current Bylaw section 6.2, “Recognized Service
10 Organizations” in collaboration with the appropriate district president; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the RSO office keep the BOD apprised of legal and regulatory constraints on the service of RSOs in
12 the adoption and foster care space which may burden an RSO’s religious exercise, and the BOD is encouraged to monitor
13 this area for potential to stand with our organizations in the unfettered “extension of the divine mercy without
14 compromising the church’s scriptural and confessional standards” (Bylaw 6.2.2 [c]), to which they may be entitled under
15 the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or other laws protecting religious liberty, and thus support
16 and extend latitude to those RSOs striving to remain faithful while navigating these situations; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the RSO office withdraw RSO status from organizations that intentionally promote actions contrary
18 to the Word of God, including but not limited to unnatural or unbiblical family structures; and be it finally

19 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks for the work of our many faithful RSOs.

20 **To Clarify Nomenclature for Chaplaincy and Institutional Care Work**
21 **and To Amend Related Bylaws**

22 **RESOLUTION 4-05**

23 Overtures 4-38–39 (*CW*, 323–24)

24 **Rationale**

25 Holy Scripture teaches that the Office of the Holy Ministry is entrusted with the public preaching of the Word and the
26 administration of the Sacraments (Matt. 28:18–20; John 20:21–23; 1 Cor. 4:1); and the Lutheran Confessions affirm the
27 necessity and centrality of the called and ordained pastor in the life of the Church (AC XIV; Tr 67–74). The Office of
28 National Mission (ONM) has submitted an overture requesting attention to the bylaws that address the work of Specialized
29 Spiritual Care Ministry. Several updates are needed. First, the language utilized by recognized service organizations and
30 other agencies that provide specialized spiritual care has changed over time. Organizations that serve people who are ill,
31 aging, or disabled no longer refer to their work as being “institutional.” Additionally, the ONM’s Specialized Spiritual
32 Care Ministry endorses workers for broader work than chaplaincy, which has historically referred to an ordained pastor
33 associated with a physical chapel in which worship services are conducted. The term *institutional chaplain* utilized in
34 Synod Bylaws is outdated and leaves out the specialized spiritual care work of the ministers of religion—commissioned
35 who do not lead worship services and serve in related chaplaincy or counseling roles. Furthermore, the usage of *chaplain*
36 for individuals not holding the Office of the Holy Ministry can create confusion regarding who is authorized to preach the
37 Gospel and administer the Sacraments, potentially undermining the pastoral office and our confession of the Office of the
38 Holy Ministry. Finally, the ONM and the Office of International Mission (OIM) have determined that the work of chaplains
39 serving in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is more closely aligned and thus better supported by the Ministry to
40 the Armed Forces, which is a department of the OIM. The bylaw that references the VA has the calling agency as the
41 Board for National Mission and needs to be updated.

42 Therefore be it

43 *Resolved*, That the 2026 Synod convention adopt the position that the title *chaplain* within Synod contexts be reserved
44 for ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament; and be it further

45 *Resolved*, That institutions, agencies, and ministries within the Synod be encouraged to ensure that titles and job
46 descriptions make clear any distinction between ordained chaplains and other spiritual care providers (e.g., deaconesses,
47 lay ministers, or counselors) who may assist but are not called and ordained to the Office of the Holy Ministry; and be it
48 further

1 *Resolved*, That districts, circuit visitors, and local congregations be urged to instruct their members regarding the
 2 proper use of the term *chaplain*, reaffirming our confessional understanding that preaching the Gospel and administering
 3 the Sacraments are entrusted to the pastoral office; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks for the faithful service of all who provide spiritual care within our fellowship,
 5 while upholding in doctrine and practice that the title *chaplain* belongs to those ordained to serve as called ministers of
 6 Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1); and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 2.11.1 (h) be amended as follows:

8 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

9 ***Active Members***

10 2.11.1 To remain on the roster of the Synod as an active member, an ordained or commissioned minister of religion
 11 must be a communicant member of a congregation which is a member of the Synod (except as provided in
 12 paragraph [c] below) and be regularly performing the duties of one of the following:

13 ...

14 (h) ~~A military or institutional chaplain endorsed by the Synod.~~ A person who is endorsed by the Synod
 15 to serve as a military chaplain or in a Word or Word-and-Sacrament specialized ministry.

16 ...

17 and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.8.2 be amended as follows:

19 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

20 ***Board for National Mission***

21 3.8.2 The Board for National Mission is charged with developing and determining policies for the coordination of
 22 and in support of district ministries which support congregations and schools (Bylaw 1.2.1 [n]). These
 23 policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention.
 24 Under the leadership of the President of the Synod, pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall assist in
 25 identifying the specific goals for the Office of National Mission. Policies determined by the board
 26 (implemented by staff) may include but not be limited to:

- 27 • strong national mission leadership
- 28 • Lutheran school ministries and accreditation
- 29 • human care and domestic mercy efforts
- 30 • stewardship
- 31 • evangelism
- 32 • church planting and revitalization
- 33 • youth ministry

34 Upon recommendation of the Office of National Mission, the Board for National Mission shall serve as a
 35 calling agency for ~~institutional and agency chaplains and other non foreign specialized ministers (e.g.,~~
 36 ~~Veterans Administration chaplains, Bureau of Prison chaplains, hospital chaplains, pastoral counselors, and~~
 37 ~~teachers of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling)~~ church workers serving in specialized ministry roles in
 38 institutions (e.g., Bureau of Prisons, hospitals, spiritual care counselors, and teachers of spiritual care
 39 education) after consultation with the appropriate district presidents(s) (cf. Bylaw 2.12.1.4).

40 and be it finally

41 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 6.2.2 be amended as follows:

42 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

43 **6.2 Recognized Service Organizations**

44 ...

45 6.2.2 Policies shall distinguish the three classes of recognized service organization, with criteria, procedures, and
 46 benefits appropriate to each, further distinctions being drawn within the categories as needed:

47 (a) *A witness service organization*, under the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions, engages in Word or
 48 Word-and-Sacrament ministry (including chaplaincy roles), religious media/programming, mission
 49 society activity, support of specific missions, mission-and-ministry training, church worker professional

1 development, church worker care, or other work directly related to the church’s proclamation. A witness
 2 service organization is governed solely by Synod (or partner church) congregations or a board
 3 comprising solely members of member congregations of the Synod (or its partner churches).
 4 ...

5 **To Amend Bylaws to Reinstate Commission on Worship**

6 **RESOLUTION 4-06**

7 Overtures 4-23–31, 40–42, 46 (*CW*, 314–19, 324–27)

8 **Preamble**

9 The Word of God and the Sacraments are the means by which God has promised to deal with us (SA III VIII 10). It is by
 10 these means that justifying faith is obtained (AC V). In order to obtain this faith, the ministry of purely teaching the Gospel
 11 and rightly administering the Sacraments was established and continues in the church, serving as the marks of the true
 12 Christian Church and its unity (AC V; VII).

13 The public teaching of God’s Word and administration of the Sacraments in Christian congregations is commonly referred
 14 to as “worship.” Such worship is the essential and necessary public activity for every Christian congregation. In faithful
 15 public worship the following common purposes of the members of the Synod (congregations and individual ministers) are
 16 enacted: to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith” (Const. Art. III 1), to strengthen one another “in giving bold
 17 witness by word and deed to the love and work of God” (Const. Art. III 2), to educate and nourish Christians of all ages
 18 (Const. Art. III 5), and to recognize, promote, express, conserve, and defend confessional unity in the true faith (Const.
 19 Art. III 6). “Worship” necessarily encompasses a variety of faithful church practices and customs. Holy Scripture does not
 20 require precise uniformity in these. Neither is the true unity of the Church to be found by outward uniformity (AC VII 2).
 21 Nevertheless, the Synod from inception has consistently affirmed that a recognizable uniformity of order and church
 22 practice is desirable and worthy of pursuit (Const. Art. III 7).

23 In fact, the Synod has found this pursuit of recognizable uniformity and faithfulness of such importance that it has
 24 conditioned membership in the Synod concerning the prayers and rites, songs and hymns used in worship. The Synod
 25 requires (based on the confessional basis of Const. Art. II) that its members “exclusive[ly] use ... doctrinally pure agenda,
 26 hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” (Const. Art. VI 4).

27 Furthermore, we have the clear teaching of Holy Scripture regarding being united by God’s Word in worship. For example,
 28 Scripture teaches that we are to “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all
 29 wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). The unity
 30 we have in God’s Word (John 17:20–21; Eph. 4:11–13) finds expression in our worship.

31 To assist its members in these things, the Synod adopts official hymnbooks and agenda, and gives attention to the conduct
 32 of rites, preaching, administration of the Sacraments, and music by her members (e.g., 2016 Res. 4-04A, “To Appeal to
 33 the LCMS Congregations, Workers, and Institutions within Christian Freedom and for Love’s Sake to Retain a Common
 34 Order of Service for the Lord’s Supper”). Recognizing the vital importance of worship, the Synod maintained a
 35 Commission on Worship from the 1930s until 1981, although it was first acknowledged in Synod Bylaws in 1960. After
 36 a brief hiatus, the Commission on Worship was reinstated in 1983 and continued until the Synod’s restructuring in 2010.
 37 The Commission on Worship was historically appointed in its entirety by the President of the Synod.

38 Such a Commission on Worship is clearly desirable: to coordinate, guide, and instruct the Synod by efforts that faithfully
 39 carry forward the Lutheran heritage of worship in the present day; to assure broad input and knowledgeable expertise from
 40 the Synod’s membership in matters of worship and future hymnal projects; to coordinate the aims of the Synod, the
 41 President of the Synod, and Concordia Publishing House; to pursue what is excellent in each new generation so that the
 42 church’s song would neither become novel nor stagnant; and to do so faithfully and cost-effectively.

43 WHEREAS, Worship in Word and Sacrament is a mark of the church and as such is a “vital function of the church and
 44 as such its importance must be strongly emphasized” (1983 Res. 5-06, “To Reinstate Commission on Worship”); and

45 WHEREAS, The Constitution of the Synod, reflecting this emphasis, directs congregations of Synod “to strive for
 46 uniformity in church practice,” “to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in
 47 harmony with [the Synod’s] common profession of faith” (Const. Art. III), and to make “exclusive use of doctrinally pure
 48 agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” (Const. Art. VI 4); and

1 WHEREAS, The Synod was served regularly by a Commission on Worship prior to 2010 to assist it in meeting such
 2 objectives and conditions for membership, and faithfully in the interim by the LCMS Office of National Mission's Worship
 3 Ministry area; and

4 WHEREAS, With the elimination of the Commission on Worship in 2010, there now exist no bylaw guidelines or
 5 processes for the production and adoption of agendas, hymnbooks, supplements, or other worship resources for use by the
 6 members of the Synod; therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod reinstate a Commission on Worship as a separate commission; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.9.1 be amended as follows:

9 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

10 **3.9 Commissions**

11 3.9.1 The commissions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are the following:

- 12 1. Commission on Constitutional Matters
- 13 2. Commission on Doctrinal Review
- 14 3. Commission on Handbook
- 15 4. Commission on Theology and Church Relations and be it further
- 16 5. Commission on Worship

17 and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.9.6 be added as follows:

19 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

20 *Commission on Worship*

21 3.9.6 The Commission on Worship exists to provide guidance and materials in matters of worship to the members
 22 of the Synod to assist them in their responsibility to make exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda,
 23 hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school (Const. Art. VI 4) and in their objective to strive for
 24 uniformity in church practice and appreciate responsible practices and customs in harmony with the Synod's
 25 common profession of faith (Const. Art. III 7).

26 3.9.6.1 The Commission on Worship shall consist of seven voting members including ordained and commissioned
 27 ministers and laypersons:

- 28 1. One ordained minister who is a parish pastor
- 29 2. One commissioned minister who is a director of parish music or parish teacher
- 30 3. One layperson
- 31 4. One additional ordained minister
- 32 5. One additional musician who is either a commissioned minister or a layperson
- 33 6. Two additional members

34 3.9.6.2 The commission may solicit the assistance of other persons who are well qualified to render valuable and
 35 necessary service to the church through the commission. Such persons may serve as advisory members.

36 3.9.6.3 The members of the Commission on Worship shall be selected as follows:

37 (a) The parish pastor, the Director of Parish music or parish teacher, and the layperson shall be elected
 38 by a convention of the Synod.

39 (b) The additional ordained minister, additional musician, and two additional members shall be
 40 appointed by the President of the Synod after consultation with the Council of Presidents.

41 3.9.6.4 The Commission on Worship may create an executive director position and fill it in accordance with the
 42 Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies of corporate Synod.

43 (a) The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.

44 (1) Upon the formation of the Commission on Worship, the appointment of the executive director
 45 shall be made by the President of the Synod. Thereafter, the initial appointment of the executive
 46 director shall be selected by the commission in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence
 47 of the President of the Synod.

48 (2) In the event of a vacancy, the commission and the President of the Synod shall act expeditiously
 49 to fill the vacancy. This commission shall present its list of candidates to the President.

(3) The commission shall conduct an annual review of its executive director and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.

(4) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the commission takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.

(b) Any interim executive director appointment by the commission shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of the executive director.

(1) Such interim appointee must be approved by the President of the Synod in consultation with the commission and may not serve more than 18 months.

(2) Such interim appointee shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis, excepting the process of filling a vacancy in Bylaw 3.9.6.4 (a)(2) being followed, with the interim appointee having been included on the commission’s list.

(c) The executive director of the commission shall normally attend all meetings of the commission except when his own position is being considered.

(d) The commission may create and fill other staff positions in accordance with the human resources policies of corporate Synod adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5. Such staff may attend meetings of the commission upon request of the commission.

3.9.6.5 The commission shall embrace, recognize, and pursue opportunities to provide guidance, resources, and events that deepen understanding, participation, and excellence in the preparation and conduct of Lutheran worship.

(a) It shall consult with the practical theology and the music departments of Synod colleges, universities, and seminaries to assist them to establish and affirm principles and practices in liturgy, church music, and church art that best express the true confessional theology of worship in Word and Sacrament of the Lutheran church.

(b) It shall support the growth of congregations’ and church workers’ discernment in selecting worship resources that edify the church.

(c) It shall facilitate the development, adoption, and revision of agenda and hymnbooks to be adopted as official agenda and hymnbooks of the Synod.

(1) All agenda and hymnbooks that are to be accepted as official agenda and hymnbooks of the Synod shall be given such status only by a convention of the Synod.

(2) All such agenda and hymnbooks shall be considered by the convention only after a process of exposure and testing decided upon by the Synod in convention.

(3) It shall represent the Synod in the preparation of agenda and hymnbooks in which the Synod may engage in cooperation with other synods.

(4) Revisions to adopted official agenda and hymnbooks shall be made only by a convention of the Synod after requesting an evaluation and subsequent recommendations by the Commission on Worship.

(d) It shall review and at its discretion exercise approval over all material related to corporate worship in liturgy and hymnody made available through the Synod’s various boards, mission offices, and commissions. The commission shall be available to review materials from recognized service organizations upon request.

(e) It shall maintain regular coordination and consultation with Concordia Publishing House to provide guidance and alignment of its worship-related offerings.

and be it further

Resolved, That the 2026 Synod convention, upon adoption, would proceed with the filling of the elected positions on the newly constituted Commission on Worship, and, in order to achieve continuity through a plan of staggered terms, the constituting election shall elect the layperson to a half term of three years and the remaining elected members to a full six-year term; and be it finally

Resolved, That the following overtures, which request action for which responsibilities are herein designated to the Commission on Worship, be referred to that Commission upon its constitution for consideration and possible response: Ov. 4-24–31, 40–42, 46.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate the annual cost to be \$175,000, including regrading the LCMS Worship director position to

1 *executive director, travel for quarterly commission meetings, part-time chaplaincy/counseling support for the*
 2 *International Center previously handled by the LCMS Worship director, and misc. other costs (estimate required by*
 3 *Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

4 **To Condemn Political Violence and Encourage Participation in Public Life**

5 **RESOLUTION 4-07**

6 Overtures 4-45, 47-48, 53-55 (*CW*, 327-28, 330-32)

7 WHEREAS, Scripture (Matt. 22:15-21) and the Lutheran Confessions (AC XVI; LC I 4) affirm that the entire civil
 8 realm is an institution of God to be respected and supported; and

9 WHEREAS, Our Lord commands us to pray for those who serve in public office (1 Tim. 2:1-3) and to respect all levels
 10 of government (Rom. 13:1; 1 Peter 2); and

11 WHEREAS, Our Lord reminds us through the words of St. Paul, that those serving in the civil realm have a God-
 12 ordained vocation (Rom. 13:6); and

13 WHEREAS, The Large Catechism warns that the devil seeks to destabilize the civil realm through “contention, murder,
 14 sedition, and war”:

15 He is not satisfied to obstruct and overthrow the spiritual order, by deceiving souls with his lies and bringing
 16 them under his power, but he also prevents and impedes the establishment of any kind of government or
 17 honorable and peaceful relations on earth. This is why he causes so much contention, murder, sedition, and
 18 war, why he sends storms and hail to destroy crops and cattle, why he poisons the air, etc. In short, it pains
 19 him that anyone should receive even a mouthful of bread from God and eat it in peace. If it were in his power
 20 and our prayer to God did not restrain him, surely we would not have a straw in the field, a penny in the
 21 house, or even an hour more of life—especially those of us who have the Word of God and would like to be
 22 Christians (LC III 80 [Tappert]); and

23 WHEREAS, In recent years, political tensions have led to “contention, murder, sedition, and war,” in many forms and
 24 guises, even among those in the church, resulting in multiple assassination attempts of politicians and other public figures
 25 of various political persuasions, violent conflicts between law enforcement and civilians leading even to death, and many
 26 other sad examples of division resulting from political opinions, all of which contradict the peaceable and law-abiding
 27 witness of the church; therefore be it

28 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention declare its opposition to political violence in any form and urge its members
 29 to oppose such violence in their local context; and be it further

30 *Resolved*, That pastors and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to affirm the importance of peaceful
 31 engagement in the public square; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That church workers and congregations of the Synod identify, encourage, and raise up from within our
 33 midst those with the gifts and abilities to serve God and their neighbor in public service, that through such representatives
 34 the church might provide a morally virtuous and theologically faithful example in this divisive climate; and be it finally

35 *Resolved*, That the theological resources addressing matters of church and state from a Lutheran perspective be
 36 commended to the people of the Synod, including the publications of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty and the
 37 Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), especially the CTCR’s 1995 report, *Render unto Caesar... and*
 38 *unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State* and its forthcoming report on church, state, and the Christian love of
 39 neighbor, as requested by 2023 Resolution 11-05, “To Address the Relationship between Church and State in an
 40 Increasingly Hostile Environment.”

**To Direct the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
to Examine Current Political and Social Issues**

RESOLUTION 4-08

Overtures 4-13–22 (*CW*, 309–14)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture declares that God created all humanity in His image (Gen 1:27) and that all believers are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28), condemns all forms of racial hatred as sinful (James 2:8–9), and exhorts us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:36–40); and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has regularly spoken to political and social issues affecting Christ’s Church (2023 Res. 11-02A, “To Reject All Forms of Racism and Affirm Our Witness to All People”; 2019 Res. 11-04A, “To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities”; 2016 Res. 1-06, “To Celebrate Legacy of Rosa J. Young and Encourage Launch of Rosa J. Young International Academies”; 2013 Res. 3-09, “To Continue to Support and Promote Black Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod”; 1995 Res. 2-05A, “To Commend for Study the CTCR Document *Racism and the Church*”; 1992 Res. 3-03, “To Combat All Racism”; 1983 Res. 1-20, “To Encourage Bringing the Gospel to Jewish People”; 1983 Res. 3-09, “To Clarify Position on Anti-Semitism”; 1981 Res. 8-07, “To Oppose Racism and Violence”; 1979 Res. 4-11, “To Reaffirm Efforts to Combat Racism”; 1977 Res. 10-18A, “To Make Every Effort to Eliminate Racism”; 1973 Res. 9-22, “To Continue Efforts to Combat Racism”; 1971 Res. 9-32, “To Encourage Christian Action to Combat Racism”); and

WHEREAS, In recent years, certain ideologies and secular distortions have proliferated, leading to widespread confusion and harmful division especially in the church; and

WHEREAS, Current political and social issues such as racism, antisemitism, and specific aberrations associated with “Christian Nationalism,” demonstrate an urgent need for theologically-sound resources to address these concerns, providing faithful care for those harmed by these ideologies and secular distortions; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod in convention condemn all forms of racial hatred as sinful (James 2:8–9); and be it further

Resolved, That Synod in convention direct the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to examine such political and social issues, especially racism, antisemitism, and Christian Nationalism, and prepare documents as it deems appropriate for the edification of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors and congregations make use of these resources to foster repentance, reconciliation, and Christ-centered unity proclaiming that for those who belong to Christ by faith, “There is neither Jew nor Greek ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Address Uses of Artificial Intelligence

RESOLUTION 4-09

Overtures 4-51–52 (*CW*, 329–30)

WHEREAS, The capabilities and regular use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) have dramatically increased in recent years; and

WHEREAS, AI tools are increasingly being used by churches and pastors to create and curate digital content and communications, to create sermons, prayers, images, hymns, and other resources for use in worship; and to perform various ministry functions; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has published a study document, *Online Technology in the Church: Study Materials* (December 2024, resources.lcms.org/reading-study/cicr-study-document-online-technology-in-the-church-study-materials), that urges against the use of AI in writing sermons, but does not address AI’s broader implications for the church, our families, or society; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR document also encouraged “the cautious, morally responsible and theologically alert use of technology in a way that reflects what we know from Holy Scripture about who we are, how God has made us, how God

1 seeks to save us in Christ, and how God has ordered and directed His church to confess its faith and share its life together”
2 (ibid., 2); and

3 WHEREAS, AI has also been associated with many moral evils, including creation and distribution of pornography,
4 solicitation of minors, and sexual and psychological manipulation; and

5 WHEREAS, AI and other emerging technologies afford us unprecedented opportunities for advancement across
6 industries and throughout our societies, but may also have dangerous and dehumanizing outcomes if not utilized with
7 godly wisdom and discernment; therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That the Synod acknowledge the power of AI and other emerging technologies to harm our churches, their
9 members, and the society in which we live, if not carefully and insightfully addressed with and limited by God’s Word;
10 and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage all who employ these tools to do so in honest, transparent, and Christ-like ways
12 that focus on loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37–40), never seeking to willfully deceive others
13 or take advantage of them; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the Synod proactively engage these emerging technologies rather than simply respond to the challenges
15 of AI and other emerging technologies after they have already affected our churches and communities; and be it finally

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod ask the CTCR, in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Office of the President,
17 to produce a document that allows for appropriate theological reflection and study of the use of AI and that evaluates it in
18 light of our theological assumptions, especially related to anthropology, the image of God, and Lutheran teaching on
19 vocation, along with practical guidance to individuals and congregations in the use of AI in ministry and in the general life
20 of God’s people.

21 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
22 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be within the existing*
23 *scope of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

24 **To Celebrate Concordia Historical Institute Centenary**
25 **and Renew the Synod’s Commitment to Treasure and Trumpet Its Redeemed History**

26 **RESOLUTION 4-10**

27 Overture 4-56 (*CW*, 332–33)

28 WHEREAS, Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) will observe its centenary anniversary on April 28, 2027, under the
29 theme: “Treasuring & Trumpeting Our Lutheran History—for All the Saints”; and

30 WHEREAS, Though officially incorporated as a Missouri State nonprofit in 1927, the institute’s origins reach back to
31 the organizational documents drafted in 1839 by the Saxons under Martin Stephan before they immigrated to Missouri—
32 plans that included provision for a church archivist. This same conviction regarding the importance of preserving historical
33 materials found expression in the founding Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in 1847, when
34 the office of Synod “Chronicler” was established; and

35 WHEREAS, After the death of the first generation of Synod leaders and the subsequent scattering and loss of important
36 historical materials related to the Synod’s early years, a renewed commitment to preserving and proclaiming the redeeming
37 work of Christ in the Synod’s history took shape. Various local efforts to safeguard historical materials continued until
38 343 charter members signed the constitution of the Concordia Historical Society (*Die Konkordia-Historische*
39 *Gesellschaft*), crafted by Concordia Seminary (CSL) professor and administrator Ludwig Fuerbringer on Nov. 4, 1910.
40 This society became the institutional model for CHI, which the Synod in convention recognized and commended in 1929
41 and later designated as the official LCMS “Department of Archives and History” at the 1965 Synod convention (Res. 14-
42 11, *Proceedings*, 188); and

43 WHEREAS, Over the past 99 years, CHI has actively curated and published “Ebenezers” (i.e., memorials, 1 Sam. 7:12)
44 of its history through its journal, the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, the longest-running Lutheran historical
45 journal in North America, first published in April 1928 and comprehensively revised and expanded in 2014; and

46 WHEREAS, Since the construction of the CHI building on the campus of CSL in 1952, books, manuscripts,
47 photographs, paintings, artifacts, and commemorative coins and medals have been displayed to commemorate Christ’s
48 gracious work among the people and congregations of the Synod. Today, CHI manages a permanent museum exhibit

1 chronicling the history of the Synod at the LCMS International Center in Kirkwood, Mo. It also provides regularly rotating
2 exhibits in the CHI Exhibition Hall on the CSL campus—and more recently, publishes printed exhibit catalogs and posts
3 digital exhibits online; and

4 WHEREAS, The CHI staff responds daily to inquiries regarding the people, places, and events spanning the 179-year
5 history of the Synod, providing the Synod with increased access to its archival materials and new publications that instill
6 and deepen interest in Lutheran history; and

7 WHEREAS, The institute continues to serve as the “corporate memory” of the Synod, steadfastly reminding the Synod
8 of its responsibility to learn with joy from the Lord’s redeeming hand in preserving and nurturing His people—especially
9 in times of crisis—over these many years. CHI continues to offer archival services to districts, congregations, Synod
10 entities, and leaders who bear fiduciary responsibility not only to maintain records but also to secure them for posterity;
11 therefore be it

12 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks to God for the historical treasures entrusted to it over the past century and make
13 fuller use of the historical resources offered through CHI, to her great benefit and blessing; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That members, congregations, districts, as well as Synod departments and entities be encouraged to uphold
15 the institute through prayer and financial support by becoming annual members of CHI and sustaining their financial
16 contributions and estate gifts (with those of sufficient means becoming annual members of CHI’s Director’s Circle or
17 Vault Society), so that the work and proper staffing of the institute may be sustained and continue; and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That the Synod renew its commitment to retrieve, organize, preserve, and share her rich history for the
19 benefit of both church and community; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention earnestly remind congregational, district, and Synod leaders of their fiduciary
21 responsibilities to maintain and secure records that document our shared history—especially in those unfortunate
22 circumstances when a congregation or educational institution closes; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That those with historical materials of various kinds (often in fragile and deteriorating condition) be
24 encouraged to share them with the church and community and make them available to be copied or deposited with CHI
25 for preservation and safekeeping; and be it finally

26 *Resolved*, That the Synod take Martin Luther’s warning to heart, asking the Lord for a greater appreciation of her
27 redeemed history and the historical treasures entrusted to her care, that our joy and thanksgiving for Christ’s work among
28 us might increase.

29

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

To Recognize Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church of Bolivia

RESOLUTION 5-01

Overture 5-01 (CW, 335–36)

Preamble

Iglesia Cristiana Evangelica Luterana, the Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church (ICEL) has its roots in the work of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) that began in the 1970's, primarily in rural, Quechua-speaking areas of southern Bolivia. NLM built an infrastructure for its missionaries and mission work in Bolivia, including a retreat center and office in Cochabamba and a training center and radio station in Sucre. Internal migration from the rural areas to the large cities spurred development of congregations in several of the major cities. The congregations affiliated with NLM formed an independent church body (ICEL) in 1997. Its first president was a layman, Mario Delgado.

Mr. Delgado received the first visit of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) from then area secretary Rev. Douglas Rutt. Rev. Rutt connected ICEL with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) which invited a delegation of ICEL to visit a conference on mission in Brazil in 2000 in São Paulo. This represented ICEL's first contact with a confessional Lutheran church body in Latin America and eventually led to IELB President Carlos Winterle signing an agreement of altar and pulpit fellowship with the ICEL in 2002. At this time, ICEL also began participating as an observer in regional meetings of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). There was also contact with and support from LCMS sister churches in Chile and Argentina.

NLM had established a training school in Sucre, Bolivia called Centro Luterano de Estudios Teológicos, Lutheran Center of Theological Studies (CLET) as well as a more advanced seminary in Arequipa, Peru called Seminario Teológico Luterano Latinoamericano, Latin American Lutheran Theological Seminary (SETELA). When the NLM closed the program at CLET (for financial reasons), ICEL began to seek other possibilities for theological education of future pastors. While ICEL remains thankful for the mission endeavors of NLM in Bolivia, ICEL no longer has a formal relationship with NLM.

The LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM) began working indirectly with ICEL in 2012 when 20 scholarships were awarded to Seminario Concordia of Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the purpose of forming pastors for the Argentine Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELA), partner churches and others—including four Bolivian pastors. At the same time, Luther Academy began to offer two courses a year in Bolivia, taught by professors such as Rev. Cristian Rautenberg and Rev. Omar Kinas of Chile and Rev. Mark Braden of the LCMS. When Concordia El Reformador Seminary (CMSCR) opened in 2017 in Santiago, Dominican Republic, three Bolivian students transferred to that institution. Presidents of ICEL have regularly attended all annual CMSCR symposia.

In September 2018, a delegation of OIM pastors attended the ordination of Rev. Osmel Soliz, one of the first Bolivian graduates of the seminary scholarship program. The liturgy followed the historic *ordo*, and the ordination rite included a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. The delegation, including Rev. Ted Krey, Rev. Dr. Arthur Just, and Rev. James Sharp, also engaged in informal discussions with members of the ministerium and the national council of ICEL about issues such as the Sacraments, the office of the Holy Ministry, and worship. In 2019, Bolivia was included as one of the countries under Rev. Sharp's responsibility in order to facilitate continued communication between ICEL and OIM.

In May 2020, ICEL presented a document on the office of the Holy Ministry signed by the entire Bolivian ministerium to Rev. Krey and Rev. Joel Fritsche. This document affirmed the scriptural and confessional doctrine of the pastoral office and represented ICEL's firm commitment to move away from its pietistic theological roots. CMSCR began monthly zoom lectures with ICEL leaders/pastors which included Scriptural and confessional teaching on the office of the Holy Ministry and other topics. At a 2021 meeting of the ILC in Mexico City, the ICEL asked the IELB to ordain the (previously un-ordained) ministerium of ICEL, since the two church bodies had already been in altar and pulpit fellowship since 2002. As part of their ordination oaths, each ICEL pastor confessed the Old and New Testament Scriptures to be the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the only rule for all faith and life, and a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions as a true and faithful exposition of the Holy Scripture.

LCMS observers, including the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw, LCMS Director of Church Relations, were present for this and related events. During the first-ever LCMS FORO with ICEL held March 23–24, 2022, in Sucre, Rev. Dr. Shaw presented copies of Luther's Small Catechism in Quechua, a first for ICEL. During and after the March 25–26, 2022, ICEL National

1 Convention, Rev. Dr. Shaw met with the Rev. Limberth Fernández, ICEL President, and the ICEL Executive Committee
 2 for ICEL-LCMS exploratory fellowship discussions, which included discussion of the basis for church fellowship, i.e.,
 3 agreement in the Gospel in all its articles founded on the authority of Holy Scripture and the testimony of the Lutheran
 4 Confessions. In June 2022, President Fernández wrote to President Matthew Harrison requesting formal fellowship
 5 discussions with the LCMS.

6 A Bolivia dialogue team was appointed by President Harrison consisting of LCMS representatives Rev. Dr. Shaw, Rev.
 7 Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, Rev. Mark Braden, Rev. Michael Frese, and Rev. James Sharp. The first round of official fellowship
 8 talks with ICEL was held in St. Louis in April 2023, followed by an initial familiarization overview and discussion with
 9 the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) on April 13. A second round of official fellowship discussions
 10 was held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2024. These dialogues exhibited a remarkable unity in doctrine and practice.
 11 By this time, the ICEL Constitution and Religious Canon had been revised to reflect a confessional Lutheran understanding
 12 of church and ministry, a commitment to the entirety of the Book of Concord as a true and faithful exposition of the Holy
 13 Scripture, and clear processes for ICEL to walk and work together as a church body in witness, service, and fellowship.

14 A third round of official fellowship discussions took place in February 2025, with President Fernández meeting with the
 15 CTCR in St. Louis. At this meeting, the CTCR unanimously recommended recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with
 16 ICEL pursuant to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(2), which authorizes the LCMS President to declare recognition of fellowship after
 17 consultation with the Praesidium “subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.” In a letter to President
 18 Fernández dated May 4, 2025, President Harrison officially declared recognition of fellowship with ICEL. On May 24,
 19 2025, a Divine Service celebrating the official recognition of fellowship was held in the chapel of Concordia the Reformer
 20 Seminary in the Dominican Republic. This service included representatives from the LCMS, its sister churches in Latin
 21 America, and faculty, students and staff of CMSCR.

22 WHEREAS, The ICEL is a confessional Lutheran church in Bolivia consisting of around 1,000 baptized members in
 23 15 congregations served by 12 ordained pastors; and

24 WHEREAS, Formal discussions directed toward altar and pulpit fellowship with the ICEL began in 2022 and concluded
 25 in February 2025, when the CTCR unanimously recommended recognition of fellowship with ICEL; and

26 WHEREAS, The ICEL accepts all the canonical books of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments
 27 as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran
 28 Church, compiled in the Book of Concord of 1580, as a correct exposition of Holy Scripture; and

29 WHEREAS, The ICEL is in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS’s sister church in Brazil (IELB); and

30 WHEREAS, The ICEL has requested altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

31 WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(2) says: “Formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the Synod and a
 32 small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief
 33 ecumenical officer) may be declared by the Synod President only after the approval of the commission and consultation
 34 with the Praesidium. Such recognition shall be subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention”; and

35 WHEREAS, The CTCR has unanimously recommended the recognition of fellowship with the ICEL as a faithful
 36 Lutheran church body, after having carefully and thoroughly considered this matter by means of extensive correspondence,
 37 reports on meetings with ICEL representatives, and the examination of pertinent documents that describe the doctrine and
 38 practice of the ICEL; and

39 WHEREAS, President Matthew Harrison, by virtue of the authority vested in him according to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2, wrote
 40 to President Limberth Fernández on May 4, 2025, stating: “I declare the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between
 41 our two churches. Praise God!”; therefore be it

42 *Resolved*, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our church bodies under
 43 the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

44 *Resolved*, That this convention formally endorse the recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship between the ICEL and
 45 the LCMS; and be it further

46 *Resolved*, That we give thanks to God for the faithful Lutheran witness ICEL provides within its own country, and
 47 beyond; and be it further

48 *Resolved*, That we encourage and walk with ICEL as they proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world;
 49 and be it further

50 *Resolved*, That we pray for God’s blessings in the coming years on this agreement in the confession of the Gospel that
 51 we enjoy as sister church bodies; and be it finally

1 CTCR unanimously recommended recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with LM—A pursuant to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2
2 (b)(2).

3 WHEREAS, The LM—A is a small but growing confessional Lutheran church in Australia consisting of around 1,000
4 baptized members in 19 congregations served by 18 ordained pastors; and

5 WHEREAS, LM—A leaders, pastors, and congregations are to be strongly commended and encouraged for their faithful
6 and courageous confession of the truth of God’s Word in response to heterodox positions taken by the LCA due to
7 erroneous views of the authority and inerrancy of Holy Scripture; and

8 WHEREAS, Formal and informal discussions directed toward altar and pulpit fellowship with LM—A leaders began
9 in 2022 and concluded in December 2025, when the CTCR unanimously recommended recognition of fellowship with
10 LM—A; and

11 WHEREAS, The LM—A accepts all the canonical books of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments
12 as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran
13 Church, compiled in the *Book of Concord* of 1580, as a correct exposition of Holy Scripture; and

14 WHEREAS, The LM—A is actively pursuing altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod’s sister churches in Canada
15 (LCC), Finland (ELMDF), and the LCP; and

16 WHEREAS, The LM—A has been a full, voting member of the International Lutheran Council since September 2025;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, LM—A leadership has expressed a hope for altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

19 WHEREAS, At its December 2025 meeting the CTCR unanimously recommended recognition of altar and pulpit
20 fellowship with LM—A pursuant to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(2), which says: “Formal recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship
21 between the Synod and a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the
22 President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) may be declared by the Synod President only after the approval of the
23 commission and consultation with the Praesidium. Such recognition shall be subject to the endorsement of the subsequent
24 Synod convention”; and

25 WHEREAS, The LM—A will hold its first churchwide convention in August 2026, at which time it hopes to recognize
26 altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS; and

27 WHEREAS, President Matthew Harrison has expressed strong support for recognition of fellowship with LM—A, and
28 has indicated his hope to be able to recognize fellowship at or after the LM—A’s first convention; therefore be it

29 *Resolved*, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our church bodies under
30 the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That this convention commend and support the CTCR’s recommendation to recognize altar and pulpit
32 fellowship with the LM—A and President Harrison’s hope to do the same at the appropriate time; and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That we give thanks to God for the faithful Lutheran witness the LM—A provides within its own country
34 and beyond; and be it further

35 *Resolved*, That we encourage and support the LM—A as they proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost
36 world; and be it finally

37 *Resolved*, That as a sign of encouragement and support of the LM—A’s confession and witness and in joyful
38 anticipation of our mutual recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship in the near future, the convention assembly rise and
39 sing the common doxology.

40 To Give Thanks for the Mission Province in Sweden

41 RESOLUTION 5-03

42 Report R1.1, R12 (*CW*, 7, 62)

43 Preamble

44 The Mission Province in Sweden (MPS) was formed in 2003 to support confessional Lutheran pastors and congregations
45 and to restore the possibility of ordination for future pastors who either could not be ordained or would not be properly
46 supervised in the increasingly liberalized and radicalized Nordic national churches. In 2006, the Mission Province was

1 expanded and renamed the Mission Province in Sweden and Finland (MPSF). In May 2009, The Lutheran Church—
 2 Missouri Synod (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and the Director of Church Relations—
 3 Assistant to the President met in St. Louis with representatives of the Mission Province, including Dr. Bengt Birgersson
 4 (general secretary of the MPSF at the time), for the purpose of encouraging the cause of biblical, confessional Lutheranism
 5 in the Nordic world.

6 In subsequent years, informal discussions took place on various occasions between LCMS and MPSF leaders in the U.S.
 7 and in Sweden. In 2012, Bishop Roland Gustafsson represented the MPSF at the International Conference on Confessional
 8 Leadership hosted by the LCMS in Atlanta, where he delivered a paper on the efforts of confessional Lutherans in Sweden
 9 and Finland.

10 In 2013, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF) was formed as an independent church body.
 11 Formal discussions regarding church fellowship between the ELMDF and the LCMS began in 2017, and (following a
 12 recommendation by the CTCR) President Harrison declared recognition of fellowship between the LCMS and the ELMDF
 13 in October 2020. The LCMS endorsed recognition of fellowship at its 2023 convention (Res. 5-02, “To Recognize Altar
 14 and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland”).

15 Following the formation of the ELMDF, the MPS once again concentrated its activities on Sweden, while also cooperating
 16 closely with the ELMDF and the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Norway (DELSiN, formed in 2013). In 2018, the MPS
 17 became a member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). In recent years, the MPS has continued to engage the
 18 LCMS in formal and informal conversations, in the hopes of ultimately declaring altar and pulpit fellowship with one
 19 another.

20 WHEREAS, The MPS is a confessional Lutheran church consisting of 20 congregations in Sweden served by 45 pastors;
 21 and

22 WHEREAS, The MPS was formed to bear witness to the truth of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and
 23 to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an increasingly liberalized and radicalized cultural and ecclesial context in the
 24 Nordic region; and

25 WHEREAS, Many MPS confessors of the faith were either defrocked or refused ordination because of their faithful
 26 witness to Christ and His Word; and

27 WHEREAS, The MPS bears witness to the Gospel of Christ in a country where only about 2 percent of the population
 28 attends church on a weekly basis; and

29 WHEREAS, The MPS remains in ongoing theological discussion with representatives of the LCMS; therefore be it

30 *Resolved*, That we give thanks to God for the faithful and courageous Lutheran witness given by the MPS within its
 31 own country, to the entire Nordic world, and beyond; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That we encourage and support MPS in appropriate ways as it proclaims the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ
 33 to a lost and dying world; and be it finally

34 *Resolved*, That Synod in convention urge the President of Synod, his church relations staff, and the CTCR to continue
 35 conversations with the MPS in the 2026–2029 Triennium in the hopes of mutual recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship.

36 **To Address Concerns with Partner Churches**

37 **RESOLUTION 5-04**

38 Overtures 5-03–09 (*CW*, 337–41)

39 WHEREAS, The psalmist writes, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the
 40 precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is
 41 like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life
 42 forevermore” (Psalm 133); and

43 WHEREAS, We give thanks to God through His Son, Jesus Christ, for our 43 Synod partner churches united with us in
 44 Christ, in confession, in worship, and in the church working together through mission, mercy, vocation, and stewardship;
 45 and

46 WHEREAS, Many of our partner churches and their leaders have often contended for the truth of God’s Word in adverse
 47 circumstances; and

1 WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures enjoin us to maintain the unity of the faith in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3, 13); and

2 WHEREAS, The Formula of Concord (FC), in line with this biblical truth, confesses that external fellowship in the
3 church is to be based upon agreement “in the doctrine and all its articles,” as well as “in the right use of the holy
4 Sacraments” (FC SD X 31); and

5 WHEREAS, The first objective of the Synod is to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor.
6 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united
7 defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy” (Const. Art. III 1); and

8 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has confessed that “all Christians are required by God
9 ... to have church-fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies,” (*A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the*
10 *Missouri Synod* [adopted 1932], 28) in accordance with the divine command to avoid those who “cause divisions and
11 create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught” (Rom. 16:17); and

12 WHEREAS, In recent years, a number of concerning teachings, practices, and internal theological disputes have arisen
13 or persisted among a small number of partner churches, including:

- 14 • the practice of fellowship between church bodies without agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles;
- 15 • the consideration of the ordination of women and the service of women in roles that cause confusion with the pastoral
16 office;
- 17 • the advocacy of apostolic succession and the necessity of episcopal ordination;
- 18 • unionistic and syncretistic practices in relationships with heterodox church bodies;
- 19 • membership in the Lutheran World Federation;
- 20 • inappropriate conduct inconsistent with their own constitutions and bylaws and unbecoming of Christian brothers;
- 21 • unwelcome involvement in the ministry of other LCMS partner churches; and
- 22 • violation of protocol and operating agreements with the Synod on matters of discipline and the rostering of pastors
23 removed from the Synod with cause;

24 and

25 WHEREAS, The President of the Synod, as the chief ecumenical officer of the Synod (Bylaw 3.3.1.1.2), is charged
26 with preserving the doctrinal integrity of the Synod and representing the Synod in its relationships with other church
27 bodies; and

28 WHEREAS, The President of the Synod, in his role as chief ecumenical officer, has sought to address many of these
29 issues through his church relations staff, by annual International Church Relations Conferences, visitation, theological
30 education, regional International Church Relations Fora, and publications such as *The Lutheran World Federation Today: Missio Dei, Imago Dei and the Ongoing Reformation* (2024), *Women’s Ordination through the Lens of the Apostles’ Creed: A Fraternal Theological Dialogue of the Lutheran Church in Korea and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, rev. ed. (2024), *Church Body Fellowship: A Collection of Theological Essays, ICRC 2025* (2026), and others; and

34 WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has, in consultation with the President of the
35 Synod, addressed many of these concerns in recent documents, including *Lutheran World Federation: An Introduction and Evaluation from the Theological Perspective of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (2022); *Response to the Lutheran Church of Australia’s Way Forward Proposal* (2024); and *Apostolic Succession in Lutheran Theology* (2026); therefore be it

39 *Resolved*, That the President of the Synod, his church relations staff, and the CTCR be commended for their efforts
40 to date in addressing concerns with partner churches, and that the noted CTCR resources be commended to members of
41 the Synod and LCMS partner churches and their leaders, that they might be informed about these concerns and our
42 theological responses to them; and be it further

43 *Resolved*, That we give thanks to God for the progress already made in these important conversations and for the
44 willingness of many partner churches to listen to and respond to our concerns, and that the President of the Synod be urged
45 to continue his efforts in this regard, making use of his church relations staff and others as he deems appropriate; and be it
46 further

47 *Resolved*, That the CTCR, in accordance with Synod bylaws, be urged to assist the President of the Synod by studying
48 controversial theological matters in partner church relations in order to “provide guidance to the Synod in matters of

1 theology and church relations” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.1) and “bring matters of theology and church relations through special
2 studies and documents to the membership of the Synod and to conferences” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.1 [a]); and be it finally

3 *Resolved*, That the President of the Synod continue to address these matters directly and urgently in the coming
4 triennium and report to the next convention concerning his progress.

5 **To Address Open Communion and Pastoral Exceptions in Extraordinary Circumstances**

6 **RESOLUTION 5-05**

7 Overtures 5-16–18 (*CW*, 345–347)

8 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches clearly that the Lord’s Supper is the true body and blood of Christ (Matt. 26:26–
9 29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:15–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–26), and that those who receive the body and blood of Christ are to
10 examine themselves, lest they eat and drink the Lord’s Supper unworthily and bring judgment upon themselves (1
11 Cor.11:27–32); and

12 WHEREAS, According to the Lutheran Confessions, “The people are instructed more regularly and with the greatest
13 diligence concerning the holy sacrament, to what purpose it was instituted, and how it is to be used, namely, as a comfort
14 to terrified consciences. In this way, the people are drawn to Communion and to the Mass. At the same time, they are also
15 instructed about other, false teaching concerning the sacrament” (AC XXIV [Kolb-Wengert]), and “the custom has been
16 retained among us of not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved” (AC
17 XXV [Tappert, German]); and

18 WHEREAS, Synod in convention has repeatedly and consistently affirmed the teaching and practice of closed
19 Communion, which entails that “except in situations of emergency or in special cases of pastoral care” we “commune
20 individuals of only those synods which are now in fellowship with us” (1969 Res. 2-12, “To Give Further Study to
21 Communion Practices”; 1986 Res. 3-08, “To Maintain Practice of Close Communion”; 1995 Res. 3-08, “To Reaffirm the
22 Practice of Close[d] Communion”; 1998 Res. 3-05, “To Reaffirm Our Practice of Admission to the Lord’s Supper”; 2013
23 Res. 4-10, “To Encourage Proper Oversight in Administration of Lord’s Supper by Visitation from Ecclesiastical
24 Supervisors”; 2016 Res. 5-15, “To Address Questions re the Sacrament of the Altar”; 2019 Res. 4-11A, “To Encourage
25 the Study of the Doctrine of Close[d] Communion and Faithful Practice in All Congregations”; 2023 Res. 5-09, “To
26 Review Guidance on Admission to the Lord’s Supper”); and

27 WHEREAS, There has been conversation within Synod over the distinction between “close Communion” and “closed
28 Communion,” implying that they are different teachings or practices; and

29 WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) in its 1983 report, *Theology and Practice of*
30 *the Lord’s Supper*, has affirmed that the two terms refer to the same teaching and practice: “While the term ‘Closed
31 Communion’ has a longer history ... and is regarded by some as theologically more proper than ‘Close Communion,’ the
32 latter term, which has been used in more recent history by writers in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, may also
33 properly be employed as a way of saying that confessional agreement must precede the fellowship of Christians at the
34 Lord’s Table. Whatever term is used, it is clear that the LCMS’s official practice is consistent with the historic practice of
35 the church, which has regarded unity of doctrine as a prerequisite for admission to the sacrament” (20); and

36 WHEREAS, There has also been conversation within Synod, especially among the Council of Presidents (COP) and
37 the seminaries, over “the language of earlier Communion resolutions regarding extraordinary circumstances” and requests
38 for “case studies and examples” that lend clarity to such circumstances (2023 Res. 5-09); and

39 WHEREAS, The CTCR in its 1999 report, *Admission to the Lord’s Supper: Basics of Biblical and Confessional*
40 *Teaching*, has acknowledged that there can be “rare and genuinely difficult situations of unusual personal need and pastoral
41 care” (47), yet that “it will never be possible to compile a list of ‘acceptable exceptions,’” (48); and

42 WHEREAS, At the same time, the report states that, while “the Synod has always recognized this ... we must engage
43 one another in respectful mutual conversation over the controverted specifics of the ‘situations of emergency, and special
44 cases of pastoral care, or extraordinary situations and circumstances which call for the necessity of exercising responsible
45 pastoral care’” (48); and

46 WHEREAS, In those rare cases of pastoral exception, the pastor takes on the grave burden of pastoral care toward those
47 whom he communes, assuming responsibility before God for their worthy reception of the body and blood of Christ and
48 for the confession of their lips; and

1 WHEREAS, The practice commonly referred to as “functionally open Communion” occurs when “the determination of
2 who is an appropriate recipient (and not merely a ‘worthy’ recipient) of the Lord’s Supper is left exclusively in the hands
3 of the individual contemplating eating and drinking, and when the church’s concern is limited to an individual’s worthiness
4 without further consideration of that person’s confession,” such that professed adherence to closed Communion is rendered
5 meaningless by actual practice (Joel D. Biermann, “Step Up to the Altar: Thinking about the Theology and Practice of the
6 Lord’s Supper,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72 no. 2 [2008]: 153); therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention again affirm its longstanding commitment to the biblical and confessional
8 teaching concerning closed Communion; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod clarify that the terms “close Communion” and “closed Communion,” as used in documents
10 of the Synod, are synonymous and pertain to the same aforementioned teaching and practice; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the pastors of our Synod, as stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1), who are charged to watch
12 over souls as those who must give an account (Heb. 13:17) and commanded to warn, instruct, examine, and withhold the
13 Sacrament when necessary for the good of souls (1 Cor. 11:27–29; Titus 1:7–9), be urged pastorally and through sound
14 catechesis to teach, exhort, practice, and defend closed Communion; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the pastors of our Synod, as members of the ministerium of the Church, be urged to act charitably,
16 seeking to put the best construction on everything as they observe and discuss Communion practice with each other and
17 in their various contexts; and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That the President of Synod and the COP, as ecclesiastical supervisors, continue to be faithful in upholding
19 the existing constitutional and bylaw provisions concerning unionism and sacramental practice and the Synod’s position
20 on closed Communion as articulated in numerous doctrinal resolutions; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That vacancy pastors, intentional interim pastors, circuit visitors, and district presidents be urged to assist
22 congregations in improving communion practices, where necessary, prior to the issuance of calls; and be it finally

23 *Resolved*, That our pastors be encouraged to receive with joy the guidance and admonition provided by their
24 ecclesiastical supervisors, especially in cases where congregations or pastors have been indiscriminate in their Communion
25 practice; and be it finally

26 *Resolved*, That the CTCR provide the Synod with a study document that addresses extraordinary circumstances and
27 pastoral exceptions to closed Communion, including case studies and study questions.

28 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
29 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and*
30 *budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

31 **To Amend Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)**

32 **RESOLUTION 5-06**

33 President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:30)

34 WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(1–3) speaks of “formal” recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship, which suggests that
35 the Synod also *informally* recognizes fellowship, a confusing phrase understood by certain other churches to mean
36 practicing church fellowship without recognized unity in the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles; and

37 WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b)(1–3) speaks of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations’ (CTCR)
38 “approval” within the church fellowship recognition process which, more accurately, is the CTCR’s recommendation that
39 the Synod in convention approve the recognition of such church fellowship; therefore be it

40 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) be amended as follows:

41 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

42 ***Commission on Theology and Church Relations***

43 ...

44 3.9.5.2.2 The Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall assist the President of the Synod at his request in
45 discharging his constitutional responsibilities for maintaining doctrinal integrity as he relates to other church
46 bodies.

47 ...

(b) It shall address itself to potential fellowship and/or partner church relations as follows:

(1) ~~Formal Recognition~~ of altar and pulpit fellowship between the Synod and another church body shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod only after ~~the approval of the commission~~ recommends such recognition.

(2) ~~Formal Recognition~~ of altar and pulpit fellowship between the Synod and a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) may be declared by the Synod President only after ~~the approval of the commission~~ recommends such recognition and the Synod President consults ~~consultation~~ with the Praesidium. Such recognition shall be subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.

(3) ~~Formal Recognition~~ of a mission of the Synod as a self-governing partner church shall be proposed at a convention of the Synod by the Board for International Mission only after the approval ~~of the commission~~ recommends such recognition.

To Refer “Sister Church” Nomenclature Change to Commission on Handbook

RESOLUTION 5-07

President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:30)

WHEREAS, “Partner church” is a confusing term that can refer both to church bodies in fellowship and to church bodies not in fellowship but partnering toward a variety of ends (e.g., disaster relief, medical programming, seminary formation, etc.); and

WHEREAS, Both Synod entities and other church bodies partnering toward given ends frequently refer to the other as a “partner church,” irrespective of church fellowship status; and

WHEREAS, “Partner church” can create fellowship confusion. When church bodies in fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) partner with the LCMS and its entities toward certain ends, and then speak of the LCMS as a partner church; and when church bodies not in fellowship with the LCMS partner with the LCMS toward certain ends, and then speak of the LCMS as a partner church; many non-fellowship churches are then led to believe that they, too, are in fellowship with the LCMS. This has led to shared pulpits and communion tables without the Synod recognizing fellowship; and

WHEREAS, “Partner church” emphasizes the human work of partnering, while true church fellowship speaks of the divine work of God creating unity of confession in the Gospel in all its articles and integrates the faithful into God’s “family” and creates “sister churches”; and

WHEREAS, “Sister church” better reflects the “blood” or “family” connection of church bodies in fellowship, with such fellowship recognized through unity in the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles (FC SD Comprehensive Summary, 1–13; X 31); and

WHEREAS, “Sister church” was the historic way (at least into the 1990s) that the Synod referred to a church body in altar and pulpit fellowship; and

WHEREAS, There are 24 occurrences of the word “partner church” or “partner churches” in the 2023 *Handbook* that would be changed to “sister church” or “sister churches,” respectively, and there are two additional occurrences of the word “partners” that would be changed to “sister churches”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm that “sister church” more accurately reflects the nature of altar and pulpit fellowship as a God-given unity in the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles, as confessed in the Formula of Concord (FC SD Comprehensive Summary, 1–13; X 31); and be it further

Resolved, That this matter be referred to the Commission on Handbook, with the instruction to change all bylaw occurrences of “partner church,” “partner churches,” and “partners” to “sister church” or “sister churches,” respectively.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, note the Handbook changes would fall within the existing scope and budget of the Commission on Handbook; costs of updating related literature are more difficult to estimate but likely not significant (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Reaffirm the Synod’s Positions on Men and Women in the Church

RESOLUTION 5-08

Overtures 5-30–35 (*CW*, 354–57)

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture clearly teaches that the pastoral office is reserved for qualified men, and therefore prohibits women from publicly preaching, teaching, or leading worship in the assembled congregation (1 Timothy 2; 1 Corinthians 11; 1 Corinthians 14); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has repeatedly affirmed this biblical teaching and opposed the ordination of women into the pastoral office as contrary to the Word of God (1971 Res. 2-04, “To Withhold Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office”; 1977 Res. 3-15, “To Reaffirm the Synod’s Position on Women with Reference to the Pastoral Office”; 1986 Res. 3-10, “To Reaffirm the Position of Synod on Ordination of Women”; 1998 Res. 3-25A, “To Affirm Position of Synod that Only Men May Hold the Pastoral Office”); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has also consistently maintained that these scriptural prohibitions do not apply to women voting in their congregations or serving on boards and committees at the congregational, district, or Synod level (1969 Res. 2-17, “To Grant Woman Suffrage and Board Membership”; 1986 Res. 3-09, “To Reaffirm Position of LCMS on Service of Women in the Church”; 1995 Res. 3-05, “To Address Concerns regarding Woman Suffrage”; 2004 Res. 3-08A, “To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*”); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has urged against practices such as women serving as elders or assisting in the distribution of the Lord’s Supper, due to potential confusion with the distinctive functions of the pastoral office (1989 Res. 3-10, “To Address Practice of Women Serving Holy Communion”; 2016 Res. 5-14, “To Reaffirm Biblical Teaching on Man and Woman in the Church”); and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has published many documents pertaining to the appropriate roles of men and women in the Christian church that explain these positions, including *Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* (1985), *The Creator’s Tapestry* (2009), *CTCR Review of 2005 Task Force Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices* (2014), and *The Order of Creation: Theology, History, Definition* (2022); therefore be it

Resolved, That these CTCR documents be commended to the Synod for study and guidance, especially as concerns arise over the ordination of women, women’s suffrage, women’s board and committee membership, and the role of women in the worship life of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod again unequivocally reaffirm its opposition to the ordination of women to the pastoral office as contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm its doctrinal and practical positions regarding women’s suffrage and participation in boards, committees, and commissions of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage men, as it did in 2016 Res. 5-14, “to continue to exercise leadership in their congregations even as they are encouraged to exercise their God-given leadership in a God-pleasing manner in their homes”; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage women to exercise their Spirit-given gifts in faithful service in scripturally appropriate ways within congregations, districts, and Synod structures to the glory of God and the building up of Christ’s Body; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod commend the faithful service of women throughout its history and in the present, and actively encourage women to serve the church in various commissioned and lay vocations, including but not limited to: teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, parish assistants, and directors of church ministries (Bylaw 2.6.1.1), as well as many volunteer roles of leadership, mercy, witness, and support.

To Address the Public Reading of Scripture

RESOLUTION 5-09

Report R62.11 (*CW*, 269–70); Overtures 5-26–29 (*CW*, 352–54)

WHEREAS, The public reading of Scripture is an integral part of Christian worship services, as seen in the New Testament (Acts, 1 Timothy 4) and throughout Christian history; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) advised the following concerning the public reading of lessons in its 1985 report, *Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* ([adopted 1985], 45):

All Christians have access to the Scriptures. They do not require the church as an institution or another person to read and interpret them on their behalf. The reading of the Scriptures belongs to the priesthood of all believers, men and women.

Moreover, there is no ceremonial law in the New Testament regarding the reading of Scripture in the context of public worship. Nor is there explicit apostolic prohibition of such reading by women. Nevertheless, it is the opinion of the CTCR that the reading of the Scriptures is most properly the function of the pastoral office and should therefore not ordinarily be delegated to a lay person, woman or man. Pastors and congregations should therefore exercise great care in making decisions permitting the lay reading of the Scriptures or any other activity in the formal liturgical services which might be perceived as an assumption of the pastoral role or a disregard for the Scriptural principles concerning the service of women in the church (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:3–16; 14:33b–35);

and

WHEREAS, The CTCR also advised that certain distinctive functions of the pastoral office should ordinarily be carried out only by clergy of the Synod, including “preaching in the services of the congregation, leading the formal public services of worship, the public administration of the sacraments, [and] the public administration of the office of the keys” (ibid., 42), though this was not an exhaustive list; the referenced 1981 report, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, stated, “No specific ‘checklist’ of functions of the office of the public ministry is presented in the Scriptures (15); and

WHEREAS, The 1989 Synod convention cited these statements by the CTCR approvingly, yet did not endorse the opinion of the CTCR that “the reading of the Scriptures is most properly the function of the pastoral office and should therefore not ordinarily be delegated to a lay person, woman or man,” but instead advised that congregations “proceed with care and sensitivity in making decisions permitting the lay reading of the Scriptures, recognizing decisions in this regard lie in the area of Christian judgment” (1989 Res. 3-14, “To Address Appropriate Roles for Women and Men in Worship,” *Proc.*, 118); and

WHEREAS, Considerable tensions have since arisen over the lay reading of Scripture lessons in public worship, especially by women, with some arguing that the pastoral reading of lessons is mandated by Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13) or that women reading the lessons contradicts the admonition of St. Paul that a woman ought not “to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet” (1 Tim. 2:12); and

WHEREAS, In response to these concerns, the CTCR has published numerous documents addressing the topic, including: *Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* (1985), *The Order of Creation: Theology, History, Definition* (2022), and *Unity in Doctrine, Uniformity and Variety in Practice* (2025); and

WHEREAS, It must be acknowledged that one cannot clearly dissociate the public reading of Scripture lessons from the distinctive pastoral function of “leading the formal public services of worship”; and

WHEREAS, It must also be acknowledged that not all formal public worship services necessarily exclude laity from officiating or participation, especially the traditional prayer offices (Matins, Vespers, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer) and other non-communion services (or when a pastor is not available due to extraordinary circumstances); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod urge its congregations not to provoke or engage in needless controversy, but teach, reprove, correct, train, and ultimately persuade one another solely by the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16–17); and be it further

Resolved, That, out of a desire for unity and in mutual love for fellow members of the Synod, the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to heed the counsel of the CTCR in 1985 and reserve the public reading of Scripture for pastors, especially in their observance of the settings of the Divine Service or other principle, weekly worship services at which

1 the congregation customarily gathers and at which visitors most often attend (as potential for confusion with the pastoral
2 office or public offense is greater there); and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the above-mentioned documents of the CTCR be commended to the Synod for their instruction and
4 guidance in discussing the matter of the lay reading of Scripture lessons in public worship; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the exegetical faculties of each seminary, as appointed by their seminary president, be asked to offer
6 a theological opinion on 1 Tim. 4:13 and how that passage relates to the public reading of Scripture in congregational
7 worship services and who should attend to those readings, and that these opinions be submitted to, studied, and evaluated
8 by the Council of Presidents (COP) with input by the CTCR at its discretion; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the COP and seminary faculties discuss this topic in detail at their annual joint meeting; and be it
10 further

11 *Resolved*, That the COP report on its discussion, evaluation, and conclusions at the next Synod convention; and be it
12 finally

13 *Resolved*, That this encouragement not be understood as a denigration of the service of laity—men or women—in the
14 church, but an expression of the desire to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3) and that “all
15 things should be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40) in Synod congregations, giving due sensitivity to the precedent
16 of that congregation’s worship and the consciences of its members, and that changes to existing practice be made with
17 care and catechetical patience.

18 **To Request Commission on Theology and Church Relations Report**
19 **on Human Organ Donation and Transplantation**

20 **RESOLUTION 5-10**

21 Overture 5-23 (*CW*, 350)

22 WHEREAS, The 1981 Synod convention adopted Resolution 8-05, “To Encourage Donation of Kidneys and Other
23 Organs” (*Proc.*, 204), which encouraged organ donation; and

24 WHEREAS, Both medical technology and its academic, peer-reviewed, and published theological assessment have
25 changed significantly since 1981 and raised complex and morally weighty questions about human organ donation and
26 transplantation and the implications of its encouragement and routinization; and

27 WHEREAS, The encouragement given by the Synod in 1981 may, even unintentionally, burden the consciences of
28 church workers and laity who hold informed and serious concerns about the practice and moral implications of routinized
29 human organ donation and transplantation; therefore be it

30 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention ask the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to produce a
31 document that considers and evaluates the theological and moral implications of human organ donation and
32 transplantation.

33 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
34 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and*
35 *budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

36 **To Reaffirm Sanctity of Human Life Regarding Practice of In Vitro Fertilization**

37 **RESOLUTION 5-11**

38 Overtures 5-19–21 (*CW*, 347–49)

39 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that human life is a sacred gift from God, who is the Creator of all life (Gen. 1:26–
40 28; Psalm 139:13–16); and

41 WHEREAS, Christ sanctified and redeemed all human beings, including human embryos, in His incarnation and
42 conception by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, His shed blood upon the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension
43 to the right hand of the Father (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20–23); and

1 WHEREAS, The tradition of the Christian Church, in accordance with the creation order revealed in Holy Scripture,
2 has consistently upheld the sanctity of human life and the dignity of procreation as an act that belongs within the marital
3 union between a man and a woman (Gen. 1:27–28; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 19:4–6); and

4 WHEREAS, The practice of in vitro fertilization (IVF) involves the creation of human embryos outside the womb,
5 which can result in the needless destruction or indefinite freezing of embryos, which contradicts the biblical teaching on
6 the sanctity of human life; and

7 WHEREAS, IVF can commodify human life by treating embryos as objects to be purchased, stored, or discarded,
8 instead of recognizing that life is a gift of God; and

9 WHEREAS, The desire for procreation of children is good, right, and godly in the context of marriage; and

10 WHEREAS, The Synod recognizes the pain of childlessness and that some people, desiring to have children, may have
11 used IVF without a full understanding of any potential theological implications; and

12 WHEREAS, Every child, regardless of how he or she is conceived, is created by God the Father, redeemed by God the
13 Son, and called by God the Holy Spirit to be in an eternal relationship with Him by faith; therefore be it

14 *Resolved*, That the Synod condemn the needless loss of life that can occur through the use of IVF; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage married couples struggling to bear children to seek pastoral care and guidance
16 before pursuing reproductive technologies, and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage pastors and other church workers to serve married couples who have troubled
18 consciences with respect to prior use of IVF and minister to them and to all people such that they may receive the comfort
19 of Christ and His redeeming love; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That all our congregations faithfully and compassionately speak to the God-given value and worth of all
21 human beings; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That the Synod urge its members to uphold the biblical understanding of procreation as a sacred act within
23 the marital union; and be it finally

24 *Resolved*, That this matter be referred to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in order to provide
25 theological clarity.

26 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
27 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and*
28 *budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

29 **To Conclude Created Male and Female Task Force and Receive Its Recommendations**

30 **RESOLUTION 5-12**

31 Overtures 4-36, 5-41 (*CW*, 322–23, 360–61)

32 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches the following truths concerning humanity: God created humanity to be male and
33 female (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4); God instituted marriage between one man and one woman as a lifelong union for
34 companionship and procreation (Gen. 1:28; 2:18–24); and God commands chastity for those who are married and those
35 who are single (Ex. 20:14; Num. 5:11–31; Deut. 5:18; Matt. 5:27–30); and

36 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture prohibits adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other forms of sexual immorality as sin
37 and as deviations from this created order (Ex. 20:15; Num. 5:11–31; Deut. 5:18; Rom. 1:18–32; 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–11);
38 and

39 WHEREAS, Cultural attitudes in recent decades have increasingly advocated for views of sexual orientation and gender
40 identity that are at odds with Scriptural truth; and

41 WHEREAS, In fulfillment of 2019 Resolution 11-03A, “To Encourage Synod to Develop Resources to Aid
42 Congregations and Schools regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues,” the Office of National Mission
43 (ONM) created the ad hoc “*Created Male and Female Task Force*” to aid in identifying and producing resources that might
44 “confess the truth boldly and minister compassionately both to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity
45 issues and those who care for them” (*Proc.*, 216); and

1 WHEREAS, 2023 Res. 1-04A, “To Continue to Address Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues,” continued the
2 task force with mandates to consider conducting field research; to “recommend and advocate for strategies and structural
3 approaches to serve the Church better and address the challenges posed by contemporary sexual ethics, recommend and
4 coordinate implementation with Synod entities and organizations that will best deliver resources to the Church, and
5 encourage congregations to raise awareness of media propaganda, cultural intimidation, and mounting pressures upon all
6 people to affirm viewpoints contrary to clear teaching in Holy Scripture, responding to those influences by the study of
7 Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (particularly the Small Catechism)” (*Proc.*, 118); and finally to report on its
8 work and make further recommendations to the 2026 Synod convention; therefore be it

9 *Resolved*, That the final report of the task force be commended to the Synod for consideration and guidance; and be
10 it further

11 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention take up the recommendations proposed therein, including the following:

- 12 • that the ONM continue facilitating retreats for families affected by sexual orientation and gender identity confusion
13 in the coming triennium and begin to recruit and train potential facilitators so these retreats might be expanded
14 nationally;
- 15 • that the Council of Presidents (COP), in conjunction with the ONM, develop lists of theologically trustworthy
16 counselors to whom they might refer those struggling with sexual orientation, gender identity, and related issues, as
17 well as criteria for evaluating and recommending those counselors;
- 18 • that the COP, in conjunction with the seminaries and administrators of the Concordia University System and its
19 colleges, consult with one another regarding the development of counseling programs specifically designed to train
20 counselors to deal theologically and ethically with such issues, as well as further training for clergy in addressing
21 them at the congregational level;
- 22 • that the ONM, in collaboration with the staff of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and
23 Concordia Publishing House, continue developing specific countercultural and apologetic resources critiquing
24 LGBTQIA+ positions and continue promoting biblically faithful resources on these topics through the website
25 hosted by the ONM (*createdmaleandfemale.org*); and
- 26 • that the CTCR, in consultation with the ONM and the seminaries, consider if and how studies might be produced
27 on the family as a unit and the foundation for a healthy society (man and woman, husband and wife, parents and
28 children, procreation and chastity, vocation and the three estates), biblical anthropology, same-sex attraction, and
29 gender dysphoria;

30 and be it finally

31 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention receive the *Created Male and Female* Task Force report and these
32 recommendations as a conclusion to its work, give thanks to the individual task force members for their labors, and pray
33 that God might heal individuals, families, congregations, and communities from the ills and consequences of these sinful
34 behaviors and ideas.

35 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
36 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as resources commended are understood to be presently in*
37 *existence (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

38 **To Give Thanks to God for 1700th Anniversary of First Council of Nicaea**

39 **RESOLUTION 5-13**

40 Overtures 5-37, 5-44 (*CW*, 358–59, 362)

41 WHEREAS, The year 2025 marked the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea, its having begun in Asia
42 Minor on May 20, A.D. 325; and

43 WHEREAS, The First Council of Nicaea opposed Arianism and confessed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the
44 Scriptures, that the Son is *homoousios* (“of the same substance”) with the Father, equal in power, majesty, and glory; and

45 WHEREAS, The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are in concord with the ancient symbols of the faith,
46 including the Nicene Creed; and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continues to confess the doctrine of the Holy

1 Trinity according to the Holy Scriptures and the ecumenical creeds, especially the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which
2 deal specifically with the nature of the eternal relations between the persons of the Holy Trinity; and

3 WHEREAS, Heresies, errors, and other misunderstandings of the doctrine taught and confessed in these ancient
4 ecumenical creeds are in need of renewed attention and response, including the eternal subordination of the Son (Carl L.
5 Beckwith, “Eternal Subordination of the Son: Arianism Past and Present,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 89, no. 4
6 [October 2025]: 307–28) and modern social trinitarian teachings that view God as an inherently relational being,
7 emphasizing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct, conscious persons with three distinct wills in an eternal,
8 perichoretic, loving communion who serve as a model for human relationships, among others; and

9 WHEREAS, Certain Christian groups have made a mockery of the ecumenical creeds by changing their language to
10 accommodate views at odds with biblical theology, morality, and views of gender and sexuality; therefore be it

11 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea;
12 and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention encourage ongoing catechesis of pastors, church workers, and congregations
14 in the classical trinitarian doctrine confessed by the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, for the sake of the Gospel and
15 the right confession of the Triune God, especially as it is expounded in Luther’s catechisms; and be it finally

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod task the Commission on Theology and Church Relations with producing a study of the texts,
17 theology, and usage of the three ecumenical creeds and of the contemporary theological errors challenging those creeds
18 and their doctrine for the sake of the edification of the church.

19 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
20 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs as the activity is understood to be within the existing scope and*
21 *budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

22 **To Respectfully Decline Overtures**

23 **RESOLUTION 5-14**

24 Overtures 5-11–12, 38–39 (*CW*, 342–44, 359–60)

25 WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons,
26 that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

27 *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 5-11	To Restore Apostles’ Creed to Historical Form regarding Christ’s “Descent into Hell”	Contradicts our confessional standard (the 1580 Book of Concord has the phrase “ <i>niedergefahren zur Hölle</i> ” in the Apostles’ Creed); therefore violates Constitution, Article II
Ov. 5-12	To Review Practice of Divine Call in Synod Constitution and Bylaws	Insufficient rationale; outside the purview of the Commission on Handbook
Ov. 5-38	To Declare Center for Missional and Pastoral Leadership to be Heterodox Tract and Mission Society	Insufficient rationale; most proper remedy for concerns is ecclesiastical supervision process
Ov. 5-39	To Declare Center for Missional and Pastoral Leadership to be Heterodox Tract and Mission Society	Insufficient rationale; most proper remedy for concerns is ecclesiastical supervision process

6. PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SEMINARIES

To Uphold a Deep and Broad Study of Holy Scripture and Book of Concord in Synod Seminaries

RESOLUTION 6-01

Overtures 6-01–8 (*CW*, 363–66)

WHEREAS, Pastors of the Synod vow in the rite of ordination to teach in accordance with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, have historically grounded pastoral formation in sustained, direct engagement with the text of Holy Scripture in the original languages; and

WHEREAS, Faithful pastoral ministry requires not merely acquaintance with the biblical text through secondary sources, but the ability to read, translate, and interpret Holy Scripture firsthand for preaching, teaching, catechesis, pastoral care, evangelism, and defense of the faith; and

WHEREAS, The church benefits when pastors are formed to handle the Word of God with confidence rooted in direct textual study rather than dependence upon external aids alone; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul pronounces every word of Scripture as “God-breathed and useful” (2 Tim. 3:16 NIV) and declares and defends the Gospel of Christ with arguments based on the precise wording of the sacred Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Luther warned that the devil himself seeks to deprive the Church of the biblical languages (*Luther’s Works* 45:358) and also perceived that nothing less than the Gospel itself was at stake (*ibid.*, 359); and

WHEREAS, The *Book of Concord* serves as the Church’s binding doctrinal confession because (Latin: *quia*) it faithfully confesses the teaching of Holy Scripture, as set forth in the Formula of Concord (FC Ep, Summary Content); and

WHEREAS, Pastoral formation within the Synod requires more than familiarity with the Lutheran Confessions, but sustained study that forms pastors who confess, teach, and practice theology in full accord with them; and

WHEREAS, The unity of the Church is preserved when pastors are formed to interpret Scripture and conduct ministry within the shared doctrinal framework of the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has consistently affirmed *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions as foundational to pastoral formation and ecclesial trust; and

WHEREAS, We need Master of Divinity pastors equipped and capable to supervise vicars and interns, and to oversee specific ministry pastors; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod’s seminaries, across all their programs, maintain and enhance courses of study that attend to careful, thorough study of Holy Scripture and ensure that all pastors certified for ordination demonstrate strong knowledge of and glad reception of “the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the ... only true standard or norm by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged” (FC SD, Comprehensive Summary, 3); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm and encourage the seminaries to maintain and deepen rigorous instruction in the original languages of Holy Scripture, emphasizing direct translation and exegetical engagement with the biblical text, resisting trends toward reduced or merely introductory engagement with the biblical languages in pastoral formation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod’s seminaries be commended and encouraged to fully commit to and persist in forming pastors who are capable of independent, faithful handling of the scriptural text in the original languages for the sake of the church’s preaching and teaching; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod’s seminaries instill in our future pastors those habits and disciplines that maintain the ongoing study of Scripture, including the knowledge and use of the biblical languages, throughout a lifetime of ministry, and that circuits and districts foster and encourage the same; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm and encourage the seminaries of the Synod to maintain and deepen comprehensive, integrated instruction in the *Book of Concord* throughout the curriculum and extended throughout a lifetime of ministry, and that circuits and districts foster and encourage the same; and be it further

1 WHEREAS, All men who are trained, examined, called, and ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry are brothers
2 in the same holy office, even while their assignments and roles may differ according to human arrangement; and

3 WHEREAS, The Lord has provided pastors who have been brought into the office via a “rightly ordered call” (AC XIV)
4 for our Synod through various pathways (Master of Divinity, Residential Alternate Route, Cross-cultural Ministry Center,
5 Specific Ministry Pastor [SMP], SMP–Español/English Program, Center for Hispanic Studies, Ethnic Immigrant Institute
6 of Theology); therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the pure confession of the faith made at Augsburg in
8 1530 and handed down to us today; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for all faithful pastors serving our Synod; and be it finally

10 *Resolved*, That the Synod rise and sing “To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray” (*LSB* 768).

11 **To Support Residential Master of Divinity and Alternate Route Pastoral Formation**
12 **for the Sake of the Flock**

13 **RESOLUTION 6-04**

14 Report R13.1–3 (*CW*, 64–74); Overtures 6-25–44 (*CW*, 379–91)

15 **Preamble**

16 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has repeatedly identified full-time, residential pastoral formation at its
17 seminaries as the standard, preferred route for men preparing for a lifetime of ministry to the church (2016 Res. 6-03, “To
18 Affirm the Master of Divinity Route at the Synod’s Seminaries”; 2019 Res. 6-02, “To Promote Residential Seminary
19 Education as the Preferred Option for the Preparation of Men for Pastoral Ministry”; 2023 Res. 6-02A, “To Encourage
20 Proper Pastoral Formation through Our Synod’s Seminaries”; 2023 Res. 6-03A, “To Affirm and Strengthen the Synod’s
21 Commitment to Well-Formed Clergy for the Sake of the Gospel”). Several overtures submitted to the 2026 Synod
22 convention (Ov. 6-28–37) call for the seminaries to attempt to duplicate the quality and scope of its regular residential
23 program in the format of a fully or largely online Master of Divinity (M.Div.). While the Synod has made successful use
24 of some online and distance education models for other routes to ministry designed to serve specific and unique needs,
25 experience has shown that there is no true replacement for what residential seminary formation provides. This resolution
26 expresses the conviction that, for the sake of the flock (Jer. 3:15; John 10:1–5, 21:15–19; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–5), it
27 would be unwise for our seminaries to begin or experiment with an online M.Div. because of the distinct, qualitative
28 benefit of full-time pastoral formation in our seminary communities and because the assumption that adding an online
29 M.Div. program would increase the overall number of pastoral students is unfounded.

30 WHEREAS, There is no other way that the Lord brings sinners to faith, salvation, and eternal life than through His
31 blessed Word and Holy Sacraments (AC V); and

32 WHEREAS, The Lord has appointed in and for His church ministers of His Word so that it may be publicly applied and
33 used in truth and purity; and of His blessed Sacraments, so that they might be administered rightly and according to His
34 command (AC VII 1); and

35 WHEREAS, The Lord requires of His ministers that they “be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2) to such an extent that for their
36 conduct in the Office they “[must] give an account” (Heb. 13:17; see also James 3:1); and

37 WHEREAS, It is a right of the Church to be assured—indeed, to demand—that her pastors are doctrinally sound and
38 capable and ready to serve as pastors (Rom. 10:14–17; Hos. 4:6; 1 Timothy 3–4; Tr 67); and

39 WHEREAS, In the history of the Bible the Lord used formational and educational communities to shape His servants
40 for this work (2 Kings 2–6; Acts 19–20), thereby ensuring that they would “hold fast the pattern of sound words” (2 Tim.
41 1:13 NKJV) and be ready, whether it seemed convenient or inconvenient, to wield God’s Word and Sacraments for the
42 faith, salvation, and eternal life of the Lord’s blood-bought sheep (2 Tim. 4:2); and

43 WHEREAS, The daily rhythm of worship in the seminary chapels, which as an integral aspect of residential seminary
44 education inculcates humility toward God’s Word, is central for the personal and spiritual formation of pastors (Ap V
45 189); and

46 WHEREAS, The education and formation of a future pastor is much more than the sum of all its parts—it requires
47 among other things:

- 1 • extensive knowledge in the interpretation of Holy Scriptures for preaching, teaching, and pastoral care (1 Tim. 3:16;
2 Rom. 15:4);
- 3 • deep reading of the Lutheran Confessions and the orthodox Fathers;
- 4 • keen understanding of the Church’s history (there is no prophetic or apostolic proclamation but that it is not also
5 deeply rooted in the history of the Gospel and God’s people with an understanding of their *telos*) so as not to repeat
6 the errors of the past and to walk to the eschatological horizon with confidence;
- 7 • deep immersion in the inevitably liturgical life of the Lutheran Church and her song;
- 8 • precise and discerning comprehension of the dynamic of Law and Gospel and the ability to apply it to sinners; and
- 9 • clear discernment of all the teachings of the Holy Scriptures according to the pattern of sound words;

10 and

11 WHEREAS, The essence of the education and formation of a future pastor is the shaping of a man in Christ for Christ-
12 like sacrificial service to the flock (1 Peter 5:2–3; Phil. 2:5–8); and

13 WHEREAS, Our Lord became flesh and dwelt among us, and in his flesh gathered the future pastors of his church to
14 himself, men who “accompanied” him (Acts 1) as he carried out his ministry and instructed his future pastors; and

15 WHEREAS, Pastors are called to share not only the Gospel but also their very lives by being with people in all their
16 service (1 Thess. 2:8); and

17 WHEREAS, The residential formation of pastors gathers students into a community of men in the physical presence of
18 their teachers and fellow students, where their identity as pastors is formed, their brotherhood is shaped, and “iron sharpens
19 iron” (Prov. 27:17) as they live, eat, talk, and work together in the flesh; and

20 WHEREAS, The ministers of Christ must be prepared to go where they “do not want to go” (John 21:18), to have no
21 place to lay their head (Matt. 8:20), to let the dead bury their own dead and not to plow with a backward gaze; and those
22 incapable of doing such are not fit for the ministerial work of Christ (Luke 9:60–62; Matt. 8:18–22); and

23 WHEREAS, Residential pastoral formation as currently constituted in the Synod immerses seminary students in
24 numerous ministerial contexts and under numerous theological experts and pastoral practitioners (all of whom have been
25 appointed by the church for this purpose) so that they may become all things to all men that by any means they may save
26 some (1 Cor. 9:22); and

27 WHEREAS, This broad exposure is a bulwark against idiosyncratic theology and practice that can lead to disunity and
28 false teaching; and

29 WHEREAS, The unity of the Synod is better cultivated when future pastors are formed in a residential setting that
30 enables them to live out the liturgical life of the church and experience an extended time of “mutual conversation and
31 consolation of the brethren” (SA III IV) that will prepare them to conduct ministry within the shared doctrinal framework
32 of the Lutheran Confessions (Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., “The Biblical and Reformation Heritage of LCMS Pastoral
33 Formation,” 2023 *Proceedings*, 107–9; Thomas J. Egger, “Our Residential Seminaries: Deep Pastoral Formation and
34 Worldwide Impact,” *Proceedings*, 109–11); and

35 WHEREAS, The adoption of online M.Div. programs by other seminaries has failed to bring about an increase in M.Div.
36 enrollment (Report R13.3, 2026 *Workbook*, 70); and

37 WHEREAS, The Synod has been blessed through nine generations of pastors with men formed in this fashion to the
38 high standards of the Office of the Holy Ministry and for the sake of the flock; therefore be it

39 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention thank the seminaries for offering, maintaining, and constantly enhancing
40 robust residential pastoral formation in their M.Div. and Alternate Route (AR) programs; and be it further

41 *Resolved*, That for the sake of the flock, the Synod in convention directs the seminaries to redouble their efforts to
42 improve their residential pastoral formation in the M.Div. and AR programs and continue to address concerns regarding
43 the accessibility and feasibility of residential formation; and be it further

44 *Resolved*, That for the sake of the flock, Synod in convention affirms our corporate commitment to robust residential
45 M.Div. and AR pastoral education and formation as highlighted in both seminaries’ reports to the convention; and be it
46 further

47 *Resolved*, That for the sake of the flock, the Synod prays for an increase in candidates for the pastoral office, trusting
48 the Lord of the Church to provide faithful shepherds (Luke 10:2); and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That for the sake of the flock, the Synod in convention reaffirm 2023 Res. 6-02A, “To Encourage Proper
2 Pastoral Formation through Our Synod’s Seminaries” (*Proceedings*, 160-61) (see also 2016 Res. 6-03, 2019 Res. 6-02;
3 2023 Res. 6-03A); and be it finally

4 *Resolved*, That for the sake of the flock, the Synod in convention reject online M.Div. education since it is insufficient
5 for achieving the high standards of the Office of the Holy Ministry.

6 **To Reaffirm the Synod’s Process for Training and Certification for Pastors**

7 **RESOLUTION 6-05**

8 Report R13.3 (*CW*, 68–70); Overtures 6-14–24 (*CW*, 370–79)

9 **Rationale**

10 Article III of the Synod’s Constitution lists the following among the objectives of the Synod:

- 11 1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith ...
- 12 3. Recruit and train pastors ...

13 To accomplish these objectives, the Synod has established seminaries, various routes to ministry, and a robust procedure
14 for training and certifying pastors (ministers of religion—ordained). This procedure requires that each man who is to be
15 placed in the Office of the Ministry gain the approval of (at minimum) his home congregation, home district, resident field
16 work supervisor, vicarage supervisor, seminary faculty, and the Council of Presidents (COP). The Synod Bylaws assign
17 specific roles in this process to the seminary faculties. This duty informs every aspect of the calling, activity, and oversight
18 of seminary faculty members (Bylaw sections 2.7–8).

19 In recent years some members of the Synod have expressed a desire to change this procedure in significant ways, including
20 removing certification from the seminary faculties or opening up the colloquy process to LCMS laymen and commissioned
21 ministers who have attained an M.Div. degree (or its equivalent) at a non-Synod seminary. Among those making these
22 suggestions have been former seminary faculty members and former and current leadership from some districts (Report
23 R13.3, *CW*, 68–70).

24 The 2023 Synod convention responded to these developments by passing 2023 Resolution 6-02A, “To Encourage Proper
25 Pastoral Formation through Our Synod’s Seminaries.” This resolution expressed the Synod’s corporate decision to
26 continue to train and certify pastors exclusively through the Synod’s own seminaries and routes to ministry.

27 In early 2025, a group of former Concordia Seminary faculty announced that they would be operating an accredited online-
28 only M.Div. program through the “Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) ... known as the Center for Missional and Pastoral
29 Leadership (CMPL)” (Report R13.3, *CW*, 68). In subsequent podcast appearances, the dean of CMPL has indicated that
30 around two dozen LCMS laymen are enrolled in CMPL in a ministry degree program (M.Div. or M.Min.).

31 While the leadership of CMPL freely admit that their program cannot currently lead to pastoral service within the Synod
32 or any other denomination, in public letters and in podcasts, the dean of this program has suggested the Synod change its
33 procedure for training and certification of pastors in such a way that LCMS laymen or commissioned ministers who
34 graduate from this program (or potentially other institutions) could be certified for the Synod’s roster of ministers of
35 religion—ordained.

36 Thus, CMPL leadership insists that they are not setting up an institution that is a competitor to the Synod’s seminaries
37 since they tell all of their students that their degrees cannot currently lead to certification within the Synod. Yet they
38 meanwhile advocate for changing the Synod’s procedures to allow for it. Since the M.Div. is virtually coterminous with
39 pastoral formation in the Synod, this will lead to confusion and an inevitable crisis in the near future when the first of these
40 LCMS laymen or commissioned ministers will have graduated with their ministry degrees (M.Div. or M.Min.) from CMPL
41 (or other institutions).

42 The COP discussed these matters in April 2025 and tried to ward off this crisis by committing themselves unanimously:
43 “Our Synod needs pastors for all our congregations and mission outreach. We implore the Lord of the Church to send
44 them. We commit ourselves to direct potential students for the pastoral office only to the routes to ordination approved by
45 and accountable to Synod. The Council will not place graduates from other programs. The Council members agree not to
46 ordain graduates from other programs. We commit ourselves to engage the Church, our Synod’s seminaries, and Pastoral
47 Formation Committee to strengthen the routes to ordination and address the challenges and opportunities for providing the
48 Church well-formed candidates for the pastoral ministry” (Roy Askins, “LCMS Addresses Unauthorized, Non-LCMS

1 Pastoral Formation Programs,” *Reporter Online*, May 8, 2025, [reporter.lcms.org/2025/lcms-addresses-unauthorized-non-](https://reporter.lcms.org/2025/lcms-addresses-unauthorized-non-lcms-pastoral-formation-programs/)
2 [lcms-pastoral-formation-programs/](https://reporter.lcms.org/2025/lcms-addresses-unauthorized-non-lcms-pastoral-formation-programs/)).

3 This is consistent with the Synod’s longstanding position since facing a similar challenge in the 1970’s: “The question
4 rather is: ‘How has the Synod decided that it wishes to have pastors trained, qualified, called, ordained, and installed in its
5 congregations?’ In answer to that question the Synod has spoken again and again. Perhaps no other subject receives as
6 much attention in the bylaws. The Synod has stated in great detail that it will train its own pastors, set its own requirements,
7 do its own certifying, etc.” (CCM Op. 26-3076, “Participation in Nonapproved Pastoral Formation Routes,” quoting Ag.
8 682, “Constitutional Comments on the Present Controversy Within the Synod,” Minutes of Oct. 11, 1974).

9 In light of all this, it is appropriate for the Synod in convention to clearly reaffirm our current procedures for the training,
10 certification, and placing of pastors. If nothing else, those LCMS laymen studying for ministry degrees at CMPL (or Luther
11 House of Studies or any other institution) and their home congregations deserve to have clarity: ministry degrees earned
12 outside of the Synod’s own seminaries and routes to ministry cannot now, and will not in the future, be a path to service
13 as a pastor (minister of religion —ordained) in the Synod. These topics have been discussed throughout the Synod for
14 several years now. The arguments for changing our procedures are well understood by all. They have been discussed and
15 debated at conferences, the Pastoral Formation Committee, on podcasts, and at the COP. And now two consecutive
16 conventions of the Synod have weighed these arguments, decided against them, and reaffirmed the exclusive use of Synod
17 owned-and-operated seminaries and routes to ministry. This assures that from generation to generation a unified Synod is
18 served by faithful, well-formed pastors trained in a manner fully accountable to the congregations and pastors of Synod.

19 Therefore be it

20 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention reaffirm 2023 Res. 6-02A; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention reaffirm the routes to the Office of the Ministry created by the Synod as the
22 only routes to certification, ordination, and service as ordained ministers of the Synod; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention specifically reaffirm these procedures: vesting certification with the seminary
24 faculties, vesting placement with the COP, and barring “LCMS laymen and commissioned ministers who complete a
25 program of study leading to ordination or its equivalent at a non-LCMS seminary” from being “eligible for colloquy on
26 that basis” (Bylaw 3.10.2.4); and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention reaffirm that “the LCMS has continually developed and refined its residential
28 and nonresidential routes to ordination in order to address the needs of the church as they have arisen and dynamically
29 changed through time” (2023 Res. 6-02A) within the overall framework noted in the previous Resolved; and be it finally

30 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention reaffirm its call to all members of Synod to “honor, use, and promote Synod-
31 approved programs and not create independent programs of pastoral preparation or direct men to pastoral preparation
32 programs outside of our Synod’s seminaries as such efforts are not in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the
33 Synod (Const. Art. III 3; Bylaw 3.10.4)” (2023 Res. 6-02A).

34 **To Affirm and Support Established Parameters of Specific Ministry Pastor Program**

35 **RESOLUTION 6-06**

36 Report R13.5 (*CW*, 75–76); Overtures 6-46–63 (*CW*, 392–403)

37 WHEREAS, The Synod established the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program to address pastoral needs in specific
38 contexts where calling a residentially-formed pastor is not feasible; and

39 WHEREAS, Specific ministry pastors provide essential service in ministries that would not otherwise receive pastors,
40 keeping congregations from closing and enabling many of them to flourish under their leadership; and

41 WHEREAS, Specific ministry pastors make significant sacrifices, often serving bi-vocational ministries while working
42 other jobs to support their families; and

43 WHEREAS, The SMP program was intentionally designed as a limited and contextual pathway, distinct from the Master
44 of Divinity program; and

45 WHEREAS, The Synod has consistently affirmed that alternative pastoral formation programs exist to serve exceptional
46 circumstances and are not intended to replace residential seminary education; and

1 WHEREAS, The *Policy Requirements for the Specific Ministry Pastor Program* (Report R13.5, *CW*, 75–76) have been
2 unanimously approved by the boards of regents (BOR) of both seminaries and establish policies born of two decades of
3 SMP experience and churchwide discussion, including provision for warranted exceptions; and

4 WHEREAS, The presidents and BOR of both seminaries, in consultation with the Council of Presidents (COP), provide
5 ongoing oversight of pastoral formation pathways to ensure faithfulness to Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and Synod
6 policies; therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, That district presidents and congregations adhere faithfully to the approved SMP policies, so that they
8 should be given opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness and impact, and to prioritize residential seminary formation
9 whenever feasible; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the presidents and BOR of both seminaries, in consultation with the COP, be encouraged to continue
11 regular oversight and evaluation of the SMP program to ensure it remains consistent with its original purpose and stated
12 intent; and be it finally

13 *Resolved*, That the Synod give thanks to God for faithful specific ministry pastors who serve under call for the sake
14 of Christ’s Church.

15 **To Encourage and Support Specific Ministry Pastors to Pursue General Pastor Certification**

16 **RESOLUTION 6-07**

17 Overtures 6-46–48 (*CW*, 392–94)

18 WHEREAS, The Synod is blessed with faithful specific ministry pastors who serve under call for the sake of Christ’s
19 Church; and

20 WHEREAS, Specific ministry pastors, the congregations they serve, and the Synod as a whole are blessed when specific
21 ministry pastors pursue the hybrid General Pastor Certification (GPC, ordinarily achievable in an additional three years),
22 the Residential Alternate Route (RAR) Program, or the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), enabling them to deepen their
23 theological understanding, learn biblical Greek, and serve the Synod in additional roles of responsibility (circuit visitor,
24 district or Synod officer or board member, pastoral delegate at Synod convention, etc.); and

25 WHEREAS, Many specific ministry pastors desire to pursue GPC but are limited due to financial constraints and limits
26 on access to needed classes; therefore be it

27 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage specific ministry pastors to pursue hybrid GPC, the RAR Program, or the M.Div. ;
28 and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the pastors’ congregation(s), district, and seminary work collaboratively to fund all tuition and fees
30 for specific ministry pastors pursuing GPC; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the seminaries work in partnership with each other and prospective GPC candidates to accommodate
32 the schedules of students (evening courses, intensive classes, etc.); and be it finally

33 *Resolved*, That we give thanks for the specific ministry pastors who have completed or are in the process of completing
34 the GPC.

35 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
36 *Committee, note no incremental costs to incorporate Synod but that districts and seminaries will bear costs related to*
37 *collaborative funding of "all tuition and fees" (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

38 **To Amend Bylaw 2.13.1 to Clarify Terminology** 39 **for Specific Ministry Pastor Mentorship and Oversight**

40 **RESOLUTION 6-08**

41 Overture 6-09, 45 (*CW*, 366–67, 391–92)

42 **Rationale**

43 In 1998 the Synod added to its bylaws a set of definitions, now designated as section 1.2 “Definition of Terms.” Two
44 important definitions are those of *supervision* and *oversight*. In the Synod’s Bylaws, outside of “ecclesiastical supervision,”

1 the term “supervision” means “to have authority over, to direct actions, to control activities” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [u]). “Oversight”
 2 means “to monitor; to make inquiry and receive a response thereto; to make suggestions; to bring concerns to the attention
 3 of a higher authority” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [p]). In 1998 it proved necessary, for example, to make it clear that the Synod’s Board
 4 of Directors cannot control the activities of the various synodwide corporate entities or issue binding directives to their
 5 boards. With respect to synodwide corporate entities, it has *oversight*.

6 When the Synod established its Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program almost a decade later, via 2007 Res. 5-01B, it
 7 adopted bylaws providing that a specific ministry pastor serves under the *supervision* (not specifically termed
 8 “ecclesiastical supervision”) of his district president and another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor. The next
 9 sentence refers again to the specific ministry pastor being under *supervision* of another pastor, who in some instances may
 10 be a neighboring Synod pastor who has no call to the church served by the specific ministry pastor. The definition of
 11 *supervision* (“to have authority over, to direct actions, to control activities”) that had been placed into the Bylaws largely
 12 to clarify the spheres of authority for various governing boards does not apply to the relationship between a specific
 13 ministry pastor and his district president. Nor does it necessarily apply to the specific ministry pastor’s relationship with
 14 the non-specific ministry pastor who oversees him. This inapt use of defined terms, along with its potential for introducing
 15 confusion, was noted in CCM Op. 23-3017, “Specific Ministry Pastor Supervision of Commissioned Ministers,” and
 16 referred to the Commission on Handbook for improvement.

17 The word *oversight*, as defined in the Bylaws, seems much more fitting for the efforts of non-specific ministry pastors
 18 who work with all specific ministry pastors. In the revision below, this term is paired with another, *mentorship*. Current
 19 nomenclature within the SMP program speaks of specific ministry pastors and their “mentors.” Together, the two words
 20 account for both the monitoring and the nurturing services that designated non-specific ministry pastors render to specific
 21 ministry pastors.

22 Therefore be it

23 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 2.13.1 be amended as follows:

24 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

25 ***Specific Ministry Pastor Status and Limitations***

26 2.13.1 A “specific ministry pastor” is a minister of religion—ordained who has completed the requirements for
 27 service as a specific ministry pastor and has been examined by one of the Synod’s seminaries, has received
 28 a regular call, and has been placed by the Council of Presidents into a specific Word and Sacrament ministry
 29 context. He is eligible to serve only in that specific ministry context for which he has been trained and may
 30 not be offered or accept a call for ministry for which he has not been certified as determined by his district
 31 president. He shall serve under the ecclesiastical supervision of his district president and under the oversight
 32 and mentorship of another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor.

33 (a) Because he is under ~~supervision~~the oversight of another pastor and because a specific ministry
 34 pastor’s theological education has been formed in part by and for a specific ministry context, he may not
 35 be placed or called into ecclesiastical roles that exercise pastoral oversight outside the context of his call.

36 (b) A specific ministry pastor is not eligible to

37 (1) serve as a voting delegate to a national convention of the Synod—but may serve as an advisory
 38 delegate to national conventions and as a pastoral delegate to district conventions;

39 (2) hold any elected or appointed office on the district or national Synod level that is assigned by
 40 the Bylaws of the Synod to “a pastor” or “an ordained minister” (although specific ministry pastors
 41 may serve in all other capacities, especially representing the ministerial contexts in which they
 42 serve);

43 (3) supervise vicars; or

44 (4) serve as a circuit visitor.

45 (c) The ministers of religion—ordained records maintained by district presidents as well as the official
 46 membership roster of the Synod shall distinguish between specific ministry pastors and other pastors.

**To Implore Council of Presidents to Fulfill 2019 Resolution 6-03A
re Oversight of Specific Ministry Pastors**

RESOLUTION 6-09

Overtures 6-54, 63 (*CW*, 397, 403)

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 2.13.1 states that every specific ministry pastor “shall serve under the supervision of his district president and another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor”; and

WHEREAS, There is a great variety of specific ministry pastors serving in a wide variety of contexts and with a great variety of education, years of service, and gifts; and

WHEREAS, This situation has created a number of questions regarding the amount and level of oversight that shall be employed as per Synod Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention adopted Resolution 6-03A, “To Enhance the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program,” which includes the resolve, “That the Council of Presidents in coordination with the Pastoral Formation Committee draft guidelines and training to enhance the mentoring and supervision of specific ministry pastors, taking into account the wide variety of abilities of pastors and the contexts in which they serve, to assist district presidents, circuit visitors, and supervising pastors in supporting the [specific ministry] pastors under their care” (*Proc.*, 159–60); and

WHEREAS, These guidelines and training either have not been completed or have not been widely promulgated throughout the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The number of specific ministry pastors continues to increase, thereby creating a growing and continuing need for such guidance and training; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention implore the Council of Presidents (COP) to complete this important assignment quickly and with due attention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend to the COP, as a reference, the supervision plan included in 2026 Report R13.6 (“Report on the Development of a Comprehensive, Uniform, Synodwide Specific Ministry Supervision Plan,” *Workbook*, 77–82) and encourage consultation with seminary SMP program directors concerning their approaches to training and support for SMP mentors and SMP vicarage supervisors; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention thank the COP for their service and efforts.

To Amend Bylaws to Address Seminary Adjunct Faculty

RESOLUTION 6-10

Overtures 6-10, 73 (*CW*, 367, 408)

WHEREAS, Both Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne make use of contracted faculty, bearing various titles including “adjunct faculty,” “guest instructors,” “guest professors,” or “visiting instructors” (hereafter “adjuncts”); and

WHEREAS, The standard procedure is that adjuncts are appointed by the president through the provost and in consultation with the pertinent department chairman. Their services to the seminary are provided on a contractual basis, rather than through a call to the faculty; and

WHEREAS, Adjuncts must conform to the doctrinal standards of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by upholding the accepted doctrinal statements of the Synod, including Article II of the Synod Constitution; and

WHEREAS, CCM Op. 24-3031, “Adjunct Seminary Faculty,” has determined that “No bylaw sets forth specific procedures for appointment of part-time or temporary faculty,” (i.e., adjuncts); and

WHEREAS, The lack of an adjunct specific bylaw has resulted in CCM Op. 24-3031 stating that “[t]he [seminary] board [of regents] could choose to undertake such appointments directly, or it could choose to permit the president to undertake such appointments subject to ultimate approval or ratification by the board. The board could also choose to delegate this task to a committee in accordance with Bylaw 1.5.3.3. These examples are not intended to exhaust all legitimate possibilities; so long as the choices of the board do not conflict with another express provision of the Bylaws, it is free to accomplish its task of ‘approving’ as it sees fit”; and

1 WHEREAS, The lack of an adjunct specific bylaw has also resulted in CCM Op. 24-3031 stating “[o]ur analysis begins
2 with Bylaw 3.11. Bylaw 3.11.1 (a) provides that ‘[m]embers of the Synod who are appointed to positions requiring an
3 ordained minister or commissioned minister shall receive a solemn call.’ If a specific position being filled by a part-time
4 faculty member requires that the person filling that position be an ordained or commissioned minister (rather than merely
5 incidentally being filled by one), then Bylaw 3.11.1 (a) would require that person to receive a solemn call. Having received
6 a call into that specific position, the position would be a ‘called position’ under the Bylaws, including Bylaw 4.4.3 (a)’;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Such a practice of calling and installing adjuncts would be administratively cumbersome and would be
9 counterproductive for the seminary and for the church; and

10 WHEREAS, The ordinary delegation of this responsibility to the seminary president and administration is wise and
11 workable; and

12 WHEREAS, The boards of regents at both seminaries have for decades understood the Bylaws to require board approval
13 of regular full-time faculty members but not to require direct board approval of adjuncts; therefore be it

14 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.11.1 be amended as follows:

15 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

16 **3.11 Staff**

17 3.11.1 Unless otherwise specified by the board of directors of the respective agency, all employees shall serve at
18 the pleasure of the appointing authorities.

19 (a) Members of the Synod who are appointed to positions requiring an ordained minister or a
20 commissioned minister, excluding part-time or temporary faculty, shall receive a solemn call.

21 (b) Other ordained or commissioned ministers appointed to positions in the Synod, excluding part-time
22 or temporary faculty, shall be affirmed by the respective board or commission through a solemn call.

23 ...

24 and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.10.5.5 be amended as follows:

26 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

27 3.10.5.5 The board of regents of each theological seminary shall become familiar with and develop an understanding
28 of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod.

29 ...

30 (g) It shall participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the
31 seminary and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of full-time faculty members who
32 meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty
33 development and research.

34 ...

35 and be it finally

36 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.10.5.7 be amended as follows:

37 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

38 *Seminary Faculties*

39 3.10.5.7 The faculty of each theological seminary of the Synod shall consist of the president, the full-time faculty,
40 and the part-time faculty.

41 (a) Part-time or temporary faculty members are distinguished by an appropriate prefix or suffix
42 (“visiting, guest, adjunct, emeritus”).

43 (b) Part-time or temporary faculty members shall hold nonvoting membership on the faculty.

44 (c) Part-time or temporary faculty and instructors must conform to the doctrinal standards of The
45 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by upholding the accepted doctrinal statements of the Synod. The
46 president of the seminary shall appoint part time or temporary faculty members. The board of regents of
47 the seminary may require such appointments be approved by the board of regents.

48 ...

1 3.10.5.7.2 Each theological seminary shall have established policies and procedures related to appointments. ~~There shall~~
2 ~~be two levels of faculty appointments: (1) Initial level, where the appointment can be terminated with no~~
3 ~~formal requirement for a show of cause; (2) continuing level, where termination requires a formal show of~~
4 ~~cause.~~

5 3.10.5.7.2.1 There shall be two levels of full-time faculty appointments: (1) Initial level, where the appointment can be
6 terminated with no formal requirement for a show of cause; (2) continuing level, where termination requires
7 a formal show of cause.

8 (a) Seminaries are free to decide for themselves what names to apply to these two levels of appointment.

9 ...

10 (f) Promotion to continuing-level appointment status shall in no case be construed as requiring or
11 indicating advancement in rank or increase in salary.

12 ~~(g) Other types of faculty appointments may be established by seminaries as the need arises.~~

13 3.10.5.7.2.2 Other types of faculty appointments may be established by seminaries as the need arises.

14 ...

15 To Embed Church Work Formation and Recruitment in the Culture of the LCMS

16 RESOLUTION 6-11

17 Report R1.2.3 (CW, 28–31); Overtures 6-76–78 (CW, 409–411)

18 WHEREAS, St. Paul writes, “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he
19 was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures ... and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in
20 vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Cor. 15:3–4, 14); and

21 WHEREAS, God our Savior desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth through the one
22 mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:3–6), and who sends
23 pastors to preach the good news as He works saving faith in those who hear and believe the word of Christ (Rom. 10:13–
24 17); and

25 WHEREAS, Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep
26 without a shepherd, and said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly
27 to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:36–38); and

28 WHEREAS, In a world of sin and death, where the devil is relentless in seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8),
29 and where millions of people are without Christ, therefore Christ’s command for laborers continues until He comes again
30 (Matt. 9:35–38); and

31 WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions testify that the Office of the Holy Ministry has been
32 instituted by Christ Himself as a gift to His Church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to administer the Sacraments
33 publicly in the stead of Christ and by His command (John 20:19–23; Eph. 4:11–16; AC V); and

34 WHEREAS, In love for Christ and His Church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod established auxiliary offices
35 (designated as ministers of religion—commissioned) to support the Office of the Holy Ministry and to assist the faithful
36 in their God-given vocations (and in addition, for Lutheran school teachers, to assist and strengthen Christian fathers and
37 mothers in their God-given responsibility to bring up their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord [*LSB Agenda*,
38 203, 210]); and

39 WHEREAS, Synod conventions since 1847 have repeatedly urged sustained, synodwide church work formation and
40 recruitment in response to ongoing need ([files.lcms.org/file/preview/building-a-culture-of-church-work-formation-and-](files.lcms.org/file/preview/building-a-culture-of-church-work-formation-and-recruitment)
41 [recruitment](files.lcms.org/file/preview/building-a-culture-of-church-work-formation-and-recruitment)); and

42 WHEREAS, The 2019 Synod convention established a comprehensive, synodwide, collaborative, long-term initiative
43 to form and recruit ordained and commissioned church workers, which became a culture of church work formation and
44 recruitment known as *Set Apart to Serve* (Res. 6-01, “To Support and Participate in the Comprehensive Church Worker
45 Recruitment Initiative”); and

46 WHEREAS, Every major entity and sector in the Synod is fully partnering and collaborating with *Set Apart to Serve* on
47 every level, including our two seminaries (and their Christ Academy and *Vocatio* recruitment programs), all of our
48 Concordia universities, all 35 districts, the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, Concordia Publishing House (CPH),
49 Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, KFUEO Radio, LCMS Youth Ministry,

1 LCMS School Ministry, LCMS Family Ministry, LCMS Worker Wellness, LCMS Communications, LCMS Mission
2 Advancement, Higher Things, the National Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Association, National Association of Directors of
3 Christian Education, the Lutheran Education Association, and many more; and

4 WHEREAS, *Set Apart to Serve* is becoming integral in the culture of the Synod when every congregation, family,
5 school, circuit, district, and entity earnestly embeds and implements church work formation and recruitment in its mission,
6 ministry, life, and work; and

7 WHEREAS, Church work formation and recruitment are strengthened when every pastor, commissioned worker,
8 parent, and layperson invests time in the intentional formation, encouragement, and recruitment of youth (from conception
9 through high school) and adults to prayerfully consider and pursue a church work vocation; and

10 WHEREAS, *Set Apart to Serve* has developed excellent, tested church work formation and recruitment strategies and
11 resources for pastors, commissioned workers, parents, laypersons, districts, and second-career audiences
12 (resources.lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve); and

13 WHEREAS, *Set Apart to Serve* and collaborating partners have worked to address obstacles that hinder church work
14 formation and recruitment (e.g., education costs, worker wellness, information, resources); and

15 WHEREAS, The Synod is experiencing rich fruit of our labors through our collective *Set Apart to Serve* focus and
16 efforts (files.lcms.org/ff/sas-annual-report-2025), such as:

- 17 • Awareness of *Set Apart to Serve* and its purpose has increased from 54 percent in 2021 to 91 percent in 2025 among
18 clergy, from 39 percent to 91 percent among commissioned workers, from 26 percent to 58 percent among laity;
- 19 • Intentional conversations with youth about considering church work have increased from 74 percent in 2023 to 83
20 percent in 2025 among clergy, from 59 percent to 74 percent among commissioned workers, and from 19 percent
21 to 30 percent among laity;
- 22 • 16 of the 35 districts adopted a specific *Set Apart to Serve* resolution in their 2025 conventions, while all 35 districts
23 are participating in pilot projects, focus groups, and social media ad campaigns;
- 24 • Church work enrollments at our Concordia universities increased from 699 students in 2024 to 768 students in 2025.
25 Deaconess enrollment at Concordia University Chicago and our two seminaries increased from 93 to 101.
26 Enrollment in all pastoral formation programs in our two seminaries increased from 566 to 586. This is an overall
27 increase in church work students in our Concordia universities and seminaries of 97 students from 2024 to 2025;

28 and

29 WHEREAS, *Set Apart to Serve* is not an end in and of itself but serves to rally and unite the entire Synod around forming
30 and recruiting church workers from conception through adulthood, so that even if *Set Apart to Serve* is no longer a known
31 name or brand, forming and recruiting church workers would be deeply embedded in the culture of the Synod until the
32 Lord returns; and

33 WHEREAS, If congregations, schools, districts, and entities prayerfully desire that our Synod be richly supplied with
34 faithful pastors and commissioned workers for future generations, then every pastor, commissioned worker, parent, and
35 layperson must continue the blessed hard work of forming and recruiting church workers; therefore be it

36 *Resolved*, That every congregation and school of the Synod (conception–high school) be encouraged to implement a
37 church work formation and recruitment plan in their mission and ministry plan within the 2026–29 triennium (see
38 files.lcms.org/file/preview/forming-congregation-sas-focus-team); and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That every pastor, commissioned worker, parent, and layperson of the Synod be encouraged to intentionally
40 encourage youth and adults in their ministry setting and families to prayerfully consider a full-time Synod church work
41 vocation; and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That all 35 district presidents, education executives, staff, and board of directors be encouraged to
43 implement a church work formation and recruitment plan in their district mission and ministry plan within the 2026–2029
44 triennium (files.lcms.org/file/preview/forming-district-sas-focus-team); and be it further

45 *Resolved*, That all circuit visitors be encouraged to include church work formation and recruitment as a standing item
46 in their winkel agendas and circuit responsibilities, utilizing the quarterly *Set Apart to Serve* circuit visitor newsletter
47 lcms.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c5b5a2837db31893114eebbb8&id=2fc11ae9e6&e=e92e2543eb; and be it
48 further

1 *Resolved*, That all Synod schools (early childhood–high school) be encouraged to implement the *Set Apart to Serve*
2 church work vocation curriculum published by CPH each year to supplement their religion curriculum
3 (resources.lcms.org/initiatives/set-apart-to-serve-curriculum); and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That district and congregation leaders and committees be encouraged to enhance their financial support of
5 individuals who are enrolled in church work programs at our Concordia universities and seminaries; and be it finally

6 *Resolved*, That district and congregation leaders be encouraged to intentionally address the compensation and overall
7 wellness, love, and appreciation of all ordained and commissioned church workers in district congregations, schools, and
8 entities.

9 **To Amend Bylaws to Reinsert 2007 Pastoral Colloquy Bylaws from Policy Manual**

10 **RESOLUTION 6-12**

11 Overtures 6-11–13 (*CW*, 367–70)

12 WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention removed numerous pastoral colloquy bylaws and added Bylaw 3.10.2.2 (a)
13 (Res. 8-08A, “To Realign National Synod Ministries around Two Mission Boards”), which directs the Colloquy
14 Committee for the Pastoral Ministry (CCPM) to develop, instead, policies that are now in the *Policy Manual for Admission*
15 *to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy (CCPM Policy Manual,*
16 files.lcms.org/dl/f/pastoral-colloquy-policy-manual); and

17 WHEREAS, For 61 years prior to the 2010 Synod convention (i.e., from 1949–2010), the Synod Bylaws for pastoral
18 colloquy, as contained in the *Handbook*, reflected the more fulsome details of policy and procedure that existed in the
19 Bylaws; and

20 WHEREAS, In response to the 2010 Synod convention action, the CCPM placed the removed bylaws into its policy
21 manual; and

22 WHEREAS, These former bylaws (now policies) have changed a little bit in the 16 years since then, though a large
23 percentage of the material remains unchanged; and

24 WHEREAS, As is the case with policy manuals in general, the *CCPM Policy Manual* can be changed at any time by
25 the four-member CCPM; and

26 WHEREAS, There are many important requirements for pastoral colloquy that have been in place for many years and
27 it would be wise to involve a larger representative body in a more deliberate process with regard to changes; and

28 WHEREAS, The well-known *Handbook* is a more accessible place to house these important requirements for pastoral
29 colloquy rather than the lesser-known *CCPM Policy Manual*; and

30 WHEREAS, This overture does not seek or intend to introduce to the Bylaws any substantial changes to the requirements
31 for pastoral colloquy as contained in the *CCPM Policy Manual*; therefore be it

32 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.10.2.2 be amended as follows:

33 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

34 ***B. Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry***

35 ...

36 3.10.2.2 The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall establish and monitor academic, theological, and
37 personal standards for admission to the office of the pastoral ministry by colloquy after consultation with the
38 faculties of the seminaries. It may consider and approve those applicants who meet the requirements for
39 eligibility as specified in this bylaw and concerning whom no valid objection is made pursuant to paragraph
40 (c). In consultation with the President of the Synod, it shall develop any necessary additional policies to
41 govern eligibility and the process to be followed to determine qualifications and suitability for pastoral
42 service in the Synod.

43 (a) ~~In consultation with the President of the Synod, it shall develop all necessary policies to govern~~
44 ~~eligibility and the process to be followed to determine qualifications and suitability for pastoral service~~
45 ~~in the Synod. Only such male applicants shall be considered eligible to apply for colloquy who are:~~

46 (1) ministers in good standing in other Christian church bodies (or independent congregations), are
47 graduates of programs of study leading to ordination of no less than 60 semester hours or the

1 equivalent thereof in length from accredited institutions, and have served at least three years in a
 2 recognized ministry of their church body, unless granted an exception to either of these last two
 3 requirements by the colloquy committee; or

4 (2) graduates of programs of study leading to ordination of no less than 60 semester hours or the
 5 equivalent thereof in length from accredited institutions, who have been communicant members in
 6 good standing of congregations of the Synod for at least two years immediately prior to the time of
 7 application (unless granted an exception to either of these last two requirements by the colloquy
 8 committee), and whose congregations adhere to Bylaw 2.5.2; or

9 (3) pastors emeriti from other church bodies according to category (2) above. If certified by the
 10 committee, they may be placed on the roster of the Synod according to Bylaw 2.7.5.

11 (b) Applicants for colloquy shall be directed to the president of the district where the applicant resides.

12 (1) The district president shall refer the applicant to a district interview committee, who shall give
 13 a report and recommendation to the district president.

14 (2) The district president shall recommend qualified applicants to the chairman of the colloquy
 15 committee. Such recommendations shall be processed according to the policies and procedures
 16 adopted by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry.

17 (c) The colloquy committee shall publish notice of its intent to interview an applicant in an official
 18 periodical of the Synod unless the applicant requests such notice be delayed until after his interview.

19 (1) If no valid objection is received by the committee within 30 days after the publication of such
 20 notice, the applicant may be interviewed.

21 (2) If the applicant was interviewed first, notice shall then be published and upon publication 30
 22 days be given for valid objections to be received.

23 (3) The committee, in its sole discretion, shall decide whether an objection is valid. Its decision
 24 shall not be the subject of any appeal.

25 (d) The colloquy committee shall arrange for an in-person colloquy, or discussion, with qualified
 26 applicants. The decision on each applicant shall be made on the basis of the colloquy application and
 27 examination and shall be the sole prerogative of the colloquy committee.

28 (e) The criteria by which the colloquy committee shall determine an applicant's readiness for
 29 certification are to be based upon adopted standards, including, but not limited to:

30 (1) areas of general education;

31 (2) understanding of and agreement with the scriptural and doctrinal positions of The Lutheran
 32 Church—Missouri Synod;

33 (3) familiarity with the history and polity of the Synod;

34 (4) studies in theology assuring a well-rounded education in the major fields of theological
 35 discipline;

36 (5) positive experience in the work of the pastoral ministry; and

37 (6) demonstrated moral character ("above reproach").

38 (f) The colloquy committee, at its sole discretion, shall determine the content and amount of academic
 39 work, personal study programs, or supervised ministry that may be required prior to certification. To
 40 this end, the committee may assign residential and/or online seminary coursework, mentored readings,
 41 and/or a formal vicarage or a shorter informal internship.

42 (g) The committee, at its discretion, may require a second colloquy interview following the completion
 43 of such study and/or supervised ministry.

44 (h) Decisions to declare applicants qualified for the pastoral ministry and to certify for placement shall
 45 be at the sole discretion of the committee.

46 (i) The committee shall:

47 (1) certify for placement those applicants who have satisfactorily completed the colloquy interview
 48 and any other requirements as assigned by the colloquy committee;

49 (2) report this action to the applicant, the Office of Pastoral Education of the Synod, and to the
 50 appropriate district president; and

51 (3) publish a report of its favorable action in an official periodical of the Synod.

52 (ej) Every applicant whom the committee declares qualified shall be assigned his first call by the
 53 Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments.

54 (k) The colloquy committee shall report to the Synod in convention.

To Affirm that the Lord has Ordained that Those Who Preach the Gospel Should Make their Living from the Gospel

RESOLUTION 6-13

Overtures 6-79–80 (*CW*, 411–12)

Rationale

When our Lord Jesus Christ called Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee to be His apostles, “they left their nets and followed Him” (Matt. 4:20). When Matthew was called, he likewise left the tax booth and followed the Lord as His apostle (Matt. 9:9). Thus, St. Paul states that “The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14 KJV).

This passage from 1 Corinthians is quoted in the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties under the heading “What Hearers Owe Their Pastors.” During the Rite for the Installation of a Pastor the people of God affirm that they will “support him by [our] gifts and pray for him always that in his labors he may retain a cheerful spirit and that his ministry among [us] may be abundantly blessed.” (*LSB Agenda*, 180) This can only happen by generous, first-fruits, sacrificial giving.

The past half-century has seen a rapid secularization of our society. Church attendance has fallen with each passing generation. This creates real challenges and raises a question for the Synod today: do we still believe that 1 Cor. 9:14 is true and that we should do what it says?

In the face of these very real financial stresses and strains, some point to the example of St. Paul who famously worked as a tent-maker to support his apostleship rather than taking a wage from his service in the Church: “I have made no use of any of [this]” (1 Cor. 9:15). Given the situation of the church today (declining membership, financial stress, rising costs of insurance, etc.) why not imitate St. Paul and intentionally seek to create more bi-vocational (or co-vocational) “tent-maker pastors?”

St. Paul was exceptional in many ways. He willingly refused to receive payment for his service as a preacher of the Word (1 Corinthians 9); he was an itinerant apostle, moving from place to place (Acts 10); he was called directly by Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9); he received dreams from God telling him where to travel (Acts 16); and he remained celibate, forgoing his right to marry so as to better dedicate his life to the Church (1 Corinthians 7). None of these exceptions in the life of St. Paul establish a pattern meant for widespread emulation: they are part and parcel of Paul’s unique call as an apostle. When St. Paul himself speaks to the Corinthians about how they should treat their parish pastor, he makes it clear that they should provide him a living wage.

The Church of the first century was smaller, more isolated, and poorer than the Church in America today—by orders of magnitude. It is this poor, small, isolated first-century Church that received the Lord’s mandate: “those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel.” (1 Cor. 9:14 KJV) It is one thing for Paul to willingly decide that his unique apostolic ministry would benefit from being financially independent from his hearers; it is quite another thing for the hearers (or their Synodical leaders) to decide that today’s finances and demographics mean that the Lord’s mandate can be set aside for a significant portion of the church.

That said, exceptional circumstances do exist and the financial and demographic challenges faced by congregations today are real. Congregations in communities that are losing jobs and population will also find it hard to maintain their own attendance and financial support. It’s worse in areas that have lost key employers or entire industries. These congregations are not willingly looking to dock their pastor’s pay. And the pastor who finds himself in need of income that his shrinking congregation just can’t give him is not trying to abandon the ministry by taking on additional secular employment: he is just trying to fulfill his other God-given vocations as a husband and father.

Nor should we be tempted to pretend that necessity makes a virtue. This is not a St. Paul tent-maker situation: these pastors are not willingly seeking employment because they think it will make their ministries better. The pastor who must punch a clock at a nine-to-five job is not available for a funeral on Friday morning or a visit to the emergency room on a Tuesday afternoon. The pastor who puts time, energy, and focus into 20 hours (or 30 hours or 40 hours) in an office, a factory, or a retail shop cannot recoup those expenditures for ministry.

The challenges we face are real. Solutions to those challenges will not be easy. They will require sacrifice, creativity, and joint efforts. Yet, the mandate of the Church always remains: faithfully apply the clear Word of God to the real world in which we live.

Therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, That all pastors of the Synod be encouraged to catechize their congregations regarding biblical stewardship
2 and first-fruits giving; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That all pastors be encouraged to utilize the stewardship resources produced by the Office of National
4 Mission (ONM) to further this catechization (*lcms.org/stewardship*); and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That all congregations of the Synod be encouraged to follow their district salary guidelines for their pastors;
6 and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That where a congregation is too small to provide a full-time living wage for a pastor, the district assist that
8 congregation in finding a partner congregation or congregations to form a multi-point parish, which can provide a pastor
9 with a full-time living wage; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That districts make ample use of resources from the ONM (*Exploring God's Mission Here, re: Vitality*) and
11 the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (Ministry Clarity, Seasons of Ministry) to help congregations assess their current
12 situation and find the best model for ministry (multi-point parish, cathedral model, circuit rider, etc.) in their midst that
13 will give them good pastoral care provided by a pastor who is compensated in such a manner that he can dedicate his full
14 working life to the ministry; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That in areas where congregations are so small and isolated that forming a traditional dual or triple-point
16 parish is not possible, the districts, circuits, or nearby thriving congregations consider the funding of cathedral models and
17 circuit rider models of ministry as a mission-oriented opportunity for revitalization; and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That the Synod express its love, understanding, and support for pastors and congregations where financial
19 and demographic realities and other local circumstances make all of these preferred solutions impossible; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That in these situations, congregations be encouraged to demonstrate understanding for, reduce the
21 expectations of, and allot time for their pastors to seek ways to subsidize their salaries to alleviate any financial strain and
22 stress upon their families; and be it finally

23 *Resolved*, That districts be encouraged to support and encourage lay leadership in such situations as they experience
24 challenges related to their pastor having additional employment.

25 To Respectfully Decline Overtures

26 RESOLUTION 6-14

27 Overtures 6-72, 74, 84, 86–87 (*CW*, 408–09, 413, 414–15)

28 WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons,
29 that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

30 *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 6-72	To Study the Feasibility of Intentional Seminary Professor Turnover and Parish Sabbatical	Doesn't account for real world variations in age and capacities
Ov. 6-74	To Direct Seminaries to Publish Annual Enrollment Numbers Every Fall	This information may be requested from the seminaries
Ov. 6-84	To Establish Commissioned Male Diaconate	Inconsistent with seminary formation and synodical practice
Ov. 6-86	To Celebrate and Encourage Lay Service	Lack of clarity
Ov. 6-87	To Celebrate and Encourage Lay Service	Lack of clarity

7. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

To Commend the Concordia University System

RESOLUTION 7-01

Overtures 7-01–03 (*CW*, 417–22); President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:33); Overture L7-30 (*TB*, 1:43)

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System (CUS) was established by the 1992 Synod convention (Res. 6-04, “To Establish Concordia University System, Inc.” [*Proc.*, 160–61]), replacing the Board for Higher Education Services, to unify the universities of the Synod around the central mission to educate students for godly vocations in the church and the world with a biblical foundation and the Lutheran Confessions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, 2023 Resolution 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod” (*Proc.*, 170–90), focused the role of CUS on the Lutheran identity and mission of the Synod’s universities; and

WHEREAS, CUS, in accordance with Bylaw 3.6.6.1, has adopted and implemented the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and engaged in both formal and informal visitations of our Concordia universities; and

WHEREAS, The presence of CUS staff and visitation teams on our campuses has produced significant positive results in relationship building and the growth of trust; and

WHEREAS, CUS has, through the visitation process, produced positive improvements in the focus on Lutheran identity and mission on our campuses as attested to by the formal visitation team reports and letters of determination; and

WHEREAS, The positive fruits of 2023 Res. 7-04B continue to be revealed; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm and sustain the work of the CUS; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the work of the CUS and our universities in carrying out their mission, and that the Synod pledge continued prayer, financial support, and encouragement.

The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance Committee, estimate with regard to sustaining and pledging financial support for the Concordia University System (CUS) that CUS operations annually cost corporate Synod \$1,100,000 (FY27 budget), of which \$250,000–\$325,000 annually is associated with maintaining the separate legal entity. Over the last 5 fiscal years, corporate Synod has supported CUS with \$19 million, including grants for paydown of substantially all of CUS’ remaining debt (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).

To Amend Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2

RESOLUTION 7-02

Overture 7-10 (*CW*, 425)

WHEREAS, The 2023 Synod convention adopted Resolution 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod” (*Proceedings*, 170–90); and

WHEREAS, 2023 Res. 7-04B significantly changed the way that the Synod relates to the universities of the Concordia University System (CUS); and

WHEREAS, Part of 2023 Res. 7-04B establishes mandatory training for the regents of the universities of the CUS; and

WHEREAS, That training is now codified in Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2, its subparagraphs (a–d) further describing such training; and

WHEREAS, The required training has been initiated and is ongoing; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2 (d) has been subject to several interpretations and has caused some confusion regarding the training required of regents appointed or elected between conventions of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**F. Concordia University System Boards of Regents**

...

3.10.6.2.2 Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents shall undergo training for such service.

(a) The Concordia University System and Synod Board of Directors shall provide for training of elected and appointed regents concerning their responsibilities under the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, to advance the Synod's confession and mission objectives and to advance their respective institutions in service of the church through the Concordia University System visitation program.

(b) The chair of each board of regents shall, subject to guidelines prepared by the Concordia University System Institution Advisory Council after input from Concordia University System, provide training of elected and appointed regents in the task of governance and in their business and legal duties as regents.

(c) The training under (a) and (b) above shall be provided ~~within one year after each Synod convention and at least annually between Synod conventions~~ as follows: (1) an initial training within one year after each Synod convention; and (2) at least annually thereafter until the next Synod convention.

(d) Every training session under (a) above, both initial training and further annual training, shall be recorded to allow for remote participation and completion of the training for those unable to attend in-person training sessions.

~~(e)~~ After each Synod convention, every regent must complete the initial training provided thereafter within six months after the training or within six months of being elected or appointed, whichever is later. Failure to complete the initial training within ~~the first year after the first Synod convention after a regent is elected or appointed~~ six months renders the regent ineligible to continue in office. Upon such failure, the respective board of regents shall declare the position vacant.

~~(e) Training programs, initial and continuing, may allow for electronic or remote participation.~~

(f) Concordia University System, in collaboration with its Institution Advisory Council and the Synod Board of Directors, shall prepare and make available a summary of the demands and expectations of service as a college or university regent, including their responsibilities under the Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. This summary shall be reviewed and confirmed by nominees as a condition to being eligible to serve if elected or appointed.

(g) The cost of the development of the regent training by CUS and Synod Board of Directors shall be funded by the CUS; the cost of regent participation in the training shall be funded per capita by the institutions.

To Amend Bylaw 3.6.6.1**RESOLUTION 7-03**

Overture 7-09 (CW, 425)

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.6.6 states that the Concordia University System (CUS) Board of Directors (BOD) is to assist with the cooperation and coordination of the Synod's colleges and universities in the "preparation of commissioned ministers for service in the Synod and of pre-seminary students for study at a Synod seminary"; and

WHEREAS, There is perceived ambiguity between Bylaw 3.6.6.1 (b) and (g); therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.6.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Concordia University System**

...

3.6.6.1 The Concordia University System Board of Directors shall:

...

(b) upon the request from a Concordia university, review and approve new implementations of and discontinuances, whether actual or constructive, (whether actual or in practical effect) of programs of study leading to one of the professional church work in the interest of the institution(s) and the Synod ministries approved by the Synod;

...

(g) receive, revise, and recommend to conventions of the Synod for approval any proposals for creating a new commissioned ministry, essentially revising, or the renaming, eliminating, or essentially revising of a program of study and certification for commissioned ministry approved by the Synod;

...

and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS BOD’s work be commended to the care and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Clarify Prior Approval Protocols for University Theological Faculties

RESOLUTION 7-04

Overtures 7-14–24 (CW, 428–33)

WHEREAS, Numerous overtures to the 2026 Synod convention have addressed the prior approval protocols for theology faculty for our Concordia universities and a desire for transparency and clarity; and

WHEREAS, The Synod treasures our Concordia universities as institutions that pass on the truths of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to those who are a part of the Synod, those of other denominations, and many who do not know the true God and the Lord Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, The truth is passed on in classrooms as well as throughout our campus communities; and

WHEREAS, Theology faculty not only teach the faith with words, but also with their lives; and

WHEREAS, The Concordia University System (CUS) has on its website “Prior Approval Protocol for Theological Faculty of the Concordia Universities” (cus.edu/protocols-and-procedures, accessed May 31, 2026) and these protocols include the Standards and Process; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.10.6.9.2 governs the prior approval panel for full-time theological appointments to the Concordia universities and the CUS has prepared a list of questions for those under consideration in its “Theology Faculty Information Form” (ibid.) including the categories: Church, Doctrine and Practice, Moral, and Duties; and

WHEREAS, The Synod is grateful for the work of the CUS in preparing the “Prior Approval Protocol for Theological Faculty of the Concordia Universities” (ibid.) and “Theology Faculty Information Form,” (ibid.) as well as all who have served on prior approval panels and those who have gone through the prior approval process; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for this important work; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention express thanks and appreciation to the CUS Board of Directors (BOD) for developing and making public their criteria for evaluating theology faculty candidates during their prior approval process (cus.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Prior-Approval-Protocol-for-Theology-Faculty-2.pdf); and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS BOD review the “Theological Faculty Information Form,” requesting input from the Council of Presidents (COP), to discuss if there are other necessary categories and questions to be included on the form for the assessment of candidates for theological faculty positions in our universities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod request that the calling university reach out to the local district president in order to notify the candidate’s district president of initiation of prior approval so as to ascertain the candidate’s effectiveness and suitability for a teaching position in light of his service to the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS, in consultation with the Office of the President and the COP, re-examine the size and composition of the university theological faculty prior approval panel and report their recommendation to the 2029 Synod convention; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod leadership publish articles in both *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter* to explain what the prior approval process is and how it is being carried out; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod lift up in prayer those who aspire to teach on theological faculties in our universities and pray that those involved in assessing candidates would be given discernment of what would best serve the church and that the Spirit would cultivate trust among us regarding those involved in the prior approval process.

1 WHEREAS, Fostering a consistent approach to worship practices across the congregations, universities, and seminaries
2 of the Synod strengthens the unity of the Synod and provides a coherent witness to students, congregations, and the broader
3 community; and

4 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church has long heeded the apostle’s injunction that all things be done decently and in order
5 (1 Corinthians 14) by, for example, joyfully and freely receiving the church’s historic orders of prayer (e.g., Matins,
6 Vespers, Compline, etc.) and the historic order of the Divine Service (e.g., the *Ordo* as described in 2016 Res. 4-04A, “To
7 Appeal to the LCMS Congregations, Workers, and Institutions within Christian Freedom and for Love’s Sake to Retain a
8 Common Order of Service for the Lord’s Supper”) as a precious gift from previous generations of Christians; and

9 WHEREAS, It is simply not necessary for the true unity of the Christian Church that ceremonies instituted by human
10 custom should be observed uniformly in all places (AC VII 3); and

11 WHEREAS, The Lutheran reformers could insist that those church usages that have been established by human
12 authority ought to be observed, provided they could be observed without sin and without the erroneous opinion that they
13 justified (AC XV), for the sake of training the unlearned in the faith (AC XXIV 3); and

14 WHEREAS, The Lutheran reformers confess that the churches of God in every locality and age have authority to order
15 the ceremonies of worship in such ways as are fitting and profitable for the edification of the communion of saints in
16 particular times and places (FC Ep X 4) and so that the weak in faith might not be scandalized (FC Ep X 5); and

17 WHEREAS, The reformers also authored church orders, such as the *Church Order for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel*,
18 published in English by CPH (2015), which show how evangelical freedom may fruitfully be joined with a grateful
19 reception and creative appropriation of the church’s living liturgical and hymnological heritage; and

20 WHEREAS, The church orders evidenced variation in the details of the humanly established ceremonies from place to
21 place, yet all within the order received from previous generations; and

22 WHEREAS, Constitution Article III 7 states, “The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions shall— ...
23 encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of
24 responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common confession of faith”; and

25 WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has appealed to our congregations and workers to welcome and encourage the
26 development and use of new hymns, spiritual songs, and liturgical settings, which continually are called forth by the Holy
27 Spirit, not as a supplanting to what has come before, but as a supplement to it, its living growth (2016 Res. 4-04A); and

28 WHEREAS, Const. Art. VI 4 requires the “exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in
29 church and school”; and

30 WHEREAS, The chapels of the Concordia universities are fertile training grounds for all students, faculty, and staff to
31 learn and grow in joyful, reverent, Christ-centered worship; and

32 WHEREAS, The adoption of *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* in 2006 provided a common, unifying liturgical and
33 hymnological foundation for our life together as a Synod; and

34 WHEREAS, The CUS Board and its Campus Worship Committee, which includes representatives from each of the
35 Concordia universities, is earnestly working to develop a plan for consistent Lutheran worship, spiritual life and pastoral
36 care on the Concordia campuses; therefore be it

37 *Resolved*, That worship life in the chapel services and across the campuses of the CUS is to be planned, practiced, and
38 aimed at the goal of forming all students, faculty, and staff to be scripturally-faithful Christians, grounded in Lutheran
39 doctrine and practice, and active members of Synod congregations; and be it further

40 *Resolved*, That use of *LSB* is encouraged as the benchmark, and that other worship materials and practices should be
41 doctrinally pure (Const. Art. VI 4); and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That the CUS Board and its Campus Worship Committee continue working to foster a rich, faithful, and
43 distinctly Lutheran worship and spiritual life throughout the CUS; and be it finally

44 *Resolved*, That the CUS Board include in its report to the 2029 Synod convention the progress of its Campus Worship
45 Committee.

To Clarify *Lutheran Identity* in Connection with the Concordia Universities

RESOLUTION 7-07

Overtures 7-04–07 (*CW*, 422–24)

WHEREAS, The 2023 Synod convention (Res. 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod,” *Proceedings*, 170–72) revised Bylaw subsection 3.6.6 to direct the Concordia University System (CUS) Board of Directors (BOD) to develop and adopt Lutheran Identity Mission Outcome Standards (LIMOS), which were adopted in February 2024 (*in.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/LIMOS-2024.pdf*); and

WHEREAS, The LIMOS are used during official CUS visitations of the Concordia universities, the goal being to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each university relative to the Lutheran identity standards adopted by the Synod (2016 Res. 7-01A, “To Adopt Lutheran Identity Statement for CUS Institutions as Prepared by CUS Presidents,” *Proc.*, 171–72); and

WHEREAS, The first round of evaluations of the Concordia universities by the CUS has recently been completed; and

WHEREAS, Following this initial round of evaluations, some questions have been raised as to the breadth and depth of the term *Lutheran identity*, and especially as to how it should be understood in connection with, and applied to, our Concordia universities; and

WHEREAS, The Lord is a God of clarity and order, and it is good, right, and salutary for His Church to seek clarity and order in all things; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CUS BOD, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, shall define and clarify what is meant by *Lutheran identity* and how it should be understood in connection with our Concordia universities, and shall issue a report to the 2029 Synod convention, at the same time issuing the same report to the boards of regents of our Concordia universities; and be it further

Resolved, That the CUS BOD shall continue to utilize, and develop further as necessary, the LIMOS, while strengthening and clarifying them with references to the scriptural and confessional bases for the standards, and making the updated, strengthened, and clarified LIMOS available to the Synod on the CUS website.

To Study Synodwide Corporate Status of Concordia University System

RESOLUTION 7-08

Overtures 7-01–03 (*CW*, 417–22); Late Overture L7-30 (*TB*, 1:43)

WHEREAS, Overture 7-01, “To Amend Bylaws to Convert Concordia University System, the Synodwide Corporate Entity, into Commission for University Education,” was submitted by the LCMS Board of Directors (BOD) for consideration at the 2026 Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, Overtures 7-02 and 7-03, “To Affirm and Sustain Concordia University System as Synodwide Corporate Entity,” were put forward by the Concordia University System (CUS) Board of Directors and St. John Lutheran Church in Springfield, Pa., respectively; and Late Overture L7-30, “To Affirm and Retain Concordia University System as Synodwide Corporate Entity,” was put forward by the Concordia University, Nebraska Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, Overtures 7-01–03 and Late Overture 7-30 are irreconcilable with one another; and

WHEREAS, The BOD submitted Overture 7-01 in the interests of its duty to attend to financial and liability issues of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, CUS no longer carries out business or line-of-credit management functions on behalf of the universities, resulting in there being no need for a separate corporation; and

WHEREAS, CUS is served by corporate Synod accounting and audit functions already, making its operations easily assimilable, and the transition of CUS to a commission from a synodwide corporate entity, potentially practicable; and

WHEREAS, The monumental shifts in the landscape of higher education, both within and outside the Synod, make it difficult to fully assess and evaluate the impact of such a transition of CUS at this time; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the BOD, in consultation with the CUS Board of Directors and the Institution Advisory Council, to analyze the relative strengths and weaknesses between retaining the CUS as a synodwide

1 corporate entity and converting the CUS into a commission of the Synod and propose the best model to the 2029
2 convention.

3 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
4 *Committee, estimate incremental cost to the named entities, for in-person meetings, of \$75,000 (estimate required by*
5 *Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

6 **To Give Thanks for Work and Ministry of Concordia University Ann Arbor**

7 **RESOLUTION 7-09**

8 Overture 7-27 (CW, 435)

9 WHEREAS, The congregations and people of the Michigan District and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have
10 treasured a close relationship with Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA) since its founding in 1963; and

11 WHEREAS, In July 2013, an affiliation between CUAA and Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) became official,
12 which enabled the campus to continue providing for the spiritual development of students; including those who were being
13 converted and baptized through the work of the Holy Spirit, choosing church work careers, and having a greater desire to
14 embrace the Christian faith and our Lutheran confession; therefore be it

15 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the mission and ministry of CUAA since its founding
16 in 1963, including the years with CUW, as well as what lies ahead; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Synod commend all past and present leaders of Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor
18 (CUWAA) as well as the entire Synod for their support of the mission and ministry of CUAA since its founding and their
19 remarkable efforts to sustain the ministry in Ann Arbor as a part of CUWAA for the last decade, for their communication
20 of the vision, and for their encouragement and support of the many faculty and staff, to the glory of God; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the Synod, with united hearts and voices give thanks and praise to God for the blessings He has
22 bestowed upon the kingdom at large through the work of His Holy Spirit and the ministry which has been done and is
23 being done in Ann Arbor; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the Synod encourage CUWAA to develop church work programs on the Ann Arbor campus; and be it
25 further

26 *Resolved*, That the Synod affirm its commitment to and support for all our Concordia universities; and be it finally

27 *Resolved*, That the assembly rise and join in singing the common doxology as an expression of thanksgiving.

28 **To Respectfully Decline Overtures**

29 **RESOLUTION 7-10**

30 Overtures 7-11, 13 (CW, 426–28)

31 WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons,
32 that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

33 *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 7-11	To Strengthen Our Process for Supporting Our Concordias	Overly broad; unfairly binds the boards of regents as to the fulfillment of their duties
Ov. 7-13	To Ask That Concordia University Nebraska Local Regents Be Appointed	Concordia University Nebraska Board of Regents already working to make necessary changes

8. FINANCE

To Encourage Transparency and Accountability in Legal Judgments and Settlements

RESOLUTION 8-01

Reports R1, R1.2–R1.2.2., R1.2.4–R1.3, R5–R8, R15–R57 (*CW*, 1–4, 15–28, 31–37, 46–56, 95–141); Overture 8-17 (*CW*, 445)

WHEREAS, Constitution Articles VII and XI establish the Synod as a voluntary association acting on behalf of its member congregations and vest final human authority in the Synod in convention; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod charge the Board of Directors with fiduciary responsibility for the Synod’s business and financial affairs (Bylaws 3.3.4.4–5) and require reporting to the Synod in convention concerning the administration of those affairs (Bylaw 3.3.4); and

WHEREAS, These and other Bylaws of the Synod establish an accountability structure that depends upon the keeping and reporting of official records and financial information for the governance of the Synod, while permitting appropriate confidentiality through executive session, personal privacy, and legal privilege; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.5.4 states that:

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.

(a) Full disclosure includes all information (including, but not limited to, information required to be made available under state law) recorded in any fashion, except the following:

(1) Information that would violate the expected confidentiality of donors.

(2) Personnel files or other information that would violate the expected confidentiality of employees.

(3) Information that relates to in-process negotiations of financial matters.

(4) Information the disclosure of which would breach a legal obligation of the Synod or its agencies or affect pending litigation or claims against the Synod or its agencies.

(5) Information that is preliminary in nature or otherwise has not been finalized in its form and content.

therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend the process outlined in Bylaw 1.5.4; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to the Lord for His provision, for the faithful support by God’s people and good stewardship of His resources, and we rejoice in these things as they enable our work of the Synod’s mission.

To Amend Bylaw Section 3.7 to Clarify Additional Assigned Responsibilities and Provisions on the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans / Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services

RESOLUTION 8-02

Reports R1, R1.2–1.2.2, R1.2.4–R1.3, R5–R8, R15–57 (*CW*, 1–5, 15–28, 31–37, 46–56, 95–141); Overtures 8-01–02 (*CW*, 437–38)

WHEREAS, Bylaw section 3.7 currently describes the responsibilities of Concordia Plan Services (CPS) and those it serves in terms that no longer fully reflect its present scope of responsibilities and service. For example, this year Synod’s Board of Directors (BOD) has authorized formation of an entity, Concordia Risk Solutions, a captive insurance company, to provide for property and casualty insurance and reinsurance within the Synod, an activity the BOD delegated to the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services consistent with Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) Opinion 24-3043, “Concordia Plan Services Property Casualty Insurance Program” (minutes of the BOD, May 23–24, 2026, item 199 [M]); and

WHEREAS, The same opinion (CCM Op. 24-3043) recommended that “the Synod Bylaw description of the work of CPS to be amended by the next convention to include this new activity, even if already entered into”; and

1 WHEREAS, The change of the bylaw should clarify that amendments are intended to include the synodwide trust
 2 manager, CPS, under the same provision for assignment of additional areas of work by the BOD to be consistent with
 3 Bylaw 3.6.1.1; and

4 WHEREAS, The sophistication of the services being provided continue to increase, the proposed amendments would
 5 update board composition and qualification requirements to reflect the expertise necessary for overseeing benefit,
 6 investment, and captive insurance company operations, and to otherwise align with the operations and requirements of the
 7 Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans and the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services; therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That Bylaw section 3.7 be amended as follows:

9 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

10 **3.7 Synodwide Trust Entities**

11 3.7.1 The synodwide trust entities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are collectively known as the
 12 Concordia Plans.

13 *The Concordia Plans*

14 ...

15 3.7.1.2 Concordia Plan Services is also responsible for managing other ancillary programs, including various
 16 supplemental insurance and administration services programs and the Support Program, and Concordia Risk
 17 Solutions.

18 (a) The Support Program of the Synod is not a trust but rather a program of financial assistance to those
 19 eligible ordained and commissioned ministers and their eligible dependents who are in financial need.
 20 This aid is in the form of a gift from the budgeted funds of the Synod. Eligibility standards shall be
 21 determined by the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services.

22 (b) There exists and may be added in the future various ancillary supplemental insurance and
 23 administration services that will be made available to ~~member organizations and their employees~~member
 24 congregations and their schools, corporate Synod, and agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service
 25 organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and their employees. These programs are not
 26 trusts and will be under the supervision of the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services.

27 (c) Concordia Risk Solutions serves as a captive insurance company to insure and/or reinsure risks of
 28 member congregations and their schools, corporate Synod, and agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized
 29 service organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

30 3.7.1.3 The Board of Trustees of Concordia Plans and the Board of Directors of Concordia Plan Services shall consist
 31 of 16 members. The 15 voting members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod. All newly
 32 appointed members shall begin service on the September 1 following appointment, except with an
 33 appointment to fill a vacancy, when service shall begin on the first day of the month in which the next regular
 34 meeting of members occurs after appointment. The representative designated by the Board of Directors of
 35 the Synod shall be the nonvoting member. Voting members shall be appointed to three-year terms, which
 36 shall not exceed four terms in a successive period. The 15 voting members shall include:

- 37 1. Two ministers of religion—ordained
- 38 2. One minister of religion—commissioned
- 39 3. Twelve laypersons, at least ~~five~~three of whom shall be significantly experienced in the design of
 40 employee benefit plans (at least one in health and one in retirement), at least ~~five~~three of whom shall be
 41 significantly experienced in the management of benefit plan or institutional investments, preferably, on
 42 a scale at least comparable to that of the Plans, and at least ~~one~~two of whom shall have significant
 43 financial/audit experience. In addition, each layperson appointed shall possess significant experience in
 44 at least one of the foregoing or of the following, preferably of a scope and scale commensurate with the
 45 work of the Plans: benefit, employment, insurance, or religious organization law; health care or health
 46 benefit administration; governance or administration of complex organizations, including those of the
 47 Synod; health or benefit public policy; regulatory compliance; or actuarial science.

48 3.7.1.4 The Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans and the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services shall have
 49 all general and incidental powers and duties appropriate for the performance of their functions (as described
 50 in these Bylaws, including Bylaw 1.2.1 [d–e]). ~~In addition, the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans will~~
 51 ~~have as well as~~ the powers and duties set forth in the respective plans, as amended from time to time. For the
 52 purposes of this bylaw, “the board” refers to the trustees/directors acting either as the Board of Trustees—
 53 Concordia Plans or Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services, as appropriate to the case. #The board

1 may create or amend any plan within limits established by the Board of Directors of the Synod so long as
 2 such changes are reported to the Synod's Board of Directors, since such power is finally vested in the Synod's
 3 Board of Directors.

4 (a) When the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans is carrying out its functions with respect to any such
 5 separate plan, it may be designated as the board of trustees of such separate plan.

6 (b) When the board is carrying out its functions generally, it may be designated as the “Board of
 7 Trustees—Concordia Plans of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.”

8 (c) The board may, at its own discretion, make investment decisions or select and utilize investment
 9 counsel and select agents and actuaries.

10 (d) ~~¶The board~~ shall design for the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's
 11 approval benefit plans which compare favorably with other similar plans while meeting unique needs of
 12 the full-time church workers in the Synod.

13 (e) ~~¶The board~~ shall provide copies of all audit reports to the Board of Directors of The Lutheran
 14 Church—Missouri Synod for information, advice, and counsel.

15 (f) ~~¶The board~~ shall settle disputes which arise in enrollment in the plans and the payment of claims
 16 and benefits.

17 (g) The board shall organize itself and elect a chair and vice-chair:

18 (1) At the first meeting following September 1 after each convention of the Synod; and

19 (2) Otherwise, if a majority of the board so determines in the first meeting following appointment
 20 of a new individual or individuals to the boards. After the chair is selected, the chair will develop a
 21 proposal for the composition of the board committees to then be presented to the full board for
 22 approval.

23 3.7.1.5 The position of chief executive shall be filled according to the process outlined in Bylaw 3.6.1.5.

24 3.7.1.6 The assignment of new areas of responsibility, beyond those assigned in the Bylaws, to Concordia Plan
 25 Services or to any of its subordinates listed in Bylaw 3.7.1.2, shall be according to the process outlined in
 26 Bylaw 3.6.1.1.

27 and be it further

28 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.6.1.1 be amended as follows:

29 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

30 **3.6 Synodwide Corporate Entities**

31 *General Principles*

32 ...

33 3.6.1.1 Formation of a synodwide corporate entity, or assignment of a new area of responsibility to an existing one,
 34 shall require the approval of the Synod in convention or the Board of Directors of the Synod.

35 (a) At least ~~six months~~60 days prior to such approval an announcement thereof shall be given in an
 36 official publication of the Synod together with a detailed explanation of the problems or factors which
 37 make the formation of the proposed synodwide corporate entity or assignment of new responsibility
 38 advisable or necessary.

39 (b) The announcement shall include an invitation for members of the Synod to submit comments
 40 thereon to the Board of Directors of the Synod.

41 (c) If the Board of Directors forms a new entity or assigns a new area of responsibility, it shall report
 42 its action to the Synod promptly and in a special report to the next Synod convention and, if it is in its
 43 judgment in the best interest of the Synod, it shall propose a bylaw amendment reflecting the new entity
 44 or assignment to the subsequent convention of the Synod.

To Fund Our Synod’s Seminaries

RESOLUTION 8-03

Reports R1, R1.2–R1.2.2, R1.2.4–R1.3, R5–R8, R15–57 (*CW*, 1–5, 15–28, 31–37, 46–56, 95–141); Overture 8-15 (*CW*, 444)

WHEREAS, The Synod maintains Concordia Seminary (CSL) and Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW) to form pastors for faithful Word and Sacrament ministry in the Church and her mission; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has repeatedly affirmed residential seminary formation as the preferred and normative route for preparation for the pastoral office (2019 Res. 6-02, “To Promote Residential Seminary Education as the Preferred Option for the Preparation of Men for the Pastoral Ministry”; 2023 Res. 6-02A, “To Encourage Proper Pastoral Formation through Our Synod’s Seminaries”); and

WHEREAS, As reported through CSL’s annual report (csl.edu/files/legal/Annual-Report.pdf) and CTSFW’s Strategic Plan 2024–2029 (ctsfw.edu/about/who-we-are/strategic-plan), more than half of current funding is contributed by individuals and households; in addition, corporate Synod directs to the seminaries annually approximately \$4 million received from supporters of the Joint Seminary Fund (JSF), Global Seminary Initiative (GSI), and *Together as Synod*; and

WHEREAS, The funding mechanism throughout Synod has changed substantially over the last 40 years from a centralized to a decentralized funding model as evidenced by *Together as Synod*; and

WHEREAS, The formation of pastors who rightly teach, administer the Sacraments, and shepherd Christ’s flock is foundational to every other work of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks to God for the faithful generosity of His people and pray for wise stewardship that strengthens both the Church’s mission and the formation of her pastors; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries and Synod Board of Directors annually provide a joint standardized report of how operations are funded; and be it finally

Resolved, That the individuals, households, and congregations of Synod be invited to directly support CSL and CTSFW or participate in partnership with corporate Synod through the JSF, GSI, and *Together as Synod*.

To Expand Access to the Lutheran Confessions

RESOLUTION 8-04

Reports R1, R1.2, R1.2.1–2, R1.2.4–5, R1.3, R5–8, R15–57 (*CW*, 1–5, 15–28, 31–37, 46–56, 95–141); Overtures 8-09–12 (*CW*, 441–43)

WHEREAS, The primary objectives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as stated in Constitution Article III, are to: “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy”; and to “strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world”; and

WHEREAS, We pray in the collect for the Church that “Thy Word, as becometh it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people” (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 14); and

WHEREAS, The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Lutheran Confessions), as listed in Const. Art. II “as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God,” are an indispensable resource for achieving the primary objectives of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) is the official publishing house of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, CPH in 2006 published the Lutheran Confessions under the title: *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions—A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord*, 2nd edition (*Reader’s Edition*); and

WHEREAS, The *Reader’s Edition*, with its historical introductions and other included materials, presents the Lutheran Confessions most intelligibly and clearly, is the generally preferred English translation among native and non-native English speakers alike, and is the preferred source for most derivative translations into other languages; and

1 WHEREAS, CPH has recently made public the website *bookofconcord.cph.org* that contains the confessional text of
2 the *Reader's Edition* (2nd ed.), but, as of yet, the website does not include any of the notes or annotations; and

3 WHEREAS, Since the website went live in January 2026, there have been over 32,000 active users from 139 countries,
4 visiting over 180,000 pages (Site statistics from CEO, Jonathan Schulz); therefore be it

5 *Resolved*, That we commend CPH for making the *Reader's Edition* (2nd ed.) easily available as of January 2026 and
6 for their endeavor to provide such resources as evidenced by the upcoming release of the Spanish version of the *Book of*
7 *Concord*; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That CPH explore the feasibility and cost of adding the helpful notes and annotations from the *Reader's*
9 *Edition* (2nd) to its online publication at *bookofconcord.cph.org* and likewise include that as part of its report to the next
10 convention of the Synod.

11 **To Give Thanks for Concordia Publishing House's Use of Bible Translations**

12 **RESOLUTION 8-05**

13 Overtures 8-07-08 (*CW*, 440-41)

14 WHEREAS, We accept without reservation that the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are “the written Word
15 of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice” (Const. Art. II); and

16 WHEREAS, Passages of Holy Scripture are used throughout the hymnals, catechisms, and other printed resources of
17 the Synod: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training
18 in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16); inasmuch as is feasible and prudent, we should endeavor to have translations that are
19 consistent and faithful; and

20 WHEREAS, Throughout our history going back even to Luther, Bible translations have never been fully stable; even
21 Luther revised his German Bible multiple times, and English translations in Synod hymnals have shifted from the King
22 James Version to the New International Version to the English Standard Version (ESV); and

23 WHEREAS, In 2003, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations cautiously noted the challenges presented by
24 different English Bible translations, declined to adjudicate among them, and left the Commission on Worship to choose
25 which translation to use for the Lutheran Service Book (LSB); and

26 WHEREAS, 2004 Resolution 2-03A, “To Accept *Lutheran Service Book* and *Agenda* as an Official Service Book and
27 Hymnal of Synod” (*Proceedings*, 124) approved the LSB with the ESV translation and rejected an amendment to allow
28 voting on the translation used; and

29 WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) gives preference to the ESV in its resources, as it aligns with the LSB,
30 which was approved by Synod and adopted by over 90 percent of our congregations (Matthew Harrison, “Singing the
31 Gospel,” *The Lutheran Witness*, Oct. 2019); therefore be it

32 *Resolved*, That we give thanks to CPH for its continued efforts of identifying and utilizing translations available that
33 best serve the mission of the Church, and further support its faithful stewardship and partnership with Synod.

34 **To Commend Concordia Publishing House for Prioritizing Mission and Distribution**

35 **RESOLUTION 8-06**

36 Reports R1, R1.2-R1.2.2, R1.2.4-R1.3, R5-R8, R15-R57 (*CW*, 1-5, 15-28, 31-37, 46-56, 95-141); Overtures 8-13-14
37 (*CW*, 443-44)

38 WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) was established in 1869 to serve the congregations of the Synod by
39 publishing materials that are useful to the church and faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and

40 WHEREAS, The mission statement of CPH further states that it “... will develop, produce, market, and distribute
41 products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and which will effectively serve such
42 proclamation to people throughout the world. All to the Glory of God” (“Who We Are,” Concordia Publishing House,
43 *about.cph.org/who-we-are.html*, accessed Feb. 25, 2026); and

44 WHEREAS, The vision statement of CPH states that they will “strive to be the premier publisher and provider of choice
45 for products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions” (*ibid.*); and

1 WHEREAS, CPH has a longstanding history of collaborating with Synod mission personnel and partner organizations
2 to translate its resources into multiple languages so that the Gospel may reach people throughout the world. To support
3 this work, CPH maintains accessible permissions policies for essential confessional resources; and

4 WHEREAS, At the end of most years, CPH is able to make a financial gift to the Synod. One half of this is designated
5 for the Synod to purchase resources from CPH to be used in ministry as they see fit. Over the last two years, CPH has
6 given \$300,000 in resources to the pastors and seminaries of Synod partner churches so that they have the necessary
7 confessional resources; and

8 WHEREAS, In addition to accessible permissions fees, CPH makes key confessional documents available at no cost.
9 With the CPH Liturgy License, used with or without *Lutheran Service Builder*, congregations are granted permission to
10 reproduce any copyrighted element from the liturgical sections of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, *Lutheran Worship*, and *Lutheran*
11 *Service Book* for use in congregational service folders at a nominal fee. In addition to accessible licensing fees, CPH
12 provides generous discounts to missionaries and church workers. Synod missionaries receive the highest discount CPH
13 offers—50 percent. Synod mission churches receive 40 percent off the majority of CPH products. Rostered church workers
14 receive a 20 percent discount on individual purchases, and CPH added free shipping for those orders over \$49; therefore
15 be it

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for CPH and its faithfulness to the Scriptures and the
17 Lutheran Confessions in providing materials to churches and church workers for 156 years; and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That the laborers and congregations of the Synod give thanks to God for the faithful authors, hymnwriters,
19 and others who often work to provide useful teaching material to the church and pray God bless the wide distribution of
20 their labors to the glory of God and the coming of His kingdom; and be it finally

21 *Resolved*, That we commend and give thanks to CPH for its policies, licensing structures, and discount programs
22 described above that demonstrate that CPH is actively reducing barriers to global access without requiring Synod action
23 to do so.

24 **To Address Concordia Publishing House Shipping Charges**

25 **RESOLUTION 8-07**

26 Reports R1, R1.2–1.2.2, R1.2.4–1.3, R5–8, R15–57 (*CW*, 1–28, 31–37, 46–56, 95–141); Overture 8-06 (*CW*, 440)

27 WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) serves as the official publishing arm of the Synod, providing essential
28 Lutheran resources, books, curricula, and materials to support the faith, teaching, and mission of congregations, church
29 workers, and individual members; and

30 WHEREAS, It is projected the cost of free shipping could be upwards of \$4 million annually, which would cause
31 financial repercussions that are unaffordable and unsustainable for CPH; and

32 WHEREAS, We give thanks for CPH and its efforts to reduce shipping costs and make its resources readily available.
33 Examples of this include the church resource program which provides free shipping and a 20 percent discount on orders
34 of \$60.00 or more for congregations, free shipping and a 20 percent discount on orders of \$49.00 or more for rostered
35 church workers, and sales to Amazon and local Christian bookstores that allow free shipping; therefore be it

36 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention commend CPH for keeping costs to a reasonable level and that they continue
37 to pursue opportunities to lower cost of shipping where possible.

38

9. STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

To Amend Bylaws 1.5.3.2–4 and Add Bylaw 4.7.6 regarding Regulations for Committees

RESOLUTION 9-01

Overture 9-01 (*CW*, 449–50)

Rationale

The Commission on Constitutional Matters, noting frequent issues encountered in applying Bylaw section 1.5 to the committees of districts, universities, and other agencies of the Synod, referred the language to the Commission on Handbook for study and potential revision. The following is the proposal of the latter commission, intended to clarify the bylaw language dealing with regulations for committees. It was designed in light of the standard language used in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 12th edition, especially sections 49–50 (Sarah Corbin Robert, Henry M. Robert III, William J. Evans, Daneil H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch, Daniel E. Seabold, Shmuel Gerber, eds. [New York: PublicAffairs, 2020]), for various types of committees and to address concerns about committee constitution and authority across the board, rather than (as the present bylaws do) allowing certain narrow structural categories while remaining silent on others. The new bylaws focus on types of committees (Bylaw 1.5.3.2), the authority and responsibility of committees (Bylaw 1.5.3.3), and the constitution of committees (Bylaw 1.5.3.4). Finally, language is added to Bylaw section 4.7 to account for district committees that are established by district bylaw or district convention resolution, so that it will be clear that such committees are not subject to the requirements imposed by Bylaws 1.5.3.2–4 on committees of a board or commission. These revisions will provide significantly improved clarity and appropriate levels of both flexibility and regulation for corporate Synod and the agencies of the Synod with regard to their committee needs.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 1.5.3.1–4 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Organization

...

1.5.3.1 Unless otherwise stipulated in these Bylaws, at the initial meeting after members take office under new terms filled by regular election or appointment (including the regular election or appointment of any fraction of the members), all mission boards, commissions, and governing boards shall organize themselves as to chair, vice-chair, secretary, and other standing committees and positions as necessary or mandated by these Bylaws and shall conduct business in accordance with accepted parliamentary rules.

~~1.5.3.2 All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may make use of executive committees to act in times of emergency between plenary meetings, to act on delegated assignments, and to act as specified elsewhere in these Bylaws.~~

~~(a) Executive committees may not perform acts specifically required by statute or by legislation or the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod to be performed by the agency, nor may they overturn actions of the agency.~~

~~(b) All executive committee actions shall be reported to plenary sessions of the agency.~~

~~1.5.3.3 All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may also delegate a specific assignment for a limited time to a committee composed of its own members.~~

~~1.5.3.4 All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may appoint standing committees of specialists to provide professional or technical assistance to the board or commission and may delegate certain responsibilities to such committees while retaining supervision. Standing committees may be made up of or include non board or commission members. The creation of standing committees shall be reported to the President and the Board of Directors of the Synod.~~

1.5.3.2 All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards (“plenaries”) may establish and appoint committees as follows:

(a) A standing committee is established explicitly in bylaws or plenary resolution or policies to perform a specified, continuing function. The creation of a standing committee shall be reported to the President and Board of Directors of the Synod.

(b) An ad hoc committee is established by resolution of the plenary to accomplish a specified task of limited duration, upon the completion of which it is automatically discharged.

(c) The executive committee, a specific type of standing committee composed of board or commission members only, may act with the authority of the plenary (i) in times of emergency between plenary meetings and/or (ii) on assignments specifically delegated by the plenary. It may also be assigned additional functions, as described below.

(d) The audit committee, another specific type of standing committee, is comprised of financially literate and independent directors, oversees for the plenary the related incorporated organization’s financial reporting process, selects an independent auditor, and receives the audit.

1.5.3.3 The authority and responsibility of a committee of a mission board, commission, or governing board, as well as any special rules applicable to such, are to be specifically set forth in the establishing bylaw, policy, or resolution, subject to the following:

(a) Committees may not perform acts specifically required by statute or the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod to be performed exclusively by the plenary, nor may they overturn actions of the plenary.

(b) Except for executive committees acting in emergencies, any committee charged “with power” to do more than report findings or recommendations to the plenary shall be empowered to act only (i) upon specific instructions of the plenary or (ii) under standing powers clearly delineated in bylaws or policies.

(c) The granting of standing authority to a committee to act for the plenary in any area without specific instructions, or the designation of any business to be automatically referred to a committee, or the impact in any other way of the parliamentary procedure of the plenary by a committee shall: (i) require, if not effected by bylaw, a two-thirds vote of the plenary; (ii) be reported to the President and Board of Directors of the Synod; and (iii) require the submission of any related policies, upon adoption or subsequent amendment, to the Commission on Constitutional Matters for review.

(d) The plenary shall retain supervision of any responsibilities delegated to committees, receiving and regularly reviewing their minutes, except for such executive sessions of committees as have been authorized by the plenary.

(e) Each standing committee shall report to each regular plenary session.

(f) Any action of a committee taken upon authority delegated by the plenary (including emergency actions of an executive committee) shall be reported to the members of the plenary within two weeks or at the next regular meeting, whichever is sooner.

1.5.3.4 Except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws, a committee of a mission board, commission, or governing board shall be constituted as follows:

(a) A standing or executive committee shall comprise members appointed by ballot election of the plenary or as *ex officio*.

(b) An *ad hoc* committee may be comprised of members appointed by ballot of the plenary, by nomination by the plenary members or chair, or by appointment by the chair, as designated by the plenary.

(c) Unless otherwise specified in bylaws or plenary policies, service in a committee appointment is at the pleasure of the plenary. Any potential committee member conflicts of interest shall be disclosed to the plenary, under Bylaw 1.5.2.

(d) The plenary may appoint as members of a committee, other than its executive committee, individuals who are not members of the plenary, provided that: (i) they provide necessary professional or technical expertise; (ii) such appointment is reported to the President and Board of Directors of the Synod; and (iii) such appointees do not vote on any action taken by the committee with authority delegated by the plenary, except where the committee acts upon specific instructions of the plenary.

(e) Committees may form subcommittees of their own members or others, including others only as specifically authorized in their constituting bylaws, policies, or resolution, as applicable, and subject to the same requirements stated in (d).

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.7 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

4.7 District Nominations, Elections, and Appointments

...

1 4.7.6 A district convention may, by bylaw or resolution, create standing or *ad hoc* committees responsible to the
 2 district. These shall act on specific assignments or within authority delegated and shall conduct business in
 3 accordance with accepted parliamentary rules. Unless these are committees of the board of directors of the
 4 district, the provisions of Bylaws 1.5.3.2–4 do not apply to them.

5 **To Amend Bylaws 1.5.1.2–1.5.2 to Clarify Service Expectations** 6 **and Handling of Conflicts of Interest**

7 **RESOLUTION 9-02**

8 Overture 9-02 (*CW*, 450–51)

9 **Rationale**

10 Bylaw section 1.5 provides regulations applicable to all agencies of the Synod, including provisions dealing with ethical
 11 standards, conflicts of interest, and removal from office. These date, at least in their modern form, to a Commission on
 12 Structure project that culminated in 2007 Resolution 7-07A, “To Revise Bylaw Section 1.5 and to Add Definitions to
 13 *Handbook*,” itself an outgrowth of the 2004 revision of the *Handbook*’s revision of agency-related language. The original
 14 statement of the conflict-of-interest policy dates to 1995 (Res. 4-05A, “To Replace Present Bylaws on Conflict of
 15 Interest”). (Bylaw 1.5.1.3 is part of the former “general regulations” and not properly part of the conflict-of-interest policy,
 16 but relevant to it.)

17 The Secretary noted to the Commission on Handbook three aspects of the present language requiring attention: (1) While
 18 potential conflicts should be identified to the extent possible in advance, the determination of whether there is an
 19 “inappropriate interest” being acted upon (Bylaw 1.5.2 [a][4]) depends on a situation arising in the work of the potentially
 20 conflicted individual (or the board or commission of which the individual is a part) to which the potential conflict is
 21 material. It is at that time the conflict would need to be processed by the board, but this timeline aspect is not evident in
 22 the present language, leading to confusion in practice. (2) The connection between the determination of Bylaw 1.5.2 (a)(4)
 23 that “an inappropriate interest exists” and the practical impact of such determination is unclear. The only apparent
 24 consequences are 1.5.2 (b)(3)’s remote and less-than-general “no one shall vote . . .,” less-than-general because it deals
 25 only with the possibility of “direct or indirect financial gain.” It seems obvious that the member having an “inappropriate
 26 interest” would be expected to recuse himself with regard to certain matters (or perhaps, if the conflict is sufficiently
 27 general, resign), but this is not so plain. (3) Adding to the unclarity is that it is not so apparent how Bylaws 1.5.1.3 and
 28 1.5.2 (b) and (b)(1–2) relate to the standards for removal from office for board or commission members, in Bylaw 1.5.7,
 29 or for officers, Bylaw 1.5.8, unless they fall generally under “breach of fiduciary responsibilities.”

30 The commission has proposed a revision that pulls Bylaw 1.5.1.3 into Bylaw 1.5.2, clarifying the relation of this standard
 31 to the rest of the provision, addressing the above issues, and further addressing the scope of the provision to clarify that
 32 conflicts are not strictly limited to matters of personal financial gain, but can involve other situations where an officer or
 33 board or commission member might have or appear to have competing loyalties.

34 Therefore be it

35 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 1.5.1.2–1.5.2 be amended as follows:

36 **PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**

37 **1.5 Regulations for Corporate Synod and Agencies of the Synod**

38 ***General***

39 ...

40 1.5.1.2 No one, either in the Synod or a district, or between the Synod and a district, shall hold more than one elective
 41 office; or hold more than two offices, although one or both be appointive; or ever hold two offices of which
 42 one is directly responsible for the work done by the other. A member of the Board of Directors of Synod may
 43 not hold any other elective or appointive office, except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws.

44 (a) An office shall be regarded as elective only if it is an office filled through election by a national or
 45 a district convention, even though a vacancy in such an office may be filled by appointment.

46 (b) Doubtful cases shall be decided by the President of the Synod.

47 ~~1.5.1.3 Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod~~
 48 ~~shall be sensitive in their activities to taking or giving offense, giving the appearance of impropriety, causing~~
 49 ~~confusion in the Synod, or creating potential liability.~~

1 **Disclosure of Expectations and Conflicts of Interest**

2 1.5.2 Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod
3 shall carry out responsibilities and avoid, or properly address, conflicts of interest as described in this bylaw.

4 (a) Corporate Synod and every ~~Every~~ agency shall implement the synodwide conflict-of-interest policy,
5 and that policy shall be applicable to them and all staff operating under them. This policy shall include
6 the following provisions:

7 (1) Every board or commission member shall on an annual basis and as the need arises disclose to
8 the chairman of the agency and all staff shall disclose to the chief executive or executive director of
9 the agency any potential conflicts of interest. Each chairman or chief executive or executive director
10 shall disclose personal potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate board or commission.

11 (2) Such disclosures shall include board membership on, a substantial interest in, or employment
12 of the individual or a relative by any organization doing business with corporate Synod or any of
13 the agencies of the Synod.

14 (3) Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency
15 of the Synod who receives honoraria or payments for any sales or services rendered to corporate
16 Synod or any of the agencies of the Synod shall disclose such information.

17 (4) All such disclosures shall be reported to the respective board or commission to determine when
18 a relevant situation arises, by a vote of its remaining impartial members whether ~~an inappropriate~~
19 ~~interest a conflict~~ exists, and such vote shall be recorded in its official minutes. In the case of officers
20 of the Synod regarding non-board, non-commission work, all such disclosures shall be reported to
21 the President of the Synod to determine whether ~~an inappropriate interest a conflict~~ exists. In the
22 case of executive staff, the board of the agency, and in the case of other staff, relevant officers or
23 executive staff shall make this determination.

24 (5) Any conflict so identified shall be managed by the conflicted member abstaining from any vote
25 or decision involving the matter. Should the responsible board, commission, officer, or executive
26 staff determine that information regarding the matter cannot be shared with the member without
27 detriment to the Synod, the member shall be asked to recuse him or herself from discussion of and
28 receipt of documents concerning the matter; failure to recuse him or herself may be inconsistent
29 with (b)(1–2) below.

30 (6) Potential conflicts of interest required to be disclosed pursuant to this subsection (a) include
31 situations where the individual or the individual's relative or business:

32 (i) stands to gain a financial benefit from an action the board, commission, agency, or corporate
33 Synod takes or a transaction into which the board, commission, agency, or corporate Synod
34 enters; or

35 (ii) has a relationship or another interest that impairs, or could be seen to impair, the
36 independence or objectivity of the individual in discharging his or her fiduciary duty to the
37 board, commission, agency, or corporate Synod.

38 (7) Potential conflicts of interest are not solely financial but may include situations in which the
39 individual or that individual's relative:

40 (i) serves on the board of, participates in the management of, or is otherwise employed by or
41 volunteers with any third party that the board, commission, agency, or corporate Synod deals
42 with or is considering dealing with, or

43 (ii) serves on a board, commission, agency, or corporate Synod, or a third party, that is
44 competing with, or may be affected by a decision of, the board, commission, agency, or
45 corporate Synod.

46 (b) Responsibilities shall be carried out in a manner reflecting the highest degree of integrity and
47 honesty consistent with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the Constitution, Bylaws, and
48 resolutions of the Synod, the policies of corporate Synod and the agencies of the Synod, and civil laws.

49 (1) Activities shall not be entered into which may be detrimental to the interests of the Synod. Any
50 ~~inappropriate such activity shall cease or the position will be vacated~~ may constitute a breach of
51 fiduciary responsibility and a cause for removal under Bylaw 1.5.7 or 1.5.8.

52 (2) Information acquired in the course of carrying out duties of the Synod shall not knowingly be
53 used in any way that would be detrimental to the welfare of the Synod.

54 (3) No one shall vote on any transaction in which the individual might receive a direct or indirect
55 financial gain.

(4) The Board of Directors shall establish policy regarding the acceptance of gifts, entertainment, or favors from any individual or outside concern which does or is seeking to do business with corporate Synod or the agencies of the Synod.

(c) Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod shall be sensitive in their activities to taking or giving offense, giving the appearance of impropriety, causing confusion in the Synod, or creating potential liability.

(ed) Individuals, prior to accepting elected, appointed, or staff positions, shall initially and annually thereafter sign statements stating that they have received, understand, and agree to abide by this bylaw and the Synod’s conflict-of-interest policy.

To Amend Bylaws regarding Doctrinal Review

RESOLUTION 9-03

Overture 9-04 (CW, 452–54)

Rationale

The Synod has a sweeping basic principle of inclusivity for doctrinal review. It is stated in Bylaw 1.9.1.1 (a): “All official periodicals and journals of the Synod as well as any material with doctrinal content issued publicly by boards, commissions, or other subordinate groups of the Synod except as stipulated in these Bylaws shall be subject to doctrinal review.”

An exception, recognized in the Synod’s Bylaws since 1971, is “study documents and exploratory material plainly designated as such,” as subparagraph (b) continues. In 2023, the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) opined that “boards, commissions, or other subordinate groups of the Synod” (as Bylaw 1.9.1.1 [b] puts it) are constrained to release study materials related to their assignment from the Synod. For example, the CCM itself should not “produce study materials on exegetical [biblical interpretation] or doctrinal topics,” for these fields lie outside the CCM’s purview (CCM Opinion 23-3010, “Scope of Bylaw 1.9.1.1 [b] concerning Concordia Publishing House”). If Concordia Publishing House (CPH) itself were to release study materials, these would necessarily concern the responsibilities with which CPH is charged by the Synod, namely, publishing, marketing, and distribution. The CCM further noted that the vintage of some materials that might be published—dating, for instance, to the 16th century or earlier—does not exempt them from the requirement for doctrinal review, although the results of the review must be reported differently than when discussions can be held with living authors.

In 2007, the Synod modified its previous bylaw from 1971 to provide for public issue of non-reviewed study materials and specified a disclaimer to be carried on or immediately after the publication’s title page, as still found in Bylaw 1.9.1.1 (b). In principle, the status of the materials as “study documents and exploratory material” remained unaltered. Yet in fact, when tentative materials are disseminated widely, especially in an age of instant communication and internet archiving, this very widespread distribution lends them a “staying power,” wrapping them in a mantle of permanency. Thus, is undermined in practice the spirit of the basic principle that doctrinal review is done on all materials with doctrinal content issued publicly by the Synod.

In the proposal below, bylaws concerning doctrinal review are reorganized for clarity. The reorganization places bylaws related to appeal of doctrinal review certification (whether before or after publication) adjacent to those treating its initial determination. This should prevent misunderstanding by allowing more ready comparison and by presenting all doctrinal review material (except for matters strictly involving the related commission) together in one place. A new second sentence is added in Bylaw 1.9.1.1 (b) to memorialize the opinion of the CCM as to the scope of the “study document and exploratory material” exception.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw section 1.9 and subsection 3.9.3 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.9 Doctrinal Review

Definition

1.9.1 Doctrinal review is the exercise of the Synod’s responsibility to determine that every doctrinal statement made in its or any of its agencies’ or auxiliaries’ materials is in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

1 **Material Subject to Doctrinal Review**

2 1.9.1.1 The following materials are subject to doctrinal review:

3 (a) All official periodicals and journals of the Synod as well as any material with doctrinal content
4 issued publicly by boards, commissions, or other subordinate groups of the Synod except as stipulated
5 in these Bylaws shall be subject to doctrinal review.

6 (b) The right to produce study documents and exploratory material plainly designated as such and
7 published by boards, commissions, or other subordinate groups of the Synod is recognized, and such
8 material is not required to be submitted to the doctrinal review process. The material of such a document
9 shall be within the purview of the respective board, commission, or other subordinate group; its intended
10 distribution shall be limited to those who are competent to evaluate the issue critically; and the document
11 shall serve only as a penultimate document intended to result in a clearer or more correct public
12 presentation of doctrine or practice in subsequent documents or efforts. ~~Publication of~~ When released,
13 such study material that is not submitted for doctrinal review shall always include this notice on or
14 immediately following the title page: “This material is being released for study and discussion purposes,
15 and the author(s) is(are) solely responsible for its contents. It has not been submitted to the process for
16 doctrinal review stipulated in the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and does not
17 necessarily reflect the theology of the Lutheran Confessions or the doctrinal position of The Lutheran
18 Church—Missouri Synod.”

19 (c) Each district is accountable to the Synod through its respective president and board of directors for
20 the content of all of its published materials.

21 (d) Each of the Synod’s schools is accountable to the Synod through its respective president and board
22 of regents for the content of its professional journals and all of its published materials that are not the
23 official publications of the Synod (Bylaw 3.4.3.7). The editorial boards of such publications shall serve
24 as their own doctrinal reviewers.

25 (e) Auxiliary organizations recognized by the Synod shall be held directly accountable for their
26 material. However, in accord with his office as defined in Constitution Art. XI B 1, the President of the
27 Synod shall require doctrinal review.

28 (f) In the case of broadcasts over the Synod’s radio station by other than staff members, individuals
29 must be held responsible for their own material since it is not feasible to apply the process of doctrinal
30 review to such broadcasts.

31 (g) Official reports of the boards, commissions, task forces, and committees of the Synod prepared in
32 response to directives from the Synod shall not be subject to doctrinal review.

33 **Procedure**

34 1.9.2 Before materials stipulated in Bylaw 1.9.1 are published, they shall be submitted to (a) doctrinal reviewer(s).
35 Reviewers shall make a careful evaluation of the doctrinal content of all items submitted. Materials are to be
36 reviewed in a prompt manner and completed in no longer than four weeks. Exceptions shall be arranged by
37 mutual agreement between the reviewer(s) and the originating entity.

38 (a) The primary responsibility for doctrinal supervision and review lies with the President of the Synod
39 (Constitution Art. XI B 1).

40 (1) Each board, commission, and other subordinate group of the Synod shall advise the President
41 of the Synod of the number and desired competency of doctrinal reviewers needed by it and may
42 suggest a list of qualified persons. The President shall appoint reviewers for each group according
43 to its needs. They shall be broadly representative of the ministry of the Synod.

44 (2) Reviewers shall be appointed for renewable three-year terms. An appointment may be
45 terminated prior to the completion of the appointed term if the reviewer is unable or unwilling to
46 carry out the reviewing tasks assigned. In the event of such termination, the President of the Synod
47 shall appoint another reviewer to complete the unexpired term.

48 (b) Each agency of the Synod, synodwide corporate entity, or auxiliary shall establish procedures that
49 will ensure that its material as specified in Bylaw section 1.9 will be submitted for doctrinal review to
50 one of the reviewers referred to in Bylaw 1.9.2 (a).

51 (c) Since time requirements vary according to the type of material being reviewed, the procedure in
52 each case shall be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of the sponsoring group and the doctrinal
53 reviewer(s).

54 (d) The identity of authors and reviewers shall not be disclosed without the approval of the President.
55 Consultation may at times be advisable, however, where clarification is necessary.

(e) The reviewer's primary concern is that items submitted to him be in agreement in their doctrinal content with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

(f) The reviewer(s) shall also be concerned that the items submitted do not contain statements that are inadequate, misleading, ambiguous, or lacking in doctrinal clarity.

(g) The reviewer(s) shall further be concerned that resolutions of the Synod be honored and upheld and that positions deviating from the doctrinal resolutions of the Synod be clearly identified as such.

(h) When the author is also a reviewer, his material shall be assigned to another reviewer. In order to avoid any conflict of interest, no author shall be involved in any way in the selection or assignment of reviewer(s) for his or her own work.

(i) The reviewer may request that specific material assigned to him also be reviewed by another reviewer.

(j) Where changes appear to be necessary, the reviewer(s) shall submit a thorough and clearly written documented critique that shall be made available to the author, the sponsoring group, and the publisher. The documentation provided by the reviewer(s) shall provide a thorough and detailed explanation, with all appropriate biblical and confessional references used to support the opinion offered.

(k) The author shall consider the critique and make necessary revisions until there is agreement between the author and the reviewer(s).

(l) Should any problem arise between an author, the reviewer(s), the publisher, or any other party involved with respect to the material submitted for review, the sponsoring group shall endeavor to resolve it to the satisfaction of the reviewer(s). If it cannot do so, the problem shall be submitted to the Commission on Doctrinal Review which shall follow the appeals procedure and criteria stated in Bylaw ~~3.9.3.2-11.9.4~~.

1.9.3 After publication, any challenge to material that is subject to doctrinal review, no matter which process is used as listed in Bylaw 1.9.2, shall be handled according to the procedure and criteria specified in Bylaw ~~3.9.3.2-21.9.5~~.

The following are relocated from Bylaw subsection 3.9.3:

Appeals Prior to Publication

~~3.9.3.2-11.9.4~~ Appeals regarding materials not yet published may be initiated by an author, the sponsoring group, or an executive staff member of that group and submitted to the chairman of the Commission on Doctrinal Review (Bylaws 3.9.3-3.9.3.2).

(a) Within seven business days after receipt of an appeal, the chairman of the Commission on Doctrinal Review shall inform all concerned and shall appoint three members of the commission to serve as a review panel and shall designate one as its chairman. A panel member shall disqualify himself on the basis of any kind of personal involvement in the issue.

(b) The review panel shall provide a copy of the appeal to the author and the sponsoring group and invite them to provide a response to the appeal. All parties to the appeal shall be given 14 days to provide their response.

(c) To aid objectivity, the identity of author and review panel shall ordinarily not be disclosed. However, consultation may at times be necessary for clarification.

(d) In making its recommendation, the panel shall decide within 30 days whether the item in question

(1) is suitable for publication; or

(2) may be published after alteration; or

(3) may be published as a study document; or

(4) shall be denied publication.

(e) The decision of the panel shall be determined by a majority vote and shall be final so far as the Commission on Doctrinal Review is concerned. A report together with the panel's minutes shall be submitted to the chairman of the Commission on Doctrinal Review.

(f) The chairman of the commission shall report the decision within seven business days to the author, the original reviewer(s), the sponsoring group, and the President of the Synod.

Appeals Following Publication

~~3.9.3.2-21.9.5~~ A challenge to the doctrinal review certification of a published item may be initiated by any member of the Synod and shall be submitted in writing via mail or personal delivery to the chairman of the Commission on Doctrinal Review (Bylaws 3.9.3-3.9.3.2).

(a) In order for the Commission on Doctrinal Review to consider a challenge, the challenger is obliged to provide specific references demonstrating how the published item is not in agreement with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

(b) After receipt of the challenge, the chairman of the commission shall within seven business days inform the President of the Synod, the sponsoring group, and, if applicable, Concordia Publishing House, shall appoint three members of the commission to serve as a review panel, and shall designate one as its chairman.

(c) The chairman of the Commission on Doctrinal Review shall provide a copy of the appeal to the President of the Synod, the sponsoring group, and, if applicable, Concordia Publishing House, and offer them the opportunity to respond to the appeal within 14 days from the date of notification.

(d) To aid in maintaining objectivity, the identity of the challenger and the identity of the panel will ordinarily not be disclosed. There shall be no publicity given to the appeal, nor an effort made to circularize the Synod on a pending appeal.

(e) The panel shall after reviewing the published material declare, within 45 days following the expiry of the 14-day response period provided in Bylaw ~~3.9.3.2.21.9.5~~ (c), whether the doctrinal review certification is affirmed or revoked based on whether the published material is in agreement with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

(f) If the panel revokes the doctrinal review certification, it must identify the part(s) of the item in need of clarification, amplification, and/or deletion in order to bring into agreement with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and withdraw the publication until such agreement is reached.

(g) The panel will appoint one of its members to be the doctrinal reviewer for the recycling of the revised material to assure the item’s agreement with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions if republished.

Commission on Doctrinal Review

3.9.3 The Commission on Doctrinal Review exists to assist the President of the Synod in the exercise of his responsibility that all doctrinal content in its or any of its agencies’ materials be in accord with the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

3.9.3.1 The Commission on Doctrinal Review shall consist of five members appointed by the President of the Synod from the total number of doctrinal reviewers.

(a) The commission shall elect its own officers.

(b) The commission shall effect its own organization.

3.9.3.2 The Commission on Doctrinal Review functions in accordance with Bylaw section 1.9, including especially the handling of appeals under Bylaws 1.9.4–5, and shall meet as often as necessary to provide guidelines for the work of doctrinal reviewers and to concern itself with problem areas in the procedures of doctrinal review and appeals.

To Amend Various Bylaws for Purposes of Clarification or Improvement

RESOLUTION 9-04

Overture 9-05 (CW, 454–58)

Preamble

The Commission on Handbook (COH), responding to a variety of observations from officers, agencies, and members of the Synod, has proposed amendments to bylaws that have given opportunity to confusion or required repeated or nonobvious interpretation by the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). These are presented together for the sake of convention efficiency, but each is logically independent of the others:

A. TO AMEND THE BYLAWS TO PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR HANDLING SECRETARY INCAPACITY

Rationale

In its review (Op. 22-3002) of the Board of Directors (BOD) Policy Manual, the CCM noted that Policy 4.6.3.3, providing that “[t]he Board shall determine when the Secretary is unable to serve in that capacity because of prolonged illness or disability, with the Board designating an acting secretary until the Board determines that such illness or disability has been

1 removed,” seems to be “without bylaw warrant.” The BOD Governance Committee (BOD Minutes, Nov. 22–23, 2024,
 2 #141) referred this matter to the COH, asking that the apparent bylaw lacuna be filled. The COH found this situation to be
 3 analogous to the provision provided for the President in Bylaw 3.3.1.4, the only complication being that there is no “Vice-
 4 Secretary” permanently in place to step in:

5 3.3 Elected Officers of the Synod

6 *President*

7 ...

8 *Inability to Serve*

9 3.3.1.4 When the President is unable to serve, the duties and responsibilities of the Office of President shall be
 10 assumed by the First Vice-President.

11 (a) The Board of Directors of the Synod shall determine when the President is unable to serve in that
 12 capacity because of prolonged illness or disability.

13 (b) The First Vice-President shall remain as the acting president until that board determines that such
 14 illness or disability has been removed.

15 The COH has proposed the following amendment to provide the BOD a bylaw basis, based on the above, for the procedure
 16 expressed in its policy manual.

17 Therefore be it

18 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.3.3.3 be inserted (with renumbering of the following bylaw) as follows:

19 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

20 *Secretary*

21 ...

22 *Inability to Serve*

23 3.3.3.3 When the Secretary is unable to serve, the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Secretary shall be
 24 assumed by an acting secretary appointed by the Board of Directors.

25 (a) The Board of Directors of the Synod shall determine when the Secretary is unable to serve in that
 26 capacity because of prolonged illness or disability.

27 (b) The acting secretary shall function as such until that board determines that such illness or disability
 28 has been removed.

29 3.3.3.34 In the event of the death, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the Secretary, the Board of Directors of the
 30 Synod shall appoint a successor for the unexpired term.

31 B. TO CLARIFY BYLAW 3.10.6.1 BY REORGANIZATION OF PROVISIONS

32 **Rationale**

33 The Synod’s 2023 convention adopted a number of revisions to bylaws that affect the Synod’s colleges and universities,
 34 notably Res. 7-04B, “To Revise Bylaws to Revisit and Renew Relationship of Colleges and Universities with the Synod.”
 35 Section D of that resolution (*Proc.*, 182–83) revised bylaws on the duties of Boards of Regents. In the present overture,
 36 the COH offers a reorganization of this list of duties, principally in response to observations from the required regent
 37 training (Bylaw 3.10.6.2.2) indicating that this would make the bylaw’s requirements more readily understood. In doing
 38 so, the commission solicited and received feedback from Concordia University presidents and the Concordia University
 39 System. No substantive change has been made, only a logical reordering of the items based in part on comments received
 40 from one of the university presidents.

41 Therefore be it

42 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.10.6.1 be amended as follows:

43 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

44 *F. Concordia University System Boards of Regents*

45 ...

46 3.10.6.1 In fulfilling its commonly understood fiduciary duties owed to the institution, and its governance
 47 responsibilities, the board of regents shall:

1 (a) serve as the governing body corporate of the institution, vested with all powers its members may
2 exercise either as directors, trustees, or members of the body corporate;

3 (~~b~~) as a whole and as individual members, as stewards of the institution on behalf of the congregations
4 of the Synod, embrace and advance with administration, faculty, staff, and students the institution's
5 fundamental purpose as inculcating the faith, as taught in the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions
6 (Constitution Article II), preparing students to live in this faith toward God and by this faith, in their
7 various vocations, in love toward the neighbor;

8 (c) govern the institution with consistent attention to specific ways that the institution is confessing
9 Jesus Christ in full accord with the doctrinal position of the LCMS (Constitution Art. II) and fulfilling
10 His mission in our world as proper to a college or university of the Synod under its objectives
11 (Constitution Art. III), intentionally seeking continual growth as a board in such governance, including
12 that the board shall:

13 (e~~1~~) ensure that all faculty receive appropriate formal, ongoing training in the doctrines of Holy
14 Scripture as rightly taught in the Lutheran Confessions as they relate to their academic disciplines,
15 to enable faculty to engage in responsible exercise of their academic freedom within the confession
16 of the institution and the Synod (Constitution Art. II); and

17 (f~~2~~) actively encourage and expect curricula and policies for student life and behavior consistent
18 with the doctrine and practice of the Synod, and commit the institution to the principles of Christian
19 discipline, an evangelical manner, and good order;

20 (~~b~~d) govern the institution at all times according to the commitment of the institution, in its mission and
21 otherwise, to carry out its affairs as part of the Concordia University System and in accordance with the
22 Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, including that the board shall:

23 (j~~1~~) ensure that its institution and constituent parts strive to excel in the Lutheran Identity and
24 Mission Outcomes Standards, and to cooperate fully with processes for ecclesiastical visitation by
25 the Concordia University System and for appointment of the institution's president; and

26 (k~~2~~) ensure that its institution and constituent parts support the proper authorities of the Synod in
27 their roles of ecclesiastical supervision of called workers, placement of graduates, and doctrinal
28 review status appeals, and submit to the Synod's expectations for handling of faculty complaints
29 and dispute resolution, insofar as they apply;

30 (m~~3~~) govern transparently, including, without limitation, providing to Concordia University
31 System in a timely manner minutes of board meetings and board and institution policies adopted or
32 modified, and to both Concordia University System and the Synod Board of Directors proposed
33 revisions of institutional governing documents and policies prior to their adoption, and responsively,
34 understanding inquiries and suggestions offered by Concordia University System and the Synod
35 Board of Directors to be offered on behalf of the congregations of the Synod, to which the board is
36 ultimately responsible;

37 (r~~4~~) ensure that all governing and other legal documents and policies of the institution conform to
38 and are consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, and modify
39 institutional governing documents only after proposed modifications have been approved by the
40 Commission on Constitutional Matters and with at least 30 days advance notice to the Synod Board
41 of Directors as custodian of Synod's property;

42 (t~~5~~) duly consider the common confession, mission, interest, and cooperative strength of the Synod,
43 with its congregations, agencies, and other institutions, as it makes decisions with impact beyond
44 its campus, especially as it plans new programs, discontinues existing programs, cooperates and
45 consolidates operations with other Synod schools, operates in a worldwide online marketplace,
46 cooperates with the Synod Board of Directors in the legal defense of the right to the free exercise
47 of our confession, and interacts with the ministries and partner churches of the LCMS, domestically
48 and internationally, in harmony with its programs and consistent with its protocol agreements;

49 (i~~6~~) review and approve academic programs recommended by the administration and faculty,
50 giving due consideration to the Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcomes Standards and coordination
51 with other Synod colleges and universities;

52 (h~~7~~) ensure the communication of board-approved strategic plan documents to the Concordia
53 University System Institution Advisory Council; and

54 (q~~8~~) exercise its exclusive duty of institutional governance in the interest of the Synod without
55 abdicating its authority to, or commingling its authority with, that of others;

(~~se~~) take the leadership in assuring the preservation and improvement of the assets of the institution and see to the acquisition, management, use, and disposal of the properties and equipment of the institution, including that the board shall:-

(~~o~~1) maintain effective internal controls and operate with financial transparency, annually reviewing and approving the institutional budget and providing, within 30 days of board acceptance and final issuance of the institutional audit, audited financial statements and other information as specified in the policies of the Synod Board of Directors and to congregations of the Synod upon request;

(~~t~~2) safeguard present and future assets of the institution, making every effort to ensure designation of gifts, whether to the university itself or to any associated foundation, so that they will continue to be available to higher education within the Synod in the event of the closure, divestiture, or separation of the institution; and

(~~g~~3) maintain and approve an institutional master plan, any modifications to which shall be submitted to the Synod Board of Directors for its approval (Bylaw 3.3.4.5 [e]);

(~~w~~f) effectively and intentionally govern the institution and its president so that administration and faculty carry out their management and educational responsibilities in a manner consistent with the foregoing, including that the board shall:- and

(~~n~~1) develop detailed policies and procedures for governance of the institution, to include policies and procedures compliant;

(~~p~~) ~~maintain policies and procedures for handling faculty complaints and dispute resolution in compliance with Bylaw 3.10.6.9.6 for handling faculty complaints and dispute resolution;~~

(~~x~~2) participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the institution and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of faculty members who meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty development and research;

(~~u~~3) initiate a performance review of the institution's president upon identification of significant operational deficiencies; and

(~~v~~4) effect the removal from office of the institution's president upon a finding, under the procedure of Bylaw 3.10.6.8.3 or Bylaw 3.10.6.8.1 (e) or (f), that he is unfit to serve as the spiritual head of the college or university;

C. TO AMEND BYLAW 4.2.2 TO ALLOW FOR ELECTRONIC DISTRICT CONVENTION DELEGATE ACCREDITATION

Rationale

At the Synod level, pre-convention processes have made increasing use of electronic methods for official acts, such as reporting of circuit delegate and alternate elections and their certification by the district secretaries, registration of presidential voters, nominations for President and vice-presidents, and the election of the President. Electronic means:

- allow more rapid turn-around without the uncertainty of mail delivery and delay;
- allow for more targeted reminders when individuals or congregations have not yet submitted, improving participation;
- avoid a data entry step involving reading of usually handwritten information, improving the reliability of information gathered;
- save mailing cost and inconvenience; and
- allow increased automation of processes, saving staff time and money and improving service.

The use of electronic means for these processes has been permitted gradually at the Synod level by a number of convention and commission actions, including:

- 2010 Res. 4-07, which replaced signatures for President/vice-president nominating ballots with “a secure and verifiable method” to be provided by the Secretary of the Synod;
- 2023 Res. 9-02 [F], which made explicit the CCM's opinion that provision of a “form” and corresponding “signatures” could be done electronically (*Proc.*, 200–1; see also CCM Op. 20-2930, “Nomination Ballot and Voter Registration Processes for Synod Conventions”); and

- 2023 Res. 9-02 [G], which did the same for the nomination ballots for regional vice-president, completing the work, in this regard, of 2010 Res. 4-07 (*Proc.*, 201; see also CCM Op. 20-2930).

The noted CCM opinion observed:

Bylaw 3.12.2.3 (b), as so amended, simply states that the congregation shall present to the Secretary of the Synod “a proper credentials form provided by the Secretary.” It does not specify how this form is to be distributed. It could be a paper form mailed to each congregation, or it could be an electronically fillable form accessible on the Synod website.

The bylaw further specifies that this form must be signed by two of the congregation’s officers. This could be done via an electronic signature (which has come to be commonly understood—as in the case of Missouri contract law, for example, for fifteen years—not necessarily to require a handwritten mark) before the form is electronically submitted to the Office of the Secretary. . . .

Thus, the wording of Bylaw 3.12.2.3 (b) allows the Secretary of the Synod to use a “secure and verifiable method” for the registration of the voting delegates of each congregation or parish to vote for the president of the Synod so long as it involves the collection by some means of the required “signatures” (i.e., verifiable attestations, by some commonly understood means of physical or electronic signature) of two congregational officers.

This same logic would seem to apply to Bylaw 4.2.2 (except, perhaps, for its use of the term *mailing*). A change should be made to Bylaw 4.2.2 to allow clearly for a secure and verifiable electronic registration method to be implemented by district secretaries. As with similar processes on the district level, the existing, paper-based approach remains an acceptable “secure and verifiable method.”

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 4.2.2 (a) be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

4.2 District Conventions

4.2.2 The delegates of a voting congregation or multi-congregation parish to a district convention shall be accredited.

~~(a) To be entitled to vote, 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 district secretary at the opening of the convention. The congregation or parish shall present to the district secretary, via a secure and verifiable method provided by him, the names of the pastor and elected lay delegate to represent it at the district convention, as well as an attestation by two of its officers that these delegates are properly authorized by it to do so. Only those delegates named in such credentials, having been submitted to the district secretary by a date set by the district or presented to him at the convention, shall be entitled to vote.~~

D. TO AMEND BYLAW 3.1.3.2 TO CLARIFY CERTIFICATION OF VOTING AND ADVISORY DELEGATES AND ADVISORY REPRESENTATIVES

Rationale

The LCMS Office of the Secretary has implemented a new system for the collection of information in the processes that gather information on officially elected, appointed, or designated Synod convention voting and advisory delegates and advisory representatives. As part of that work, the office reflected on, and brought to the COH, the following issues of wording in Bylaw 3.1.3.2. The COH now recommends the proposed amendment below for the following reasons:

1. Bylaw 3.1.3.2 uses language of *certification*, which is helpful and should be used for all official convention attendees or potential attendees, such as delegates, representatives, and their alternates. This may be distinguished from the later *registration*, which could then apply exclusively to the later process of arranging for actual attendance, hotel accommodations, etc. There has been confusion in the minds of many over whether *registration* has been completed when the individual is simply named to participate; accommodations remain, importantly, to be worked out. Using the term *certification* exclusively to refer to the official process of determining and

1 recording *who* is to attend and the term *registration* exclusively to refer to the process of arranging for the actual
2 attendance of such individuals will improve clarity of communication.

3 2. With regard to the word *forwarded*, there is an implication that there is movement of a document, either hard copy
4 or digital, from one person to another. With the implementation of an electronic forms system, this information is
5 submitted to the Office of the Secretary rather than forwarded. Bylaw 3.12.3.4, which deals with the work related
6 to the Committee for Convention Nominations, uses *submitted* to refer to the information pertaining to nominees,
7 all of which is being collected using an online form system. The same term could be used here.

8 3. Bylaw 3.1.3.2 appears to be located in the section pertaining to Nonvoting Advisory Delegates and yet refers to all
9 district representation, including voting and nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives and their alternates.
10 The commission recommends introduction of a subsection header to clarify the scope of this bylaw without
11 adjusting the section outline.

12 Therefore be it

13 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.1.3.2 be amended and a header be inserted as follows:

14 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

15 *Nonvoting Advisory Delegates*

16 ...

17 *Certification of Voting and Advisory Delegates and District Advisory Representatives*

18 3.1.3.2 All district voting and nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives and their alternates shall be certified
19 before attending a convention of the Synod.

20 (a) The names and addresses of all voting and nonvoting advisory delegates and representatives and
21 their alternates shall be ~~forwarded~~submitted by the district secretary before the announced ~~registration~~
22 deadline to the Secretary of the Synod on ~~registration~~the forms provided by the latter.

23 (b) This procedure shall constitute certification.

24 **E. TO AMEND BYLAW 3.10.6.9 TO CLARIFY HOW UNIVERSITY FACULTIES MAY VOTE**
25 **TO SUBMIT OVERTURES**

26 WHEREAS, Questions have arisen as to how university faculties may vote to submit overtures to a convention, as
27 allowed in Bylaw 3.1.6.2; and

28 WHEREAS, Bylaws provide in other instances for how faculties elect advisory representatives (Bylaw 3.10.6.9 [c]),
29 certify church work students (Bylaw 2.7.2), and deal with their voting in general (Bylaw 3.1.6.2), but do not deal with this
30 specific issue; and

31 WHEREAS, The submission of an overture to a convention of the Synod is a right afforded only, otherwise, to bodies
32 composed entirely of members of the Synod or of members of Synod member congregations (Bylaw 3.1.6.2); and

33 WHEREAS, The voting model used for certification of church work students (Bylaw 2.7.2) therefore seems appropriate
34 to this faculty function, as well; therefore be it

35 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.10.6.9 be amended as follows:

36 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

37 *Concordia University System Faculties*

38 3.10.6.9 The faculty of each college or university of the Synod shall consist of the president, the full-time faculty, and
39 the part-time faculty.

40 (a) Part-time or temporary faculty members are distinguished by an appropriate title.

41 (b) Part-time or temporary faculty members shall hold nonvoting membership on the faculty.

42 (c) Only the voting or full-time faculty who are in good standing as individual members of the Synod
43 or are members in good standing of a member congregation of the Synod shall participate in faculty
44 decisions regarding the qualification of graduates or colloquy program participants for rostered service

45 (d) Submission of an overture to a convention of the Synod shall be by majority vote of the full-time
46 faculty who are in good standing as individual members of the Synod or are members in good standing
47 of a member congregation of the Synod.

To Amend Bylaw 3.6.4.3 to Increase the Number of Lutheran Church Extension Fund Directors Elected by the Synod in Convention from Three to Four

RESOLUTION 9-05

Overture 9-15 (CW, 474–75)

Rationale

During a review of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)’s articles and bylaws, the Commission on Constitutional Matters stated the following in Opinion 24-3024, dated March 15–16, 2024:

Synod Bylaw 3.6.1.3 (a) provides that a minimum of one-third of the voting members of the governing board of a synodwide corporate entity [including LCEF] shall be elected by the Synod in convention. Thus, with three voting members elected by the convention, LCEF’s board may contain no more than six appointed voting members; it presently has eight.

In order to comply with the opinion, LCEF must either: (i) reduce the number of directors elected by LCEF’s members from eight to six, (ii) increase the number of directors elected by the Synod in convention from three to four, or (iii) implement some other combination that complies with the mathematical conclusion of the opinion. The LCEF Board of Directors has resolved that it is in the best interest of the good governance of LCEF, balancing the need for sufficient voices with that to avoid having too many voices, to increase the number of directors elected by the Synod in convention from three to four. To implement this change, it will be necessary to revise Synod Bylaw 3.6.4.3 (1), a bylaw that only applies to LCEF.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.4.3 (1) be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod

...

3.6.4.3 The board of directors for the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall consist of such number of directors as are specified in the bylaws of The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod. All voting members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall serve a maximum of four three-year terms.

- 1. ~~Four~~^{Three} directors shall be elected by the Synod in convention and shall include one ordained or commissioned minister and ~~two~~^{three} laypersons.

...

To Amend Bylaws 3.6.1.8 (c) and 3.6.4 (a) to Clarify that Two-Thirds Approval Requirements for Synodwide Corporate Entity and Lutheran Church Extension Fund Governing Document Amendments are Based on Members Actually Present at Meeting

RESOLUTION 9-06

Overtures 9-16, 46 (CW, 475, 490)

Rationale

During a review of Lutheran Church Extension Fund’s (LCEF) articles and bylaws, the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) stated the following in Opinion 24-3050A (Minutes of the CCM, May 6, 2025, 92–93) with respect to the conformity of LCEF’s membership voting process with Synod Bylaws:

With regard to the first item, in view of Synod Bylaws 3.6.4 (a) and 3.6.1.8 (c), the commission notes an additional detail in Article NINTH, namely, that the “two-thirds majority vote” is to be of the *members* (whether all members or members appointed by the Board of Directors), not of the *members present at such meeting*. The two instances of “present at such meeting” should therefore be removed. The same changes need to be applied in the Bylaws, Article VII, as the same standards apply to the amendment of the LCEF Bylaws as to the LCEF Articles.

1 In consideration of the opinion, at LCEF’s annual meeting in November 2025, LCEF’s members amended its articles and
2 bylaws to remove the phrase “present at such meeting” in the relevant places in order to be in compliance.

3 However, the LCEF Board of Directors believe that it is in the best interest of LCEF that the two Synod bylaws cited in
4 the opinion be revised such that LCEF can revise its articles and bylaws in the future to reinsert the phrase “present at such
5 meeting” in the relevant places. Presently, LCEF has 75 members. Therefore, two-thirds of the 75 members (50) must
6 approve changes to LCEF’s articles and bylaws regardless of how many members are present to vote. Thus, for example,
7 if only 60 of the 70 members were present to vote at the meeting (the quorum requirement thus being satisfied), then 50
8 of the 60 members must approve any changes, which is 83.3 percent of the members present at the meeting. The two-
9 thirds majority requirement is already a supermajority.

10 The current situation becomes even more challenging when certain changes are made to LCEF’s articles and bylaws. In
11 those cases, two-thirds of LCEF’s members appointed by the Synod Board of Directors (the members at large) must also
12 approve voting as a separate class. There are six such members at large. Thus, to obtain approval of this class, two-thirds
13 of the six (four) must approve. If only four of the six members at large are present at the meeting, then all four must
14 approve, which is 100 percent of the members at large present.

15 It is customary and prudent in voting bodies that a majority or supermajority of those present at such meetings approve
16 action items (assuming quorum requirements are met). LCEF requests the changes resolved below for LCEF to put in
17 place a reasonable supermajority requirement.

18 Therefore be it

19 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.6.1.8 (c) be amended as follows:

20 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

21 **3.6 Synodwide Corporate Entities**

22 ***General Principles***

23 ...

24 3.6.1.8 Each synodwide corporate entity shall provide in its governing instruments

25 ...

26 (c) a provision that any amendments to a provision of its governing instruments which relate to its
27 objects and purposes, the designating of its members, or the procedure for amending its governing
28 instruments shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of its members present at such meeting, if any,
29 who are appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod;

30 and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.6.4 (a) be amended as follows:

32 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

33 ***The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod***

34 3.6.4 The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, as established on June 15, 1978, as a corporate
35 entity under the laws of the State of Missouri, is operated by its members and Board of Directors, in
36 accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and corporate Bylaws, to further the objectives and duties of
37 the church extension fund by providing financial resources and related services for ministry, witness, and
38 outreach within the Synod and, as approved by the Synod Board of Directors, beyond the Synod: (1) to and
39 within partner churches with which the Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship; or (2) upon the
40 recommendation of the President of Synod, to Lutheran entities formed and operating outside of the United
41 States that assist in fulfilling the Synod’s ministry and mission objectives in foreign countries.

42 (a) Any amendment to the Articles of Incorporation and the corporate Bylaws of the Lutheran Church
43 Extension Fund—Missouri Synod as heretofore adopted shall be made by a two-thirds vote of the
44 members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod present at such meeting as set forth
45 in its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

46 ...

To Amend Bylaw 3.6.4.3 to Clarify That No More Than Two Lutheran Church Extension Fund Directors Can Be from the Same District

RESOLUTION 9-07

Overture 9-47 (CW, 490)

Rationale

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) Bylaws in Section 1, Article II, contain a sentence that reads, “No more than two elected Directors can be from the same district of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.” (The *elected* directors in the language of the LCEF Bylaws include all the *voting* directors on the board, both those elected by the Synod convention and those appointed by the LCEF Board of Directors.) The Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM), in Opinion 26-3076, dated March 5, 2026, has stated that the aforesaid limitation does not apply to the LCEF directors elected by the Synod in convention since the limitation does not appear in the Synod’s Bylaws. The CCM also suggested that, “The convention can be asked to add the language to the Synod Bylaws, perhaps to Bylaw 3.6.4.3, and if it does so, the provision would be operative from the time of adoption.”

In order, therefore, to clarify that the requirement that no more than two voting LCEF directors can be from the same district also pertains to the LCEF voting directors elected by the Synod in convention, a sentence similar to that in the LCEF Bylaws is proposed to be added to Synod Bylaw 3.6.4.3. This would avoid the possibility that the LCEF directors elected by the Synod convention, when added to the directors appointed by the LCEF membership, could exceed the limitation. Since LCEF amended its Bylaws in 2025 to remove geographical restrictions regarding the election of its directors, the proposed change would prevent overrepresentation on the LCEF Board of Directors by any one district.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.4.3 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.6.4.3 The board of directors for the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall consist of such number of directors as are specified in the bylaws of The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod. All voting members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall serve a maximum of four three-year terms.

1. Three directors shall be elected by the Synod in convention and shall include one ordained or commissioned minister and two laypersons.
2. The remaining voting directors shall be ~~chosen~~appointed by the members.
3. The representative designated by the Board of Directors of the Synod shall also be a nonvoting member of the board.

No more than two voting directors shall be from the same district, provided that the current term of a director shall not be affected if the director moves from one district to another during the term.

To Amend Bylaws to Clarify and Streamline Responsibilities of Appointed Synod Officers

RESOLUTION 9-08

Overture 9-09 (CW, 468–70)

Rationale

Under current Bylaws, the positions of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) exist to assist the Synod Board of Directors (BOD) in carrying out the responsibilities of the BOD to the Synod. These responsibilities include managing, on behalf of the BOD, left-hand kingdom affairs of the Synod and coordination with all other officers and agencies of the Synod. Both positions report to the BOD and both positions are appointed by the BOD, with the concurrence of the President.

The current responsibilities of the CAO and CFO are distinct, yet complementary. Maintaining the two positions at times creates ambiguity and slows coordination with other officers, boards, and agencies of the Synod. Consolidating the two positions into a single Chief Operating Officer (COO) will improve clarity of authority, resource alignment, and coordination across the Synod. It also will give the BOD the ability to allocate resources in a fashion that better serves left-hand kingdom Synod needs, such as audit, finance and accounting, human resources, legal, risk management, and

1 information technology. Organization of these administrative and financial functions under one office will allow the board
2 and its executive freedom to provide for these activities and their leadership with coordination and flexibility. Under the
3 coordination provided by the COO, these principal staff members will provide sensible points of contact and long-term
4 direction in manageable areas of service.

5 Combining the CAO and CFO positions into the COO position also will simplify the overall administration and structure
6 of the Synod office, allowing the elimination of the Operations Team as currently prescribed in Bylaw 3.5.2. Present
7 Operations Team functions would either be addressed by several bylaws that provide for coordination between the COO
8 and Chief Mission Officer or handled by the Administrative Team (Bylaw 3.5.1), which includes also the elected officers,
9 which will be retained and remain under the leadership of the President.

10 Therefore be it

11 *Resolved*, That to effectuate the consolidation of the CAO position and CFO position into the COO position and to
12 make other adjustments accordingly to improve efficiency and coordination with the Synod, Bylaws 3.1.6.1, 3.1.9, 3.2.1.1,
13 3.3.4.6, 3.3.4.9, 3.4.1, 3.4.1.1–3.4.1.4, 3.5.1.1, 3.6.4.2.1, and 3.9.4.1 be amended and that Bylaws 3.4.2–3.4.2.3 and 3.5.2–
14 3.5.2.1 be deleted as follows:

15 **PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**

16 *Reports*

17 3.1.6.1 Reports to a convention of the Synod may be submitted only by the President, a vice-president, the Secretary,
18 the Chief ~~Financial~~Operating Officer, the Board of Directors of the Synod, a board or commission of the
19 Synod as listed in Bylaws 3.2.2, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.3, and 3.2.3.1, and other individuals or duly constituted groups
20 who may be required or permitted to do so by the Bylaws, by action of a prior convention of the Synod, or
21 by the President.

22 ...

23 ***Convention Order***

24 3.1.9 The President shall be responsible for the overall organization and operations of the conventions of the
25 Synod.

26 (a) The Chief ~~Administrative~~Operating Officer or the Chief ~~Administrative~~Operating Officer's
27 designee shall serve as the convention manager. He shall be responsible to the President for making
28 arrangements for and directing the externals of the convention and other major assemblies of the Synod
29 and may assist with planning and arranging for district conventions.

30 ...

31 (e) All travel and convention expenses of the Synod's Praesidium, Secretary, Chief
32 ~~Administrative~~Operating Officer, ~~Chief Financial Officer~~, Chief Mission Officer, Board of Directors,
33 district presidents, Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook, Commission on
34 Theology and Church Relations, and legal counsel are included in the operating cost of the convention
35 and as such are included in the district levy.

36 ...

37 ...

38 ***Officers Appointed by the President and Board of Directors***

39 3.2.1.1 The appointed officers of the Synod shall be the Chief ~~Financial~~Operating Officer ~~and the Chief~~
40 ~~Administrative~~ Officer, appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod, and the Chief Mission Officer,
41 appointed by the President of the Synod.

42 ...

43 ***Board of Directors***

44 3.3.4.6 The Board of Directors shall exercise general oversight over the operations and activities of the synodwide
45 corporate entities, the Concordia Plans, and Concordia Plan Services as required of it in the Constitution of
46 the Synod and specified in these Bylaws.

47 ...

48 (d) The board shall have the right to designate a representative (~~by default, the Chief Financial Officer~~)
49 ~~to attend~~, as a nonvoting member, all meetings of the boards of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
50 Foundation, The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, Concordia Publishing House,
51 Concordia University System, and the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans (Board of Directors—
52 Concordia Plan Services); These non-voting members are entitled to attend all meetings of the board.

including executive sessions, and have the same rights and privileges of other board members, except the right to vote. The board's representative shall serve on the investment committee of the Concordia Plans and Concordia Plan Services. The board and its representative shall, in reasonable time, receive notice of such meetings, the proposed agenda, and minutes thereof.

...

3.3.4.9 To carry out the business and legal affairs of the Synod, the Board of Directors may, after consultation with the Administrative Team, appoint other officers subject to the approval of the President. The Board of Directors may also appoint and staff as required.

...

Chief Financial Operating Officer

3.4.1 The Chief Financial Operating Officer shall administer the financial affairs of the Synod, excluding the synodwide corporate entities, the districts, the Concordia Plans, and Concordia Plan Services and shall assist the Board of Directors of the Synod in carrying out the responsibilities given to it by the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

3.4.1.1 The Chief Financial Operating Officer shall be an officer of the Synod and a layperson appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod in consultation with and with the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

3.4.1.2 The Chief Financial Operating Officer shall serve a three-year renewable term of office during which he/she shall serve at the direction of the Board of Directors.

(a) He/she may serve an unlimited number of terms.

(b) Each reappointment by the Board of Directors shall be after consultation with and with the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

3.4.1.3 The Chief Financial Operating Officer also serves as the Treasurer of the corporation and shall

...

(h) be authorized to borrow in the name of the Synod, provided its Board of Directors has first determined the amounts and conditions under which such moneys shall be borrowed;

(1) instruments relative to such borrowing shall require two signatures:

(2) one shall be the Chief Financial Operating Officer and the other shall be another officer of the Synod designated by the Board of Directors of the Synod;

...

3.4.1.4 The Chief Financial Operating Officer shall work together closely with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief Mission Officer in carrying out the programmatic, administrative, and financial functions of the national Synod.

...

3.5 National Office Teams

Administrative Team

3.5.1.1 The Administrative Team shall consist of the President, the First Vice-President, the Secretary, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Mission Officer, and the Chief Administrative Officer and shall be under the leadership of the President.

...

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod

3.6.4.2.1 One class of members consists of the President of the Synod or his representative, the Chief Financial Operating Officer of the Synod, and such additional members appointed by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as shall equal one for each ten members of the other class of members.

...

Commission on Handbook

3.9.4.1 The Commission on Handbook shall consist of eight members, five voting and three nonvoting:

1. Of the five voting members, three shall be individual members of the Synod and two shall be attorneys. Terms of voting members shall be for six years, renewable once.

2. The Chief Administrative Operating Officer of the Synod, the Secretary of the Synod, and an additional member of the Commission on Constitutional Matters shall serve as advisory members.

1 ...

2 ***Chief Administrative Officer***

3 3.4.2 ~~The Chief Administrative Officer shall assist the Board of Directors of the Synod in carrying out the~~
4 ~~responsibilities given to it by the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.~~

5 3.4.2.1 ~~The Chief Administrative Officer shall be an officer of the Synod and shall be appointed by the Board of~~
6 ~~Directors of the Synod in consultation and mutual concurrence with the President of the Synod.~~

7 3.4.2.2 ~~The Chief Administrative Officer shall serve a three-year renewable term of office during which he/she shall~~
8 ~~serve at the direction of the Board of Directors.~~

9 (a) ~~He/she may serve an unlimited number of terms.~~

10 (b) ~~Each reappointment shall be with the mutual concurrence of the President and the Board of Directors~~
11 ~~of the Synod.~~

12 3.4.2.3 ~~The Chief Administrative Officer shall work together closely with the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief~~
13 ~~Mission Officer in carrying out the programmatic, administrative, and financial functions of the national~~
14 ~~Synod.~~

15 ...

16 ***Operations Team***

17 3.5.2 ~~The Operations Team shall assist the President and the Board of Directors of the Synod in carrying out their~~
18 ~~respective responsibilities for oversight, supervision, management, and coordination of the operations of the~~
19 ~~national office and according to the triennial emphases adopted by conventions of the Synod.~~

20 3.5.2.1 ~~The Operations Team shall consist of the Chief Mission Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the~~
21 ~~Chief Financial Officer and shall be convened by the Chief Administrative Officer.~~

22 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
23 *Committee, estimate no incremental cost, as cost savings from reduction of an officer-level position would be mostly*
24 *offset by investment in additional and higher-grade supporting roles (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

25 **To Amend Bylaws to Coordinate Responsibilities of Chief Mission Officer**
26 **with Other Synod Officers**

27 **RESOLUTION 9-09**

28 Overture 9-10 (CW, 470–71)

29 **Rationale**

30 The 2010 Synod convention made substantial changes to the structure and organization of the national Synod office that
31 impacted significantly the mission operations of the Synod. These changes included creating the Chief Mission Officer
32 (CMO) position, eliminating the Synod's Board for Mission Services, and creating the Board for National Mission (BNM)
33 and the Board for International Mission (BIM). The bylaws governing the CMO position have been in effect for 15 years,
34 allowing time to assess their overall efficiency and effectiveness.

35 The CMO is ultimately responsible to the President of the Synod. The CMO also has responsibilities that have significant
36 impact on matters within the supervision and responsibility of the Synod's Board of Directors (BOD) and must coordinate
37 extensively with other officers of the Synod, some of whom report to the BOD.

38 While the content of the Synod's communications deals with doctrinal, practical, and programmatic material that belongs
39 under the supervision of the President or the appointed officer reporting to him, namely the CMO, and while Synod's
40 fundraising certainly relates to its programs, there are operational aspects of this work that the BOD suggests would benefit
41 from closer coordination with other activities more operational than programmatic. Corporate Synod would benefit from
42 an integrated treatment of its information systems. The BOD has made a significant ongoing investment in a constituent
43 management system and a more comprehensive approach to information management, including building a team with the
44 skills for internet and database development, which is necessary if rewards are to be reaped in better service to the Synod's
45 membership, enhanced presentation of its confession and mission in electronic platforms, and improved efficiency and
46 capacity. Likewise, the BOD is responsible for "providing operating and capital funds to carry out the work of the Synod"
47 (Bylaw 3.3.4.5 [c]), but 2010 restructuring placed fundraising under the supervision of the President. While messaging
48 and approach may shift with changes in presidential administrations, the fundamental communications and fundraising
49 operations of the Synod should be provided for in a way that could survive such a transition. The change here proposed,

1 to transfer these functions to reside under the board’s Chief Operating Officer, while retaining certain approvals to the
2 President, therefore serves continuity as well as efficiency and effectiveness.

3 It is desirable and would assist the overall coordination and efficiency of the work of the CMO, other Synod officers, and
4 the BOD to realign certain responsibilities among the CMO and other Synod officers that relate to budgetary, property,
5 financial, legal matters, and other left-hand kingdom responsibilities.

6 **Proposed Action**

7 Therefore be it

8 *Resolved*, That to assist in the overall coordination and efficiency of the Synod’s mission operations and to assist the
9 overall coordination and efficiency of the work of the CMO, other Synod officers, and the BOD, the bylaws be amended
10 as follows:

11 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

12 **Chief Mission Officer**

13 3.4.3 The Chief Mission Officer shall be responsible to the President of the Synod for the mission, ministry, and
14 any programmatic and coordinative functions which are implemented according to the policies adopted by
15 the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission.

16 3.4.3.1 The Chief Mission Officer shall provide staff and other resource(s) to the Board for National Mission and
17 the Board for International Mission.

18 3.4.3.2 The Chief Mission Officer shall be an officer of the Synod and shall be appointed and subsequently
19 reappointed by the President of the Synod following the President’s consultation with the Board for National
20 Mission and the Board for International Mission and with the ~~mutual~~ concurrence of the Board of Directors
21 and the concurrence of the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission acting jointly.
22 The Chief Mission Officer may serve an unlimited number of terms.

23 3.4.3.3 The Chief Mission Officer shall be a minister of religion—ordained and shall serve a three-year renewable
24 term of office and shall serve at the direction of the President of the Synod.

25 3.4.3.4 ~~The Chief Mission Officer shall meet regularly with the executive directors of the commissions (if any) and~~
26 ~~the chief executives of synodwide corporate entities as the liaison for and at the direction of the President of~~
27 ~~the Synod. In carrying out his responsibilities as described in Bylaw 3.4.3 as an aspect of the programmatic,~~
28 ~~administrative, and financial functions of the national Synod, the Chief Mission Officer He shall work~~
29 ~~together shall coordinate closely with the Chief Financial Operating Officer and the Chief Administrative~~
30 ~~Officer in carrying out the programmatic, administrative, and financial functions of the national Synod and~~
31 ~~shall meet regularly with the executive directors of the commissions (if any) and the chief executives of~~
32 ~~synodwide corporate entities as the liaison for and at the direction of the President of the Synod.~~

33 3.4.3.5 The Chief Mission Officer shall, at the direction of the President, supervise the work of the Office of National
34 Mission and the Office of International Mission.

35 ~~3.4.3.6 The Chief Mission Officer shall, on behalf of the President, supervise fundraising activity of the national~~
36 ~~office according to policies established by the Board of Directors of the Synod.~~

37 3.4.3.76 The Chief Mission Officer shall, on behalf of the President, supervise the content of communications, public
38 relations, and news and information provided by the Synod, including the official periodicals of the Synod,
39 *The Lutheran Witness and Reporter.*

40 ~~3.4.3.8 The Chief Mission Officer shall, on behalf of the President, provide leadership, coordination, and oversight~~
41 ~~for pre-seminary education programs, seminary education, and post-seminary continuing education, and by~~
42 ~~providing advocacy for pastoral education and health within the Synod. He shall serve as the chairman of the~~
43 ~~Pastoral Formation Committee.~~

44 ...

45 **Chief Financial Operating Officer**

46 ...

47 3.4.1.5 The Chief Operating Officer shall, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Synod, supervise fundraising
48 activity of the national office according to policies established by the Board of Directors of the Synod and
49 subject to the supervision of the President of the Synod over the theological content of communications. The
50 selection of the top executive responsible for fundraising of the national office and all employees responsible
51 for theological content of related communications can be made only with the concurrence of the President of

1 the Synod. Selection of other outward facing employees shall occur only after consultation with the President
 2 of the Synod.

3 3.4.1.6 The Chief Operating Officer shall, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Synod, supervise the budgetary,
 4 legal, and business aspects of communications, public relations, and news and information provided by the
 5 Synod, including the official periodicals of the Synod, *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*. The selection of
 6 the top executive(s) responsible for communications, public relations, and news and information provided
 7 by the Synod and all employees responsible for theological content of such can be made only with the
 8 concurrence of the President of the Synod. Selection of other outward facing employees shall occur only
 9 after consultation with the President of the Synod.

10 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
 11 *Committee, estimate no incremental cost, as existing responsibilities are simply realigned (estimate required by Bylaw*
 12 *3.1.7 [g]).*

13 **To Revise the Membership of the Pastoral Formation Committee**

14 **RESOLUTION 9-10**

15 Overtures 6-64–71, 9-10 (*CW*, 403–8, 470–71)

16 WHEREAS, One of the objectives of the Synod is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church
 17 workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Const. Art. III 3); and

18 WHEREAS, The 2013 Resolution 5-14A Task Force (2013 Res. 5-14A, “To Conduct Study of Alternate Routes to
 19 Pastoral Ministry,” [*Proceedings*, 155]) recognized “the need to provide for greater coordination and collaboration
 20 between our two seminaries” (Report R64, 2016 *Workbook*, 279); and

21 WHEREAS, The task force recommended “that there be an entity ensuring that the seminaries *do* coordinate and
 22 collaborate with respect to these various programs” (Report R64, 2016 *Workbook*, 279); and

23 WHEREAS, In 2016, the Synod resolved that Bylaw section 3.10 be amended, creating the Pastoral Formation
 24 Committee (PFC) (2016 Res. 6-01, “To Create Pastoral Formation Committee,” [*Proceedings*, 165–6]); and

25 WHEREAS, The need for coordination and collaboration between our two seminaries has not ceased; and

26 WHEREAS, Current Bylaw 3.10.4.6 provides that the Chief Mission Officer (CMO) is a member of the PFC. The
 27 CMO’s responsibilities have been amended by Res. 9-09, “To Amend Bylaws to Coordinate Responsibilities of Chief
 28 Mission Officer with Other Synod Officers”; therefore be it

29 *Resolved*, That Bylaw section 3.10 be amended as follows:

30 **PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**

31 ***D. Pastoral Formation Committee***

32 ...

33 3.10.4.6 The Pastoral Formation Committee shall comprise the following five members:

34 *Voting Members:*

- 35 1. ~~The Chief Mission Officer of the Synod, chairman~~ A member appointed by the Synod President
- 36 2. ~~The presidents of the seminaries~~ A district president (not serving on a seminary Board of Regents),
 37 appointed by the Council of Presidents
- 38 3. The presidents of the two seminaries (neither shall serve as chair)
- 39 4. The executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education, as a non-voting advisory member

40 *Nonvoting Advisory Member:*

41 ~~The Executive Director of the Office of Pastoral Education~~

42 3.10.4.7 The executive director of the Office of Pastoral Education shall assist the president in overseeing the pre-
 43 seminary education programs, seminary education, and post-seminary continuing education.

44 3.10.4.78 The Pastoral Formation Committee shall meet at least once per year, and shall report on its work at the annual
 45 joint meeting of the two seminary boards of regents. Additional meetings shall be determined by the chairman
 46 in consultation with the committee members.

- 1 4. *Opportunity*: The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and certain districts and educational institutions of the
 2 Synod have begun to explore the development or redevelopment of real property, in part, for commercial
 3 purposes, and in part, to sustain or expand ministry opportunities in locations where they otherwise could not be
 4 sustained or in connection with opportunities related to the contemplated developments. Doing so requires the
 5 creation of entities that are neither Synod agencies (as there would be involvement of commercial developers and
 6 investors) nor purely passive, “detached,” investment vehicles. Because there is no mechanism for formation of
 7 these *special-purpose entities* at present, even if there is a very good business and ministry case for such an effort,
 8 the BOD has no option to allow it to proceed. *Solution*: The proposal, in the aforementioned taxonomy, allows a
 9 category of *special-purpose entity*, presently limited to a narrow scope of initial possibilities, instances of which
 10 must be approved by the Synod BOD.

11 The most important feature of the proposal is the development of a taxonomy of “instrumental entities” (defined below)
 12 that may be established, acquired, or entered into by corporate Synod and agencies of the Synod, and a definite set of
 13 regulations applicable to each. These may be outlined as follows (compare proposed Bylaw 1.5.1 below):

- 14 1. *Agencies of the Synod (existing category)*: These are “instrumentalities . . . , whether or not separately incorporated,
 15 which the Synod in convention or its Board of Directors has caused or authorized to be formed to further the
 16 Synod’s Objectives (Const. Art. III)” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [a]). Every corporation formed by corporate Synod or an
 17 agency of the Synod is expected to be authorized by the BOD or convention (1981 Res. 5-07) and therefore to be,
 18 itself, an agency, meeting the requirements of Bylaw section 1.5. Corporate instrumentalities formed to further the
 19 Synod’s Objectives will remain agencies. For agencies *other* than those named in Bylaw 1.2.1 (a)(1) (the “Bylaw-
 20 Mandated Agencies,” such as boards, commissions, councils, seminaries, universities, colleges, and districts), the
 21 BOD will have more flexibility to allow waiver or modification of Bylaw section 1.5 requirements due to legal or
 22 business needs.

- 23 a. *Governed Agencies (all agencies are presently in this category)*: Among many other requirements for
 24 agencies are strictures on board membership (Bylaws 1.5.1.1–2) and board member removal (Bylaw 1.5.7.1),
 25 which have the effect of ensuring relative independence of agency boards. In most cases, these requirements
 26 serve well—and in all but the following cases, they will continue to apply.

- 27 b. *Managed Agencies (a new category for agencies that do not require the level of independence specified for*
 28 *governed agencies)*: Corporate Synod has, especially internationally, subagencies that simply manage
 29 property and assets (generally related to international schools and international mission) under direction of
 30 corporate Synod. These do not need independent directors and would best be managed simply by a board
 31 consisting of designated employees or other designated directors, whom the designating board can replace at
 32 will. Present bylaws do not allow for this arrangement. The proposal allows for such “managed” agencies,
 33 where authorized by the BOD.

- 34 2. *Non-Agency Instrumental Entities (newly acknowledged / defined / specially regulated)*:

- 35 a. *Special-Purpose Entities*: Bylaws at present (and 1981 Res. 5-07) do not contemplate a corporate body
 36 manifesting a business partnership of a Synod agency with non-Synod partners. This is a new area but one of
 37 some importance:

- 38 i. In the past triennium, this has caused issues for at least one seminary as it contemplated a property
 39 development proposal as part of its master plan.
- 40 ii. LCEF and the Pacific Southwest District have also identified and are hoping in the coming triennium to
 41 pursue a number of property redevelopment projects involving external partnerships, in which “excess”
 42 property of Synod would be commercially developed while retaining a “ministry footprint.” These
 43 projects are viewed as unique opportunities to maintain a “ministry foothold” in an area where
 44 repurchase at some future date would be prohibitively expensive, or where the ministry opportunity is
 45 tied to the development contemplated. The district or other property contributor would become a
 46 member of a corporation or corporations holding an interest in the property under development.
- 47 iii. A university has expressed an interest in developing a holding corporation to facilitate student-run
 48 businesses or other entrepreneurial or service ventures not directly part of the mission of the university.
 49 This sort of corporate structure would likely be a part of such a plan.

- 50 b. *Passive Investment Entities*: A number of these entities, involving a Synod agency as passive investor and an
 51 operating or general partner who managed the investment, already exist, although the Bylaws and 1981 Res.
 52 5-09 do not provide for corporations (other than national inter-Lutheran entities, Bylaw 1.3.8) having as

1 members Synod agencies and non-Synod entities. The creation of this category of acknowledged entities will
2 allow these to be utilized and created under appropriate oversight by the BOD.

3 It is important to understand that neither the passive investment entities nor the special-purpose entities are
4 allowed to perform the functions of an agency (that is, fulfilling the objectives of the Synod) themselves. They are
5 not doing ministry or calling church workers. The property they hold is not the property of the Synod (though
6 some of it may once have been, and though Synod or its agency may hold an ownership interest in the entity).
7 These are not an “alternative” to agencies for activities that should have the strict governance requirements of
8 agencies. They are an acknowledgement and fitting regulation of activities that are helpful to the Synod but that do
9 not fit properly within the agency model.

10 The BOD proposes the following as a serviceable, unified but differentiated, model for dealing with the needs of corporate
11 Synod and its agencies for additional corporations (and for the orderly and proper regulation of those that now exist). (The
12 board notes compatible proposals by the Commission on Handbook, to revise the conflict-of-interest language and to
13 revise committee requirements, both also to be found in Bylaw section 1.5; these changes do not conflict with that proposal,
14 but to avoid excessive complexity, no attempt has been made here to account for potential numbering changes resulting
15 from adoption of those proposals.) It fills many acknowledged gaps and allows both the assurances and the flexibility
16 Synod needs today, and will need in years to come, to manage on behalf of its member congregations the large array of
17 corporate entities necessary to fulfill, and to assist in fulfilling, its many objectives.

18 Therefore be it

19 *Resolved*, That the Synod and its agencies commit themselves to their defined roles in carrying out the changes in
20 these bylaws, focusing on the things of God; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 1.2.1 be amended to adjust the definition of *agency* to distinguish from other instrumental entity
22 types, to harmonize language with that of other sections, to account for the formation of Concordia Risk Solutions (the
23 assets of which are reserved to meet claims of the insureds), and to clarify that the *property of the Synod* definition covers
24 only the property of corporate Synod and Synod agencies, as follows:

25 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

26 **1.2 Definition of Terms**

27 1.2.1 The following definitions are for use in understanding the terms as used in the Bylaws of The Lutheran
28 Church—Missouri Synod:

29 (a) **Agency**: An instrumentality other than ~~a congregation or~~ corporate Synod or a Special Purpose or
30 Passive Investment Entity (Bylaw 1.5.1), whether or not separately incorporated, which the Synod in
31 convention or its Board of Directors has caused or authorized to be formed to further the Synod’s
32 Objectives (Constitution Art. III).

33 (1) Agencies include each board, commission, council, seminary, university, college, district,
34 Concordia Plan Services, and each synodwide corporate entity (the “Bylaw-Mandated Agencies”).

35 (2) The term “agency of the Synod” does not describe or imply the existence of principal and
36 agency arrangements as defined under civil law.

37 (3) Member congregations of the Synod, which are self-governing, are not agencies of the Synod
38 (Const. Art. VII).

39 ...

40 (e) **Concordia Plans**: The Concordia Plans, while operating under the supervision of the Synod Board
41 of Directors, are trust ~~agencies~~ entities whose assets are not the property of corporate Synod.

42 ...

43 (r) **Property of the Synod**: All assets, real or personal, tangible or intangible, whether situated in the
44 United States or elsewhere, titled or held in the name of corporate Synod, its nominee, or an agency of
45 the Synod. “Property of the Synod” does not include any assets held by member congregations, the
46 Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, or by an agency of the Synod in a fiduciary capacity
47 or as an insurer (including, for purposes of example, the funds managed for the Concordia Plans by
48 Concordia Plan Services, the funds held by Concordia Risk Solutions, and certain funds held by The
49 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation, and funds held on behalf of an investor or beneficiary).
50 The assets of a Special Purpose or Investment Entity (see Bylaw 1.5.1) are not property of the Synod as
51 herein defined. An equity or ownership interest in such an entity that is held by corporate Synod or an
52 agency of the Synod except in a capacity excluded above, however, is property of the Synod as that term
53 is defined in, and to the extent and for the purposes established in, these Bylaws.

1 and be it further

2 *Resolved*, That Bylaw section 1.5 be amended, to distinguish different types of instrumental entities, to allow for
3 creation of investment and special purpose entities as described, to integrate and update requirements for corporate
4 documents and governance of instrumental entities, and to allow the Board of Directors to permit certain waivers and
5 modifications, as follows:

6 PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

7 **1.5 Regulations for Corporate Synod and Agencies of the Synod, and Other Instrumental Entities**

8 **A. General Entity Types, Formation, and Regulation**

9 1.5.1 This section provides regulations for the governance of corporate Synod and for the formation and
10 governance of agencies of the Synod (whether or not incorporated) and other types of Instrumental Entities.

11 1.5.1.1 An Instrumental Entity is any corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association, or any other
12 form of entity established, acquired, or entered into by corporate Synod and/or an agency or agencies of the
13 Synod (“Participants”). Trusts are not Instrumental Entities.

14 Corporate Synod and agencies of the Synod may form and use Instrumental Entities of the following types,
15 each subject to regulation as indicated:

16 (a) A Bylaw-mandated Agency, one of the agencies included by name or class in Bylaw 1.2.1 (a)(1), is
17 subject to regulations in subsection B without the possibility of modification or waiver by the Synod
18 Board of Directors.

19 (b) Agencies other than those mandated by the Bylaws may be of two types:

20 (1) A Governed Subagency has board members that are independent (with respect to Bylaws
21 1.5.2.3.2–3) of its Participant(s) and of other agencies of the Synod. A Governed Agency is, except
22 as it is granted a modification or waiver by the Synod Board of Directors, subject to regulations in
23 subsection B.

24 (2) A Managed Subagency is an agency specifically designated as such by the Board of Directors
25 of the Synod. A Managed Subagency has board members that need not be independent of its
26 Participant(s) and other agencies of the Synod. A Managed Subagency is, except as it is granted a
27 modification or waiver by the Synod Board of Directors, subject to regulations in subsection B with
28 the following modifications:

- 29 • The board of a Managed Subagency may include (ctr. Bylaw 1.5.2.3.2) board members and/or
30 employees from its Participant(s). These individuals may serve on the Managed Subagency’s
31 board either by virtue of their position (serving *ex officio*) or as designated by the board(s) of
32 the Participant(s), whether directly or through delegated authority.
- 33 • Individuals serving on the Managed Subagency’s board in this capacity are not subject to the
34 usual limitations on holding multiple offices, as described in Bylaw 1.5.2.3.3.
- 35 • Any such board member may (ctr. Bylaw 1.5.2.10) be removed from office at any time with or
36 without cause, solely at the discretion of the designating board. This removal authority may be
37 exercised directly by the designating board or by delegation of its authority.

38 (c) A Special Purpose Entity (SPE) is an Instrumental Entity established, acquired, or entered into by
39 corporate Synod and/or its agencies to carry out business functions that support, but do not themselves
40 engage in, the activities outlined in Constitution Article III. An SPE may be formed only for one of the
41 specific purposes permitted under subsection C. An SPE is not an agency of the Synod and is subject to
42 the requirements of subsection C only.

43 (d) A Passive Investment Entity (PIE) is an Instrumental Entity established, acquired, or entered into by
44 corporate Synod and/or its agencies strictly as passive investors and not to operate an active business or
45 ministry. A PIE is not an agency of the Synod and is subject to the requirements of subsection D only.

46 1.5.1.2 Before Corporate Synod and/or any agencies of the Synod seek to establish, acquire, or enter into any
47 Instrumental Entity other than a Passive Investment Entity, they must first obtain approval from the Synod’s
48 Board of Directors.

49 (a) The Synod’s Board of Directors will decide if, and in which of the above Bylaw 1.5.1.1 categories,
50 an Instrumental Entity may be established, acquired, or entered into. The Board shall develop policies
51 and procedures for applications for such authorization.

52 (b) Each application shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- 53 • proposed Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws (or other governing documents) of the entity;

- the date when such entity is proposed to begin to function;
- an explanation of how the entity will aid in carrying out the responsibilities of the Participant(s); and
- draft language for the bylaws of the Participant(s) requiring the minutes and financial records of any subordinate agency or entity to be monitored regularly by the board(s) of the Participant(s).

(c) The board’s approval of an application to form and/or the Board’s classification of an Instrumental Entity must be documented in open meeting minutes.

1.5.1.2.1 Participant(s) establishing, acquiring, or entering into a Passive Investment Entity must report such event to the Board of Directors as required in Bylaw 1.5.4.1.

1.5.1.3 The Board of Directors will maintain a register of all agencies and other Instrumental Entities of the Synod, including their categorization and any granted modifications or waivers, and provide it to any member congregation upon request.

1.5.1.4 The regulations of Bylaw section 1.5 supersede all prior resolutions governing the formation or utilization of corporations by corporate Synod and agencies of Synod.

1.5.1.5 The requirements of this section shall apply to all preexisting Instrumental Entities.

(a) Participant(s) must submit to the Board of Directors of the Synod for categorization and approval any existing Instrumental Entity that has not (i) been approved by the convention or Board of Directors of the Synod and Commission on Constitutional Matters or that (ii) does not meet these requirements (potentially with modifications or waivers already granted). Thereafter, both the entity’s governing documents and its categorization must be submitted to and approved by the Commission on Constitutional Matters in accordance with these Bylaws.

(b) Participant(s) in any preexisting Instrumental Entity requiring authorization, re-classification, or governing document review and approval shall have until a date four weeks prior to the report submission deadline for the 70th regular Synod convention to complete the above. Any not having completed the above by that date shall be reported by the Board of Directors to the convention with a recommendation for action.

(c) This bylaw is not to be construed to require categorization or approval of preexisting Passive Investment Entities, which are excluded from the approval process by Bylaw 1.5.1.2. These are, however, to be reported as required by Bylaw 1.5.4.1.

B. Regulations for Corporate Synod and Agencies of the Synod

1.5.2 The regulations of this subsection apply to corporate Synod and to agencies of the Synod.

1.5.2.1 Each Synod agency, along with every individual involved in its governance and management, is accountable to the Synod for operating within the specific responsibilities assigned to them or for which they have been otherwise authorized by the Synod, and for advancing the Synod’s objectives.

1.5.2.2 Except for the Bylaw-mandated Agencies or as otherwise prohibited herein, the Board of Directors, as legal representative and custodian of the property of the Synod, may waive or modify the provisions of this subsection for individual agencies or classes of agencies. To do so, the Board must:

- (a) obtain advice of legal counsel and the Commission on Constitutional Matters regarding the consequences of the provision and any proposed waiver or modification; and
- (b) decide, in its sole discretion, that creating or using the agency is important to furthering the Synod’s constitutional objectives; and
- (c) decide, in its sole discretion, that the Synod’s purposes and interests would be frustrated or unacceptably impaired apart from granting of the waiver or modification; and
- (d) approve the waiver or modification by a two-thirds vote, record the decision in open minutes, and file it with the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

Board and Commission Membership

1.5.2.3 The board membership of corporate Synod and Synod agencies, and commission membership, shall be regulated as follows:

1.5.2.3.1 Board and commission members of all agencies shall be members of member congregations of the Synod. The Board of Directors cannot waive this requirement, but may, in only the following cases, modify it to the extent indicated:

- (a) for foreign mission agencies established at the request of the Board for International Mission and for foreign subagencies of agencies of the Synod, the Board of Directors may, to the extent legally

1 required, permit a minority of the board members to be, instead of members of member congregations
 2 of the Synod, members of congregations or missions in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod.

3 ~~1.5.1-1.5.3.2~~ 1.5.1-1.5.3.2 Unless otherwise specified or permitted by the Bylaws, chief executives and executive directors, faculty,
 4 staff, and all other employees on either the national or district level shall not be members of the board of the
 5 agency under which they serve, nor shall any such executives or staff be members of the board of any other
 6 agency of the Synod. For purposes of this bylaw only, *staff* shall mean:

7 (a) Employees, other than faculty, rostered as ministers of religion—ordained or ministers of religion—
 8 commissioned, whether or not serving in such capacity; or

9 (b) Employees of corporate Synod or an agency of Synod, other than faculty, who are responsible for
 10 the development and/or implementation of policies, goals, and programs; or

11 (c) Employees of corporate Synod or an agency of the Synod who assist chief executives, executive
 12 directors and faculty in their work and are supervised by these individuals directly or through a line of
 13 supervision.

14 ~~1.5.1-1.5.3.3~~ 1.5.1-1.5.3.3 No one, ~~either in the Synod or a district, or between the Synod and a district,~~ shall hold more than one elective
 15 office; or hold more than two offices, although one or both be appointive; or ever hold two offices of which
 16 one is directly responsible for the work done by the other.

17 (a) For purposes of this bylaw, office includes service as an officer or board or commission member
 18 with corporate Synod or any agency of the Synod (Bylaw 1.2.1 [a]) other than a Managed Subagency as
 19 described in Bylaw 1.5.1 (b).

20 (a**b**) An office shall be regarded as elective only if it is an office filled through election by a national or
 21 a district convention, even though a vacancy in such an office may be filled by appointment.

22 (b**c**) Doubtful cases shall be decided by the President of the Synod.

23 Governing Documents

24 ~~1.5.3-6.2.4~~ 1.5.3-6.2.4 Notwithstanding anything in the Bylaws to the contrary, the Articles of Incorporation or other governing
 25 documents of each agency shall, in the most fundamental document possible, provide:

26 (a) That all provisions of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, as well as its governance and
 27 operation, are subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the resolutions of the Synod
 28 in convention, as may hereafter be adopted or amended from time to time, and that in the event of any
 29 conflict or inconsistency between the agency's governing documents and those of the Synod, the
 30 Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod shall govern; and

31 (b) That in the event of dissolution other than by direction from the Synod in convention, the assets of
 32 such agency, subject to its liabilities, shall be transferred, consistent with applicable state and federal
 33 laws, as follows:

34 (1) In the case of a synodwide corporate entity, district, university, college, or seminary, to The
 35 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as may be more specifically described elsewhere in these
 36 Bylaws;

37 (2) In the case of a corporation formed by an agency (as defined in these Bylaws), to the agency
 38 that formed the dissolving corporation, or if such forming agency is not then in existence, to The
 39 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod itself.

40 (c) That, if the agency has members, membership shall not be granted except to corporate Synod and/or
 41 to an agency or agencies of the Synod, except that a district has as its corporate members the member
 42 congregations assigned to it and a district church extension fund has as its corporate member(s): (i) its
 43 respective district; or (ii) the members of the board of directors and/or elected officers of its district; or
 44 (iii) the member congregations of its district.

45 (d) That its assets are property of the Synod as that term is defined in, and to the extent and for the
 46 purposes established in, the Bylaws of Synod, as the same may be changed from time to time.

47 (e) That the minutes of its board of directors, as well as quarterly and audited financials, shall be
 48 promptly furnished to the board of directors of its Participant(s).

49 (f) That any amendment or restatement of its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws requires sixty days
 50 advance notice to any Participant(s) and to the Board of Directors of the Synod.

51 (g) That any amendment or restatement of its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws is subject to the prior,
 52 written approval of the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

53 (h) That any amendment or restatement of its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws without satisfaction
 54 of (f) and (g) is null and void and of no effect.

~~An agency may submit any concerns related to the inclusion of subsections (a) or (b) in its governing documents to the Board of Directors of the Synod, and the Board of Directors may determine to permit the removal or modification of these provisions for an affected agency.~~

The phrase “in the most fundamental document possible” means and refers to the foundational legal document that establishes the existence of the entity. If, for some reason, the Articles of Formation cannot include the provision (due to legal or practical constraints), then the next most authoritative document—such as the Bylaws—should be used.

Organization

1.5.2.5 The organization of corporate Synod and each agency of the Synod shall be regulated as follows:

~~1.5.32.5.1~~ Every ~~agency~~ Bylaw-mandated Agency of the Synod (Bylaw 1.5.1 [a]) shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise stipulated in the Bylaws. Exceptions require the approval at least annually of the President of the Synod. All such agencies shall announce their upcoming regular meetings.

1.5.2.5.2 Unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws, each agency is free to select a manner of meeting, consistent with Board of Directors policy, that best enhances its ability to accomplish its mission, taking into consideration fostering the open exchange of ideas, availability of technology to all members, stewardship of resources, perception of fairness, controversial nature of agenda items, and whether secret ballots might be used.

~~1.5.3.12.5.3~~ ~~At~~ Unless otherwise stipulated in these Bylaws, at the initial meeting after members take office under new terms filled by regular election or appointment, all mission boards, commissions, and governing boards shall organize themselves as to chair, vice-chair, secretary, and other standing committees and positions as necessary or mandated by these Bylaws and shall conduct business in accordance with accepted parliamentary rules.

~~1.5.3.22.5.4~~ All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may make use of executive committees to act in times of emergency between plenary meetings, to act on delegated assignments, and to act as specified elsewhere in these Bylaws.

(a) Executive committees may not perform acts specifically required by statute or by legislation or the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod to be performed by the agency, nor may they ~~overturn actions of the agency~~ alter or repeal actions of the board of the agency.

(b) All executive committee actions shall be reported to the next plenary sessions of the agency.

~~1.5.3.32.5.5~~ All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may also delegate a specific assignment for a limited time to a committee composed of its own members.

~~1.5.3.42.5.6~~ All mission boards, commissions, and governing boards may appoint standing committees of specialists to provide professional or technical assistance to the board or commission and may delegate certain responsibilities to such committees while retaining supervision. Standing committees may be made up of or include non-board or commission members. The creation of standing committees including non-board or commission members shall be reported to the President and the Board of Directors of the Synod.

Minutes and Financial Books and Records

1.5.2.6 The minutes and financial records of corporate Synod and Synod agencies shall be regulated as follows:

~~1.5.3.52.6.1~~ All agencies of the Synod shall develop policies and procedures for making available official minutes of their meetings. All mission boards and commissions shall develop policies and procedures to make available upon request and at a reasonable price a verbatim copy of the official minutes of their meetings except for executive sessions. Any member of the Synod may request a copy of any official minutes of mission boards or commissions by submitting a written or electronic (via email) request to the Secretary of the Synod, who shall provide such minutes according to the policy of the Board of Directors.

Full Financial Disclosure

1.5.42.6.2 The Synod and each of its agencies shall fully disclose their financial books and records to any member congregation of the Synod.

(a) Full disclosure includes all information (including, but not limited to, information required to be made available under state law) recorded in any fashion, except the following:

(1) Information that would violate the expected confidentiality of donors.

(2) Personnel files or other information that would violate the expected confidentiality of employees.

(3) Information that relates to in-process negotiations of financial matters.

(4) Information the disclosure of which would breach a legal obligation of the Synod or its agencies or affect pending litigation or claims against the Synod or its agencies.

(5) Information that is preliminary in nature or otherwise has not been finalized in its form and content.

(b) Salaries of elected officers of the Synod, as identified in Constitution Art. X A, shall be published annually in an official periodical.

(c) The accounting department of the Synod shall publish annually in an official periodical an invitation to request full, audited financial statements and summary operating budgets of the Synod or its agencies.

(d) The Synod and its agencies shall share, upon request, the quarterly financial statements as reported to the respective governing boards.

(e) All information produced for normal publication or distribution shall be provided free of charge.

(f) Requests for detailed financial information or the inspection of financial records shall be made in writing to the respective corporate boards by a member congregation and shall state the records desired and the time period to be covered.

(1) All responses to requests for information involving research or compilation shall be billed to the member on the basis of actual costs.

(2) Any inspection of financial records shall be done by (a) member(s) of the congregation or its stated authorized agent at a mutually agreeable time and place.

(3) The board may decline to provide the information requested if the board can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the member congregation's request is with the specific intent to cause harm to the Synod or one of its agencies or with the sole intent of deliberately and significantly disrupting the operations and affairs of the Synod or one of its agencies.

(4) Any declination to provide information or decision to limit inspection shall be explained in writing.

(5) Challenges to any board decisions declining to provide information or to limit inspection may be reviewed under the Synod's dispute resolution process.

1.5.2.6.3 The board of each Bylaw-Mandated Agency must regularly review the minutes (if applicable) and financial reports of its Instrumental Entities and, at least bi-annually, report to the Board of Directors of the Synod, in a form set by its policies, their existence and their performance in achieving their assigned objectives.

Agency-Operations

1.5.2.7 The operations of corporate Synod and of each agency of the Synod shall be regulated as follows:

1.5.2.7.1 Every agency shall operate under the general human resources policies of the Synod as provided by the Board of Directors of the Synod, in accordance with Bylaw 3.3.4.3. Specific policies under these general policies may be adopted by each agency's governing board in order to accommodate the unique character of its operations.

1.5.5-12.7.2 All agencies shall develop policies regarding their relations with staffs in accordance with general human resources policies provided by the Board of Directors of the Synod.

1.5.5-22.7.3 When calling ordained or commissioned ministers, agencies shall seek the counsel of the district president who would, by virtue of the call, assume ecclesiastical supervision of the minister (Bylaw section 2.12). If the call is such that the district president to assume ecclesiastical supervision is not known, the counsel of the president of the district within which the agency is located or with which it is associated shall be sought.

Agency-Conflict Resolution

1.5.2.8 Dissent to decisions of, and administrative and programmatic conflicts between, corporate Synod and Synod agencies shall be regulated as follows:

1.5.6-2.8.1 Dissent to decisions made by an agency shall ordinarily be expressed within the structure of that agency.

1.5.6-12.8.2 Administrative and programmatic conflicts between agencies of corporate Synod, between such agencies and the synodwide corporate entities, and between synodwide corporate entities shall be dealt with by the parties concerned in a Christian manner with the assistance of the President of the Synod.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

1.5.2.9 Ethical and conflict-of-interest standards for corporate Synod and Synod agencies shall be regulated as follows:

1.5.1-32.9.1 Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod shall be sensitive in their activities to taking or giving offense, giving the appearance of impropriety, causing confusion in the Synod, or creating potential liability.

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

1.5.22.9.2 Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod shall avoid conflicts of interest as described in this bylaw.

(a) Every agency shall implement the synodwide conflict-of-interest policy, and that policy shall be applicable to them and all staff operating under them. This policy shall include the following provisions:

(1) Every board or commission member shall disclose to the chairman of the agency and all staff shall disclose to the chief executive or executive director of the agency any potential conflicts of interest. Each chairman or chief executive or executive director shall disclose personal potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate board or commission.

(2) Such disclosures shall include board membership on, a substantial interest in, or employment of the individual or a relative by any organization doing business with corporate Synod or any of the agencies of the Synod.

(3) Every board or commission member, officer, and all staff of corporate Synod and every agency of the Synod who receives honoraria or payments for any sales or services rendered to corporate Synod or any of the agencies of the Synod shall disclose such information.

(4) All such disclosures shall be reported to the respective board or commission to determine by a vote of its remaining impartial members whether an inappropriate interest exists, and such vote shall be recorded in its official minutes. In the case of officers, all such disclosures shall be reported to the President of the Synod to determine whether an inappropriate interest exists.

(b) Responsibilities shall be carried out in a manner reflecting the highest degree of integrity and honesty consistent with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the policies of corporate Synod and the agencies of the Synod, and civil laws.

(1) Activities shall not be entered into which may be detrimental to the interests of the Synod. Any inappropriate activity shall cease or the position will be vacated.

(2) Information acquired in the course of carrying out duties of the Synod shall not knowingly be used in any way that would be detrimental to the welfare of the Synod.

(3) No one shall vote on any transaction in which the individual might receive a direct or indirect financial gain.

(4) The Board of Directors shall establish policy regarding the acceptance of gifts, entertainment, or favors from any individual or outside concern which does or is seeking to do business with corporate Synod or the agencies of the Synod.

(c) Individuals, prior to accepting elected, appointed, or staff positions, shall initially and annually thereafter sign statements stating that they have received, understand, and agree to abide by this bylaw and the Synod's conflict of interest policy.

Removal of Individual Members from Board or Commission Membership

1.5.72.10 Individual members of the Synod's commissions and the boards of its agencies, as well as the individual members of its Board of Directors, shall discharge the duties of their offices in good faith. The following are considered cause for removal pursuant to this bylaw:

- (1) Incapacity
- (2) Breach of fiduciary responsibilities to the Synod or agency
- (3) Neglect or refusal to perform duties of office
- (4) No longer satisfying any of the qualifications for directors set forth in the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the entity as in effect at the beginning of the member's term
- (5) Conviction of a felony
- (6) Failure to disclose conflicts of interest to the Synod or agency
- (7) Conduct evidencing a scandalous life
- (8) Advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution Art. II)
- (9) Failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod
- (10) Accumulation of three unexcused absences within any term of office

1.5.742.10.1 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, the procedure for removal of a member of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, except for those persons subject to Bylaw sections 2.15 and 2.16, shall be as follows:

(a) Action for removal shall require written notice to each member of the relevant commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors at least 30 days prior to a special meeting of the commission, agency

board, or LCMS Board of Directors called for that purpose. A copy of such notice shall be sent to the President and the Secretary of the Synod and to the ecclesiastical supervisor, if applicable.

(b) The special meeting shall be held no later than 60 days after the provision of the written notice, unless extended by the mutual agreement of the parties.

(c) Removal shall be effected by

(1) recommendation of such to the Synod's Board of Directors by a vote in favor of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the applicable commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors; and

(2) by a vote in favor of the recommendation of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the Board of Directors of the Synod.

(d) Removal may be appealed by a member who has been removed from a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors through the use of the Synod's dispute resolution process as provided in Bylaw section 1.10.

(e) From the time that written notice is given until the commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors takes action with respect to the removal, the member(s) subject to removal may not vote on matters before the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors.

(f) If a Concordia University System (CUS) college or university board of regents is presented with a written notice from the CUS Board of Directors, a copy of which shall also have been sent to the President and Secretary of the Synod and to any applicable ecclesiastical supervisor, detailing the basis for cause for removal of a member of the board of regents pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10 (2), (8), or (9), the written notice shall be handled as follows:

(1) The board of regents shall schedule and hold a special meeting as required under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10.1 (a) and (b) and consider a recommendation for removal under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10.1 (c) (1).

(2) If the board of regents fails to take action or declines to recommend removal under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10.1 (c) (1) within 90 days of receiving the written notice from the CUS Board of Directors, the CUS Board of Directors may present the written notice to the Praesidium of the Synod.

(3) The Praesidium, without participation of the First Vice-President of the Synod, shall make an initial determination as to whether the written notice presents sufficient grounds for removal of a member of a board of regents under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10 (2), (8), or (9).

(4) If the Praesidium determines, by majority vote, that the written notice presents sufficient grounds for removal, a three-person panel shall be appointed, consisting of the First Vice-President of Synod, a member of the Council of Presidents appointed by the Council of Presidents, and an additional member who is a member of the Council of Presidents who shall be appointed by the First Vice-President and the member of the Council of Presidents who was appointed by the Council of Presidents.

(5) This panel shall consider the written notice and evidence submitted by the CUS Board of Directors and the board of regents member and make a determination as to whether there is sufficient grounds for removal of the board of regents member under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10 (2), (8), or (9).

(6) If a majority of the panel concludes sufficient grounds exist, it shall make a recommendation to the Synod's Board of Directors. This recommendation shall be considered and acted upon under Bylaw 1.5.7.2.10.1 (c) (2).

(7) If the CUS Board of Directors presents written notice stating cause for removal of more than one member of the board of regents, each written notice shall be handled separately, although if a panel is appointed these can be considered by the same panel.

1.5.7.22.10.2 To the extent that the application of this bylaw is limited by applicable law with respect to the removal of members of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors on which the member serves may recommend the removal and attempt to cause the appropriate procedures under applicable law, these Bylaws, and the governing documents of the affected entity to be followed to permit the removal of such commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors member.

Removal of Officers of the Synod or District from Office

1.5.8~~2~~.11 Officers of the Synod and a district shall discharge the duties of office in good faith. The following are considered cause for removal from office of an officer of the Synod or a district pursuant to this Bylaw, but not from membership in the Synod:

- (1) Incapacity
- (2) Breach of fiduciary responsibilities to the Synod or a district
- (3) Neglect or refusal to perform duties of office
- (4) Conviction of a felony

1.5.8+2.11.1 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, the procedure for removal of an officer of the Synod or a district from office shall be as follows:

- (a) Action for removal of an officer of a district other than a district president shall require written notice to each member of that district’s board of directors at least 30 days prior to a special meeting of the board called for that purpose. A copy of such notice shall be sent to the President and the Secretary of the Synod and to the ecclesiastical supervisor, if applicable.
- (b) Other than in the prior subsection (a), action for removal of an officer of the Synod other than the President of the Synod shall require written notice to each member of the Synod’s Board of Directors at least 30 days prior to a special meeting of the Board called for that purpose. A copy of such notice shall be sent to the President and the Secretary of the Synod and to the ecclesiastical supervisor, if applicable.
- (c) The special meeting provided for herein shall be held no later than 60 days after the provision of the written notice, unless extended by the mutual agreement of the parties.
- (d) Removal from office of an officer of a district, other than a district president, shall be effected by a vote in favor of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members of the district board of directors (excluding the officer in question if a member of the board); and
- (e) Removal from office of an officer of the Synod, other than the Synod President, shall be effected by a vote in favor of the recommendation of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the officer in question if a member of the board) of the Board of Directors of the Synod.
- (f) Removal pursuant to this Bylaw may be appealed by the officer who has been removed from office through the use of the Synod’s dispute resolution process as provided in Bylaw section 1.10.

C. Regulations for Special Purpose Entities

1.5.3 A Special Purpose Entity (SPE), as defined in Bylaw 1.5.1 [c] and further below, shall be subject to the following regulations.

(a) An SPE is an Instrumental Entity other than an agency that is established, acquired, or entered into by corporate Synod and/or one or more agencies (hereafter, “Participant[s]”) to carry out business functions beyond the unaided capacity of its Participant(s) that support, but do not themselves enter into, the purposes outlined in Constitution Article III. An SPE does not call rostered church workers.

(b) Except as specifically provided in these bylaws or its governing documents, the property of a Special Purpose Entity is not property of the Synod. This provision does not exclude Participant(s) or the Synod from retaining rights of reversion or reentry, including those based on use restriction, in the property of the entity. Nor does it exclude from the property of the Synod, as that term is defined in, and to the extent and for the purposes established in, these Bylaws, any equity or ownership interest that the Participant (s) may hold in the entity in a capacity other than those excluded in Bylaw 1.2.1 (r).

(c) Participant(s) are responsible for the oversight and, to the extent specifically defined in SPE governing documents, supervision of the SPE.

(1) Participant(s) shall regularly and promptly review the minutes and financial statements—unaudited and audited, as presented to SPE boards—of their SPE(s).

(2) A Participant board shall facilitate access upon request by the Board of Directors of the Synod, as provided for in Bylaw 3.3.4.10, to the records of any SPE participated in.

1.5.3.1 Establishment of, acquisition of, or entry into a Special Purpose Entity is subject to applicable policies of, and requires that Participant(s) be authorized by, the Synod Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of the Synod may, at its discretion, approve a Special Purpose Entity for a specific purpose and for a limited duration. The approval shall be set forth in a resolution of the Board of Directors adopted in open session, having been made at the request of the Participant(s).

(a) A request to form, acquire, or enter into a Special Purpose Entity must be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Synod by the Participant(s) under Bylaw subsection 1.5.1, above. In addition to the requirements set forth in Bylaw 1.5.1 above and policies adopted by the Board, the request shall include, at a minimum:

1. A description of the purpose of the entity and its intended support for the Participant(s)' assigned Article III mission and ministry responsibilities.
2. A complete draft of entity governing documents, which shall (except as a waiver is requested of the Synod Board of Directors):
 - provide for oversight of entity activities by the Participant(s);
 - indemnify and limit liability for the Synod and Participant(s) for the activities of the entity;
 - require approval of amendments to reserved rights of Participant(s), of Synod, or of Synod members in entity governing documents by the Participant(s) and the Synod Board of Directors; and
 - state the proposed duration of any specific purpose or project of the entity.
3. A risk management plan, including evidence of insurance.
4. Information demonstrating the financial stability of the entity.
5. Identification and characterization of any property of the Synod to be transferred or provided on an initial or ongoing basis to the entity.
6. Assurance by the Participant(s) that they will exercise proper oversight of the entity, including receiving and review annual independent audited or compiled financial statements for the entity.
7. Assurance by the Participant(s) that the entity will not engage in activities contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod or permit property of the entity to be used for such purposes.
8. If applicable, the proposed duration of the Special Purpose Entity and criteria for project completion or termination.

(b) The Board of Directors may authorize Special Purpose Entities of the following types:

(1) Real estate development, redevelopment, or holding, provided that the project both includes features that physically accommodate ministry purposes and involves, at least as a consultant, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

(2) Other categories specifically identified in the published policies of the Board of Directors.

1.5.3.2 Participant(s) shall immediately report to the Board of Directors of the Synod ("Board") the establishment of, acquisition of, or entry into any Special Purpose Entity (all of which must be approved in advance by the Board), and shall report biannually to the Board, in a form it shall specify, on their continued participation in, and the activities and performance of, Special Purpose Entities.

D. Regulations for Passive Investment Entities

1.5.4 A Passive Investment Entity (PIE), as defined in Bylaw 1.5.1 [d] and further below, shall be subject to the following regulations.

(a) A PIE is an Instrumental Entity other than an agency that is established, acquired, or entered into (as more than a diminutive shareholder, which threshold may be further defined by the Board of Directors in its policies) by corporate Synod and/or one or more agencies (hereafter, "Participant(s)"), not to operate or manage an active business or ministry, and not to solicit donations or raise funds for the Participant, but solely to provide Participant(s) a means of passive investment. It may have an operating general partner or member, other than Participant(s), providing investment management day-to-day.

(b) Included as a PIE is an entity in which the LCMS Foundation, or an agency of the Synod with the guidance of the LCMS Foundation, receives an interest (as more than a diminutive shareholder) by gift, bequest, or devise. Such interest is not to be held beyond a period of time fixed by the Board of Directors of the Synod in its policies.

(c) Except as specifically provided for in these bylaws or its governing documents, the property of a PIE is not property of the Synod. This provision does not exclude Participant(s) or the Synod from retaining, where applicable, rights of reversion or reentry, including those based on use restriction, in the property of the entity. Nor does it exclude from the property of the Synod, as that term is defined in, and to the extent and for the purposes established in, these Bylaws, any equity or ownership interest the Participant(s) may hold in the entity in a capacity other than those excluded in Bylaw 1.2.1 (r).

(d) Participant(s) are responsible for the oversight and, to the extent specifically defined in PIE governing documents, supervision of the PIE.

(1) Participant(s) shall regularly and promptly review the minutes, if available, and financial statements—unaudited and audited, as presented to PIE boards—of their PIE(s).

(2) Participant board(s) shall facilitate access, at the same level possible to them, upon request by the Board of Directors of the Synod, as provided for in Bylaw 3.3.4.10, to the records of any PIE participated in by the Participant(s) collectively at a majority level.

1.5.4.1 Participant(s) shall report to the Board of Directors of the Synod (“Board”) the establishment of, acquisition of, or entry into any Passive Investment Entity, and shall report on a biannual basis to the Board, in a form it shall specify, on their continued participation in, and the activities and performance of, Passive Investment Entities.

(a) Establishment, acquisition, or entry into a Passive Investment Entity in which Participant(s) have majority ownership shall be reported no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Board of Directors. Excluded from this requirement and subject to (b) instead are PIEs as described in Bylaw 1.5.4 (b) and PIEs in which Participant funds invested are excluded from the definition of property of the Synod in Bylaw 1.2.1 (r).

(b) Establishment, acquisition, or entry into any other Passive Investment Entity shall be reported in the next biannual report.

1.5.4.2 Specifically reserved to the Board of Directors of the Synod is the right to regulate by its policies, as it sees the need arise, the establishment of, acquisition of, or entry into Passive Investment Entities, excepting those in which Participant funds invested are excluded from the definition of property of the Synod in Bylaw 1.2.1 (r).

and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw section 3.3.4.7 be amended as follows:

Board of Directors

...

3.3.4.7 The Board of Directors shall serve as the custodian of all the property of the Synod as defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (r). Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, it shall have the authority and responsibility with respect to the property of the Synod as is generally vested in and imposed upon a board of directors of a corporation.

(a) It shall, however, delegate to district boards of directors the authority to buy, sell, and encumber real and personal property in the ordinary course of performing the functions which the district carries on for the Synod in accord with general policies (which shall be applicable to all districts) established from time to time by itself or the Synod in convention.

(b) It may, however, delegate to any agency of the Synod powers and duties with respect to property of the Synod for which such agency of the Synod has direct supervisory responsibility.

(c) Such delegation shall be in writing and shall be subject to change at any time by the Synod’s Board of Directors provided that reasonable deliberations, as determined by the Board of Directors, take place with such agency prior to the change.

(d) Regarding the Synod’s colleges, universities, and seminaries, the board shall approve capital projects in relation to campus property management agreements and institutional master plans, and shall establish and monitor criteria for determining institutional viability, fiscal and otherwise.

(e) An agency may submit any question related to the status of assets as property of the Synod to the Board of Directors of the Synod, which shall determine whether such assets are property of the Synod.

and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaw section 3.6.1.1 be amended, to allow the Board of Directors not only to create new synodwide corporate entities but also to assign new responsibilities to those existing, as follows:

~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

3.6 Synodwide Corporate Entities

General Principles

...

3.6.1.1 Formation of a synodwide corporate entity, or assignment of a new area of responsibility to an existing one, shall require the approval of the Synod in convention or the Board of Directors of the Synod.

(a) At least six (6) months prior to such approval of the formation of a synodwide corporate entity, or sixty (60) days prior to the assignment of a new area of responsibility to an existing corporate entity, an announcement thereof shall be given in an official publication of the Synod together with a detailed

1 explanation of the problems or factors which make the formation of the proposed synodwide corporate
2 entity or assignment of new responsibility advisable or necessary.

3 (b) The announcement shall include an invitation for members of the Synod to submit comments
4 thereon to the Board of Directors of the Synod.

5 (c) If the Board of Directors forms a new entity or assigns a new area of responsibility, it shall report
6 its action to the Synod promptly and in a special report to the next Synod convention and, if it is in its
7 judgment in the best interest of the Synod, it shall propose a Bylaw amendment reflecting the new entity
8 or assignment to the subsequent convention of the Synod.

9 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
10 *Committee, estimate at \$200,000 the incremental annual cost of the Synod governance and compliance position added to*
11 *manage related processes and information, though this position is needed and will be helpful for other reasons, as well*
12 *(estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

13 **To Amend Bylaws Exclusive to Lutheran Church Extension Fund to Clarify That It May**
14 **Provide Real Estate Evaluation and Redevelopment Services in Support of Synod Mission and**
15 **Ministry**

16 **RESOLUTION 9-12**

17 Overture 9-08 (CW, 467–68)

18 **Rationale**

19 Most congregations and ministries within the Synod are owners of real estate. Many of these ministries need assistance
20 evaluating their property so they can steward their assets wisely. In some cases, they may not have need for some or all of
21 their real estate. In many cases, sale of the real estate is the best option to raise funds for future operations or to wind up
22 affairs in an orderly way. In other cases, ministries want to keep some of the real estate to continue operations and divest
23 of other portions. Such divestiture may entail a sale or lease of the property to either raise funds for continued operations,
24 maintain ministry activity in the divested property, or both. Redevelopment of the real estate may occur with retained or
25 divested property.

26 In most cases, ministries do not possess expertise in the evaluation, redevelopment, or repurposing of real estate. Lutheran
27 Church Extension Fund (LCEF) has decades of experience in assisting ministries in evaluating, acquiring, developing, and
28 selling real estate through its church extension activities. LCEF has expanded this expertise in the last few years by hiring
29 a team of individuals with extensive real estate consulting and redevelopment experience. LCEF can provide expanded
30 real estate services that are of great value to the ministries of the Synod.

31 The requested bylaw changes are exclusive to LCEF and are necessary to clarify that it is within LCEF's purposes to
32 provide such real estate services to ministries within the Synod.

33 Therefore be it

34 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.6.4 be amended as follows:

35 **PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**

36 ***The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod***

37 3.6.4 The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod, as established on June 15, 1978, as a corporate
38 entity under the laws of the State of Missouri, is operated by its members and Board of Directors, in
39 accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and corporate Bylaws, to ~~further the objectives and duties of~~
40 ~~the church extension fund by providing~~ provide financial, real estate, and other related resources and ~~related~~
41 services for ministry, witness, and outreach within the Synod and, as approved by the Synod Board of
42 Directors, beyond the Synod: (1) to and within partner churches with which the Synod is in altar and pulpit
43 fellowship; or (2) upon the recommendation of the President of Synod, to Lutheran entities formed and
44 operating outside of the United States that assist in fulfilling the Synod's ministry and mission objectives in
45 foreign countries.

46 and be it further

47 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 3.6.4.4.1 be amended as follows:

1 ~~PRESENT/PROPOSED~~ WORDING

2 3.6.4.4.1 The assets of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall be used exclusively to provide
3 financing and services for the acquisition of sites, for the construction of facilities, for the purchase of
4 buildings and equipment, for operating expenses, for professional church worker education, for the
5 residential housing needs of professional church workers, for promoting strategic ministry planning and
6 assisting in capital campaigns, for the evaluation and redevelopment of real estate; and for other purposes
7 approved by its governing board and the Synod Board of Directors, which purposes shall be consistent with
8 the ministry and mission of the Synod.

9 **To Adopt Recommendations of 2023 Res. 9-06A Task Force on Electoral Circuit Parameters**10 **RESOLUTION 9-13**

11 Reports R59–59.2 (*CW*, 143–60); Overtures 9-19–20, 33 (*CW*, 476–77, 485)

12 **Rationale**

13 2023 Resolution 9-06A, “To Appoint Task Force to Evaluate Current Electoral Circuit Parameters,” (2023 *Proceedings*,
14 206–9) was adopted with the acknowledgement that “due to demographic changes over the past several convention cycles,
15 it has become necessary for more and more visitation circuits either to request an exemption from the President of the
16 Synod or to be combined in order to qualify to meet the parameters for an electoral circuit. The result has been a gradual
17 decrease in the number of electoral circuits within the Synod and the number of delegates attending conventions.” The
18 charge to the task force was described as to “consider the parameters for the electoral circuits which select delegates to
19 conventions of the Synod to determine if they are adequate as they are or should be changed.”

20 In preparation for the first meeting, the Secretary of the Synod drafted a whitepaper (later updated) with the history of
21 selecting delegates; trends in convention delegation size and exceptions requested and granted; and a view toward the
22 shape of the future based upon past and current demographics. The task force met nine times from October 2024 to
23 December 2025 to review the charge by the 2023 Synod convention, offer a report, and recommend to the Synod changes
24 to the Bylaws to address the concerns raised.

25 The task force commissioned several surveys to determine the health and viability of the current visitation circuits and the
26 opinions of pastors, circuit visitors, district presidents, and the Praesidium on the size and effectiveness of Synod
27 conventions in view of their purpose “to afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the
28 communication of vital information” (Bylaw 3.1.1). The general conclusions from these surveys both set the direction for
29 the work of the task force and undergirded the recommendations made in their report.

30 The surveys revealed a profound desire on the part of all to strengthen visitation circuits and the functioning of winkels
31 (circuit pastors’ conferences). They also indicated that when the number of active participants dropped below five actively
32 serving pastors (with the emeritus pastors who reside in the circuit), it directly impacted the health and effectiveness of
33 the visitation circuit. With respect to the electoral circuits, the surveys found they need to be flexible enough to provide
34 adequate and fair representation at the Synod convention and yet maintain a viable connection to the visitation circuit
35 wherever possible.

36 The discussions and proposed changes in the Bylaws recommended by the task force flowed from the concrete data of the
37 whitepaper, the opinions of 1,682 parish pastors, 772 candidate or emeritus pastors, 393 circuit visitors, and 27 district
38 presidents, and the combined experience of the members of the task force across the regions of the Synod and within the
39 districts and circuits where they reside.

40 Even early on, the task force felt the urgency of the task and the consequences of making no change to the status quo.
41 Failure to make any changes would create an untenable situation due to the rise in the number of exceptions for electoral
42 circuits from triennium to triennium and the increasing difficulties in forming circuits within the current parameters of the
43 Bylaws. An increasing number of electoral circuits for the 2026 Synod convention and beyond are approaching the
44 minimum numbers of communicant members required to constitute an electoral circuit (1,500) and others are very close
45 to the maximum number of congregations allowed (20). Details of these trends are outlined in the whitepapers along with
46 projections for the situation three to six years beyond the 2026 Synod convention.

47 Having considered all the foregoing, the task force made the following proposal to the 2026 Synod convention:

48 1. Change the Bylaw 3.1.2 standard from *congregations* to *parishes*;

1 the President” (Const. Art. VIII B 2), but there is no obvious alternative to the district president as “convener” of a
2 special session of a district in Const. Art. XII 15.

3 The CCM commented, “This presents something of a conundrum on the district level, should a district find that it needs
4 to call its president to account and directly remove him from office *for cause* in a circumstance where removal *from the*
5 *roster of the Synod* (which would trigger his removal from office) is not called for.”

6 The CCM referred this matter to the Commission on Handbook (COH) and the two, through the Secretary, initiated
7 discussion of the matter by the Council of Presidents, a discussion that resulted in no proposal. The COH found it
8 incongruous with the provisions of Const. Art. XI A 1–4 that a district president might be able to prevent the body from
9 convening that might call him urgently to give account of his stewardship. There being no other explicit means (other than
10 the President of the Synod invoking the procedure of Bylaw section 2.15 to remove the district president from the roster
11 of the Synod and, thereby, from office) for this to occur, the following constitutional amendment is proposed:

12 Therefore be it

13 *Resolved*, That Constitution Article XII 15 be amended as follows:

14 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

15 **Article XII Districts of the Synod and Their Regulation**

16 ...

17 15. In cases of urgent necessity a special session of the district president is empowered to convene special sessions
18 of his district; he must, however, previously have obtained consent of at least a majority of the voting members
19 of the district after having informed them and the President of the Synod of the purpose of the intended special
20 session may be called:

21 a. by the district president with the consent of at least a majority of the voting members of the district;

22 b. by the circuit forums in three-fourths of the circuits of the district without the consent of the district presidents;

23 or

24 c. by a majority of the vice-presidents and three-fourths of the circuit visitors of the district without the consent
25 of the district president.

26 All congregations and other members of the district and the President of the Synod must be notified 30 days in
27 advance and told for what purpose this extra meeting is being convened.

28 and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the above amendment be submitted, according to Const. Art. XV 4, to the congregations of the Synod
30 for ratification.

31 **To Increase Congregation Participation in Election of Synod President**

32 **RESOLUTION 9-15**

33 Overtures 9-21–22 (CW, 477–80)

34 WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention changed the longstanding practice of electing the Synod President at the
35 convention and conferred that right to congregations using electronic voting (2010 Res. 8-17, “To Elect the Synod
36 President,” [Proceedings, 167]); and

37 WHEREAS, The move to direct representation has seen decreased participation in every election since this process was
38 adopted, to wit:

- 39 • The 2013 presidential election saw 8,201 registered electors and 6,432 votes cast, representing 78.43 percent voted;
40 (2013 *Today’s Business*, 2:221)
- 41 • The 2016 presidential election saw 7,348 registered electors and 6,157 votes cast, representing 83.79 percent voted;
42 (2016 *Today’s Business*, 2:334)
- 43 • The 2019 presidential election saw 6,449 registered electors and 5,823 votes cast, representing 90.29 percent voted;
44 (2019 *Today’s Business*, 2B:239)
- 45 • The 2023 presidential election saw 6,053 registered electors and 5,000 votes cast, representing 82.60 percent voted;
46 (2023 *Today’s Business*, 2B:286);

1 and

2 WHEREAS, “The end-to-end participation rate of votes cast per theoretically registerable elector has declined gradually
3 through the decade from an initial high of 62.16 percent in 2013 to a new low of 53.78 percent in 2023, with a greater
4 decline in this election, particularly among lay electors” (2023 TB 2B:287); and

5 WHEREAS, 2019 Resolution 9-16 amended Bylaw 3.12.2.3 by allowing the district president to know the registration
6 status of his congregations for the sole purpose of encouraging their participation (*Proc.*, 327–28); and

7 WHEREAS, Congregations with updated contact information (in particular, email addresses) on file in the Synod
8 database (LCMS Information Support Network [LISN]) have greater rates of participation; therefore be it

9 *Resolved*, That congregations be encouraged to complete their Congregation Profile in LISN, including current email
10 contact information for their lay leadership, and update it annually during their statistical reports (Bylaw 1.3.4.3); and be
11 it further

12 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention direct all district presidents to encourage participation in the Synod President
13 election by educating all congregations and their pastors in their districts of their right to vote and the process by which
14 they can exercise their right to vote (Bylaw 4.4.8); and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the districts in convention allot time to educate their respective districts about the process for the
16 election of the Synod President; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Council of Presidents utilize the information from the Secretary of the Synod about the registration
18 process at their November and February meetings in the twelve months prior to the Synod convention; and be it finally

19 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention direct all circuit visitors to work with the vacant congregations in their circuits
20 to help them register to vote and to understand the process by which they can exercise their right to vote (Bylaw 5.2.3.[h]).

21 **To Direct Board of Directors, Board for National Mission, Board for International Mission,
22 and Chief Mission Officer to Review Overture 9-11**

23 **RESOLUTION 9-16**

24 Overture 9-11 (*CW*, 471–73)

25 WHEREAS, the Board of Directors (BOD) desires to enhance the coordination and efficiency of the Synod’s mission
26 operations to better align the responsibility of the Board for National Mission (BNM) and Board for International Mission
27 (BIM) with the authority given to the BNM and BIM, and enhance the ability of the BNM and BIM to better advance the
28 Synod’s operations both within the United States and worldwide; therefore be it

29 *Resolved*, That the BOD, BNM, BIM, and the Chief Mission Officer together review Overture 9-11 and recommend
30 structural changes to the Synod convention to accomplish those goals; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That they bring these recommendations to the 2029 Synod convention.

32 **To Respectfully Decline Overtures**

33 **RESOLUTION 9-17**

34 Overtures 9-17, 23–32, 36–40, 44–45, 48, 52 (*CW*, 475–76, 480–95)

35 WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons,
36 that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

37 *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 9-17	To Initiate Proposal to Realign Districts	Bylaw 4.1.1.3 not followed
Ov. 9-23	To Affirm Regional Selection of Board Members	Bylaws 3.3.4.1, 3.8.2.3, and 3.8.3.3 already reflect the intent of the overture

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 9-24	To Create Task Force to Develop Overture for Change in Regional Vice-President Selection	All vice-presidents, in line of succession, should be elected by the Synod
Ov. 9-25	To Amend Bylaws to Allow Regional Delegates to Select Regional Vice-Presidents	Constitution Article X A 2: Vice-presidents are officers of Synod, not only officers of a region
Ov. 9-26	To Develop Overture for Change in Regional Vice-President Selection	Const. Art. X A 2: Vice-presidents are officers of Synod, not only officers of a region
Ov. 9-27	To Appoint Task Force to Improve District Representation on Synod Boards, Boards of Regents, and Commissions	Addressed by Bylaw section 3.12
Ov. 9-28	To Amend Bylaw 3.2.4.1 to Limit Terms of Office for President, First Vice-President, Regional Vice-Presidents, and Secretary	To place a limit upon the Synod President that does not apply to his representative District Presidents is a policy inconsistency. Tenure is limited by being up for election each Convention.
Ov. 9-29	To Amend Bylaw 3.2.4.1 to Establish Term Limits for Elected Synod Officers	To place a limit upon the Synod President that does not apply to his representative District Presidents is a policy inconsistency. Tenure is limited by being up for election each Convention.
Ov. 9-30	To Amend Bylaw 3.2.4 to Establish Term Limits for Synod President and Vice-Presidents	To place a limit upon the Synod President that does not apply to his representative District Presidents is a policy inconsistency. Tenure is limited by being up for election each Convention.
Ov. 9-31	To Give Commissioned Ministers the Franchise and To Study Equal Lay and Clergy Representation on Boards and Other Bodies	Addressed by Const. Art. IX and 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-32	To Amend Constitution Article XII 10 a to Provide Option of Appointing Ordained or Commissioned Minister as District Convention Rostered Voting Delegate	Addressed by Const. Art. IX and 2023 Res. 9-08A
Ov. 9-36	To Amend Bylaws to Eliminate Ability of Circuit Forum to Submit Overtures	It is important to strengthen circuit forums
Ov. 9-37	To Amend Bylaw 3.1.6.2 to Allow Pastoral Circuit Meetings and Teacher Groups to Submit Overtures	Circuit forums and official district conferences of ordained and/or commissioned ministers can already submit overtures
Ov. 9-38	To Amend the Bylaws to Require Sixty-Percent Affirmative Vote for All Non-Election Matters	Const. Art. VIII C and XIV establish thresholds for passage
Ov. 9-39	To Bring Resolutions with Strong District Support to Convention Floor	Addressed by Bylaw 3.1.6.2
Ov. 9-40	To Create Process for Initiatives and Referenda	Addressed by Bylaw 3.1.6.2
Ov. 9-44	To Amend Bylaw 4.2.2 to Grant Lay Vote to Every Congregation at District Conventions	Addressed by Bylaw 3.1.6.2
Ov. 9-45	To Permit Majority Voting in Electronic Decisions for Synod Boards and Agencies	Overture misstates distinction between voting without a meeting and voting during a meeting held electronically based on Missouri corporate law

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 9-48	To Affirm and Use Biblical Terminology concerning Ministry	Addressed by CCM Op. 25-3053; Op. 25-3053A
Ov. 9-52	To Declare Commission on Constitutional Matters Unconstitutional and Void All Its Opinions	Constitution does not specifically exclude judicial powers

1
2 **10. ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERVISION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

3 **To Seek Commission on Theology and Church Relations Opinion**
4 **regarding Usage of Matthew 18:15–20**

5 **RESOLUTION 10-01**

6 Overtures 10-10, 12 (*CW*, 505–7)

7 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, being faithful to Scripture, acknowledges, “All Scripture is
8 breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim.
9 3:16); and

10 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture distinguishes between private sins that are first to be rebuked privately (Matt. 18:15); and
11 public sins that are to be rebuked publicly (1 Tim. 5:20); and

12 WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.10 and Bylaw 2.14 make multiple references to Matthew 18:15 as support for guiding,
13 respectively, the dispute resolution process and expulsion of members from the Synod; and

14 WHEREAS, There is disagreement as to whether Matthew 18:15 must be followed when responding to public sin, as
15 required by Bylaw 2.14 and its subsections; and

16 WHEREAS, Luther’s Large Catechism states, “But where the sin is quite public, so that the judge and everybody know
17 about it, you can without any sin shun the offender and let him go his own way, because he has brought himself into
18 disgrace. You may also publicly testify about him. For when a matter is public in the daylight, there can be no slandering
19 or false judging or testifying ... Where the sin is public, the rebuke also must be public, that everyone may learn to guard
20 against it” (LC 1 [Eighth Commandment] 284); and

21 WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) released the 2006 report “Public Rebuke of
22 Public Sin”; and

23 WHEREAS, It is fitting and salutary for the Synod, from time to time, to reexamine its polity and practice in light of
24 Scripture and the Confessions, that we may repent where needed and strengthen what is good; therefore be it

25 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR to study Matthew 18:15–20 as it applies to public and private
26 sin with special consideration of the 2006 Report “Public Rebuke of Public Sin”; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That this new CTCR report provide comment as to Matthew 18:15–20 and its relationship or implications,
28 if any, to the practices of maintaining ecclesiastical order and practices of church polity in their historical and contemporary
29 applications; and be it further

30 *Resolved*, That this report be made available to the Synod as a whole prior to the 2029 Synod convention.

31 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
32 *Committee, anticipate no significant incremental costs to the Synod as the activity is understood to be within the existing*
33 *scope and budget of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

34 **To Create a Task Force to Clarify Relationship Between Bylaw 1.10 and 2.14 and Consider**
35 **Bylaw Changes for Dispute Resolution (Bylaw 1.10) and Expulsion of Congregations or**
36 **Individuals from Membership in the Synod (Bylaw 2.14)**

37 **RESOLUTION 10-02**

38 Overtures 10-06, 08, 12–17, 20–23 (*CW*, 503–4, 506–13)

39 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is united in a common confession of Holy Scripture and the
40 Lutheran Confessions and is called to maintain unity in doctrine and judgment while addressing disputes in a fraternal and
41 timely manner (Matt. 5:23–24; 1 Cor. 1:10). Such reconciliation serves both the Gospel and the well-being of the church;
42 and

1 WHEREAS, 1 Cor. 1:10 says, “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree,
2 and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment;” and

3 WHEREAS, The current dispute resolution process, codified by Bylaw 1.10, was established to resolve disputes within
4 the church while avoiding secular litigation; in practice, however, the process has become lengthy, complex, and costly;
5 its extensive procedural requirements and frequent reliance on in-person meetings can cause disputes to take years to
6 address or to remain unresolved altogether; and

7 WHEREAS, The relationship between Bylaw 1.10 and 2.14 (hereinafter referred to as 1.10/2.14 processes) is frequently
8 confusing and the processes need clarification; and

9 WHEREAS, Numerous overtures to this Synod convention (referenced above) indicate the necessity

- 10 • to clarify the relationship between the Bylaws concerned in the 1.10/2.14 processes;
- 11 • to clarify appropriate responses and differences in public vs. private disputes and/or grievances; and
- 12 • to make the 1.10/2.14 processes more efficient and timely to complete: less costly, less complex, less cumbersome,
13 and more transparent; and to address issues of required face-to-face meetings versus electronic communication;

14 therefore, be it

15 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention create a task force to study and recommend changes, if needed, to the
16 1.10/2.14 processes; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the task force consist of the following members:

- 18 • the President of Synod or his designee;
- 19 • the Secretary of Synod or his designee;
- 20 • three district presidents and two district secretaries selected by the Council of Presidents to represent each of the
21 geographical regions of the Synod;

22 and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That this task force seek the input of experienced lay panel facilitators and reconcilers; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That this task force, in its study, include special attention to changes in these Bylaws, address the concerns
25 expressed including, but not limited to, the process being too costly, cumbersome, lengthy, and inefficient; and provide
26 clear guidance regarding private/public processes and face-to-face versus electronic communications; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the report of recommendations made by the task force be made available to the congregations and
28 pastors of the Synod no less than nine months prior to the 2029 Synod convention for the purpose of receiving input,
29 comment, and feedback prior to publishing the 2029 *Convention Workbook*; and be it finally

30 *Resolved*, That the report and all feedback be assigned to the proper floor committee for the purpose of adopting
31 resolutions to present at the 2029 Synod convention.

32 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
33 *Committee, estimate an incremental cost of \$90,000–\$120,000 for task force meetings (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7*
34 *[g]).*

35 **To Respond to Sexual Misconduct by Rostered Workers and Make Provision** 36 **for Spiritual Care of Those Affected**

37 **RESOLUTION 10-03**

38 Overtures 10-27–30 (*CW*, 515–18)

39 WHEREAS, God establishes the Office of the Holy Ministry for the care of His people (John 20:21–23; 1 Tim. 3:1–7;
40 Titus 1:5–9), and those who serve in this office are called to lives that are “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2); and

41 WHEREAS, Offices auxiliary to the Office of the Holy Ministry have been established by the church and entrusted to
42 fallible men and women who must remain above reproach for the sake of Christ’s Church; and

1 WHEREAS, The Synod, in seeking to be faithful to these vocations, has established a process of ecclesiastical
2 supervision for the oversight and discipline of church workers; and

3 WHEREAS, The Synod uses the term *sexual misconduct* to describe a range of sinful behaviors reflecting an ungodly
4 life (Constitution Article XII 8) that gives offense to the victims, the congregation or institution, all affected individuals,
5 and the church’s witness to the world (cf. “offensive conduct,” Const. Art. XIII 1); and

6 WHEREAS, A member accused of such an ungodly life or a giving of offense may resign from the roster at any time,
7 removing himself or herself from ecclesiastical supervision; and

8 WHEREAS, The need for spiritual care continues for all involved in an instance of sexual misconduct, regardless of the
9 roster status of the accused; and

10 WHEREAS, Member congregations, schools, or other calling bodies are required to consult with their district president
11 before issuing a call (Bylaw 2.5.1) and may not issue a call to a worker who has resigned or been removed from the roster
12 (Bylaws 2.5.2–3); workers who have resigned or been removed from the roster are no longer commended by the Synod
13 for ministry; and member congregations, schools, or other calling bodies considering being served (without a call) by an
14 individual who may have resigned or been removed from the roster may also contact their district president for counsel;
15 therefore be it

16 *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention direct the Chairman of the Council of Presidents (COP) to appoint a task
17 force to continue the work assigned by 2023 Resolution 10-05A, “To Speak to Spiritual Care of Victims of Sexual
18 Misconduct by Individual Members of the Synod” (*Proc.*, 219); and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the task force be comprised of no more than six individuals, including:

- 20 • the Secretary of Synod or his designee;
- 21 • the Synod’s legal counsel;
- 22 • a member of the COP;
- 23 • a female commissioned minister;
- 24 • female lay representation, giving special consideration to victims of rostered worker sexual misconduct or
25 experienced therapy professionals in this field;

26 and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That this task force be encouraged to seek the input of outside consultants with expertise in sexual
28 misconduct issues and the testimony of victims of rostered worker sexual misconduct; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the task force will:

- 30 • review current bylaws, manuals, procedures, and opinions from the Commission on Constitutional Matters
31 pertaining to sexual misconduct;
- 32 • recommend revisions, if any, to applicable bylaws regarding cases of sexual misconduct;
- 33 • contribute to continued refinement of advisory procedures and guidelines for ecclesiastical supervisors;
- 34 • recommend resources to congregations and institutions to address the spiritual needs of the victims, the accused, the
35 congregation(s) or institution(s) involved, and all affected individuals; and
- 36 • recommend resources and encourage training of all rostered workers and of those preparing for church work
37 vocations in sexual misconduct awareness and prevention; and be it further

38 *Resolved*, That the task force report recommendations to the 2029 Synod convention; and be it finally

39 *Resolved*, That in cases of alleged sexual misconduct, regardless of the roster status of the accused, the district
40 president will assess the spiritual needs and make provision for the spiritual care of the victims, the accused, the
41 congregation(s) or institution(s) involved, and all affected individuals.

42 *The Chief Financial Officer and LCMS Accounting and Financial Services staff, in consultation with the Finance*
43 *Committee, estimate an incremental cost of \$200,000–\$225,000 for 8–10 task force meetings and use of legal counsel*
44 *and other external consultants (estimate required by Bylaw 3.1.7 [g]).*

**To Seek Unity and Peace in the Synod and to Establish a Practical Statement
for God-Pleasing Use of Digital Communications**

RESOLUTION 10-04

Report R62.6 (*CW*, 232–34); Overtures 4-43–44, 49, 10-04–05 (*CW*, 326–28, 502–3)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for the unity of His Church so that the world might believe He has been sent by the Father (John 17:11, 20–23) and declared that all people would know we are his disciples by the love we have for one another (John 13:35); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul enjoins God’s people to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1–3); and

WHEREAS, The first objective listed in Article III of the Synod Constitution is to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy”; and

WHEREAS, Unity in the Church is a gift from God (Rom. 15:5–6) which we should humbly seek from Him in prayer; and

WHEREAS, The Eighth Commandment forbids bearing false witness against our neighbor and commands that we defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way (SC I, Eighth Commandment); and

WHEREAS, Luther’s explanation of the Eighth Commandment in the Small and Large Catechisms warns against gossip and slander and calls for appropriate, orderly channels when confronting sin (SC I, Eighth Commandment; LC I [Eighth Commandment]); and

WHEREAS, Division and acrimony between Christians compromises the witness of the Church to the world and may impede the proclamation of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, there are individuals and organizations that use social media platforms to publicly disparage the character of others, demonizing and dismissing their humanity; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), especially in its 2019 report, *A Snapshot of Trending Tools: Christians and Social Media* and its 2024 report, *Uses of Online Technology in the Church: Study Materials* has recognized the dangers that exist when using digital technologies as a means to critique fellow Christians and intervene in our agreed upon processes for resolving disputes; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention strongly urge people across the church to pray fervently, both in corporate worship and as individuals, for the unity and health of the Synod, believing that all things are possible with God (Phil. 4:13); and be it further

Resolved, that the Synod in convention encourage all rostered workers and laypeople to commit themselves anew to guarding their tongues and keyboards, that we may “[speak] the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) and avoid harming Christ’s flock through uncharitable or disorderly speech; and be it further

Resolved, that those using pseudonymous accounts for the purpose of sowing discord within Synod be encouraged to repent, delete their accounts, and confess to their pastor or ecclesiastical supervisor to receive absolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod call on individuals to “[bear] with one another in love” (Eph. 4:2), by providing forgiveness, by speaking well of each other, by praying for one another, by seeking peace, and by explaining everything in the kindest way; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its rostered workers, congregations, and laity to avoid using social media to express their disagreements, and for the sake of theological clarity, pastoral care, and a spirit of reconciliation, seek in-person opportunities to engage each other in civil and respectful conversations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR, in consultation with the Council of Presidents, to prepare a theological and pastoral statement addressing:

- the Eighth Commandment in the digital age;
- the proper handling of accusations against pastors and congregations;

- 1 • the appropriate and inappropriate uses of social media, blogs, podcasts, and similar media in relation to ecclesiastical
- 2 supervision and discipline;
- 3 • the dangers of anonymous or pseudonymous attacks; and
- 4 • the responsibility of Christians to refrain from sharing unverified accusations;

5 and be it finally

6 *Resolved*, that the CTCR include this work in its report to the next Synod convention.

7 **To Amend Bylaw 4.2.4 regarding Installation of District Presidents**

8 **RESOLUTION 10-05**

9 President’s Report, Part 2 (*TB*, 1:35)

10 WHEREAS, The President of Synod or his representative reports to each district convention of the Synod (Bylaw 4.2.4);
11 and

12 WHEREAS, It is the desirable practice that the elected or re-elected district president be installed before the conclusion
13 of the district convention; therefore be it

14 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 4.2.4 be amended as follows:

15 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

16 **4.2 District Conventions**

17 ...

18 4.2.4 The President of the Synod or his representative shall report on the condition and affairs of the Synod. He
19 shall also deliver the sermon at the opening or convention service. He shall also install or reinstall the elected
20 or re-elected district president prior to the conclusion of the district convention in which he is elected. The
21 district president shall assume office upon a date certain in accordance with the bylaws of the district or
22 practices of the district.

23 **To Amend Bylaw 2.11.2.2 (c)**

24 **RESOLUTION 10-06**

25 Overtures 10-38–39 (*CW*, 520–21)

26 WHEREAS, The 2023 Synod convention adopted Resolution 10-06, “To Amend Bylaw 2.11.2.2 regarding Candidate
27 Status,” that moved the filing deadline for the required candidate annual report from January 31 to July 31; and

28 WHEREAS, Annual reports for emeriti remain due on January 31; and

29 WHEREAS, Many district offices find it more efficient to request and process both candidate and emeriti annual reports
30 simultaneously; and

31 WHEREAS, The preparation and conduct of both district and Synod conventions coincide with this annual reporting
32 time period two out of every three years; therefore be it

33 *Resolved*, That Bylaw 2.11.2.2 (c) be amended as follows:

34 ~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

35 *Candidate*

36 2.11.2.2 A “candidate” member is one who is eligible to perform the duties of any of the offices of ministry specified
37 in Bylaw section 2.11 but who is not currently an active member or an emeritus member.

38 ...

39 (c) The candidate shall, by ~~July~~January 31, make an annual report to the district president who shall
40 determine the member’s eligibility to remain on candidate status. The candidate’s report shall include
41 current contact information and address the criteria for remaining on candidate status.

To Respectfully Decline Overtures

RESOLUTION 10-07

Overtures 10-07, 11, 18–19, 26, 33 (*CW*, 504, 506, 511, 514, 519)

WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons, that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Overture</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 10-07	To Establish an Independent Appeals Panel in Cases Involving the President's Decisions	Action called for is addressed by Bylaws 2.14.9 and 2.14.9.1
Ov. 10-11	To Amend Bylaw 4.4.6 (c) to Require Reporting Complaints to Subjects	Overture provides insufficient rationale of theology and practice for consideration
Ov. 10-18	To Require No One to Participate in the Dispute Resolution Process	Overture contravenes Bylaw 1.10.2 and contains inaccurate or confusing information
Ov. 10-19	To Allow Parties to Delay Hearing to Await Commission Opinion	Action called for is addressed by Bylaw 1.10.18.1 (h)(2)
Ov. 10-26	To Amend Bylaw 2.13.3.2 to Make Restriction Appeals Public Record and to Allow Further Review	Would attempt to create a new appeals process that is otherwise not documented
Ov. 10-33	To Amend Bylaw 2.10.3 to Allow District Presidents to Share Issues Prior to Installation	Overture incorrectly refers to Bylaw 2.10.3, which refers to only ordination and initial calls and not all calls as implied by the overture

PROPOSED RESOLUTION CROSS-REFERENCE

The following table indicates the actions proposed by floor committees for each of the overtures contained in the *Convention Workbook* and in *Today's Business*, 1st Edition.

Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)
Ov. 1-01	Res. 1-01	Ov. 3-01	Res. 3-02	Ov. 4-32	Res. 4-04
Ov. 1-02	Res. 1-03	Ov. 3-02	Res. 3-01	Ov. 4-33	Res. 4-04
Ov. 1-03	Res. 1-03	Ov. 3-03	Res. 3-03	Ov. 4-34	Res. 4-04
Ov. 1-04	Res. 1-12	Ov. 3-04	Res. 3-03, Res. 3-07	Ov. 4-35	Res. 4-04
Ov. 1-05	Res. 1-12	Ov. 3-05	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-36	Res. 5-12
Ov. 1-06	Res. 1-07	Ov. 3-06	Res. 3-05	Ov. 4-37	Omnibus B
Ov. 1-07	Omnibus A	Ov. 3-07	Res. 3-04	Ov. 4-38	Res. 4-05
Ov. 1-08	Res. 1-05	Ov. 3-08	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-39	Res. 4-05
Ov. 1-09	Res. 1-06	Ov. L3-09	Res. 3-06	Ov. 4-40	Res. 4-06
Ov. 1-10	Res. 1-06, Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-01	Res. 4-03	Ov. 4-41	Res. 4-06
Ov. 1-11	Omnibus B	Ov. 4-02	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-42	Res. 4-06
Ov. 1-12	Res. 1-10	Ov. 4-03	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-43	Res. 10-04
Ov. 1-13	Res. 1-09, Res. 1-12	Ov. 4-04	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-44	Res. 10-04
Ov. 1-14	Res. 1-15	Ov. 4-05	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-45	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-15	Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-06	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-46	Res. 4-06
Ov. 1-16	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-07	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-47	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-17	Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-08	Res. 4-03	Ov. 4-48	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-18	Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-09	Res. 4-01	Ov. 4-49	Res. 10-04
Ov. 1-19	Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-10	Res. 4-03	Ov. 4-50	Omnibus A
Ov. 1-20	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-11	Res. 4-03	Ov. 4-51	Res. 4-09
Ov. 1-21	Res. 1-09, Res. 1-12	Ov. 4-12	Res. 4-02	Ov. 4-52	Res. 4-09
Ov. 1-22	Res. 1-02, Res. 1-10	Ov. 4-13	Res. 4-08	Ov. 4-53	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-23	Res. 1-02, Res. 1-08	Ov. 4-14	Res. 4-08	Ov. 4-54	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-24	Res. 1-11	Ov. 4-15	Res. 4-08	Ov. 4-55	Res. 4-07
Ov. 1-25	Res. 1-11	Ov. 4-16	Res. 4-08	Ov. 4-56	Res. 4-10
Ov. 1-26	Omnibus B	Ov. 4-17	Res. 4-08	Ov. L4-57	Res. 4-04
Ov. 1-27	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-18	Res. 4-08	Ov. 5-01	Res. 5-01
Ov. 1-28	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-19	Res. 4-08	Ov. 5-02	Res. 5-02
Ov. 1-29	Res. 1-02	Ov. 4-20	Res. 4-08	Ov. 5-03	Res. 5-04
Ov. 1-30	Res. 1-02	Ov. 4-21	Res. 4-08	Ov. 5-04	Res. 5-04
Ov. 1-31	Omnibus C	Ov. 4-22	Res. 4-08	Ov. 5-05	Res. 5-04
Ov. 1-32	Res. 1-11	Ov. 4-23	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-06	Res. 5-04
Ov. 1-33	Omnibus C	Ov. 4-24	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-07	Res. 5-04
Ov. 2-01	Res. 2-02	Ov. 4-25	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-08	Res. 5-04
Ov. 2-02	Res. 2-02	Ov. 4-26	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-09	Res. 5-04
Ov. 2-03	Res. 2-03, Res. 2-04	Ov. 4-27	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-10	Omnibus B
Ov. 2-04	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-28	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-11	Res. 5-14
Ov. 2-05	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-29	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-12	Res. 5-14
Ov. 2-06	Res. 2-01	Ov. 4-30	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-13	Omnibus A
Ov. 2-07	Omnibus A	Ov. 4-31	Res. 4-06	Ov. 5-14	Omnibus A

Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)
Ov. 5-15	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-17	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-63	Res. 6-06, Res. 6-09
Ov. 5-16	Res. 5-05	Ov. 6-18	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-64	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-17	Res. 5-05	Ov. 6-19	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-65	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-18	Res. 5-05	Ov. 6-20	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-66	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-19	Res. 5-11	Ov. 6-21	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-67	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-20	Res. 5-11	Ov. 6-22	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-68	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-21	Res. 5-11	Ov. 6-23	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-69	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-22	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-24	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-70	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-23	Res. 5-10	Ov. 6-25	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-71	Res. 9-10
Ov. 5-24	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-26	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-72	Res. 6-14
Ov. 5-25	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-27	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-73	Res. 6-10
Ov. 5-26	Res. 5-09	Ov. 6-28	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-74	Res. 6-14
Ov. 5-27	Res. 5-09	Ov. 6-29	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-75	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-28	Res. 5-09	Ov. 6-30	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-76	Res. 6-11
Ov. 5-29	Res. 5-09	Ov. 6-31	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-77	Res. 6-11
Ov. 5-30	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-32	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-78	Res. 6-11
Ov. 5-31	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-33	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-79	Res. 6-13
Ov. 5-32	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-34	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-80	Res. 6-13
Ov. 5-33	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-35	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-81	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-34	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-36	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-82	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-35	Res. 5-08	Ov. 6-37	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-83	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-36	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-38	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-84	Res. 6-14
Ov. 5-37	Res. 5-13	Ov. 6-39	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-85	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-38	Res. 5-14	Ov. 6-40	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-86	Res. 6-14
Ov. 5-39	Res. 5-14	Ov. 6-41	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-87	Res. 6-14
Ov. 5-40	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-42	Res. 6-04	Ov. 6-88	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-41	Res. 5-12	Ov. 6-43	Res. 6-04	Ov. L6-89	Omnibus A
Ov. 5-42	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-44	Res. 6-04	Ov. 7-01	Res. 7-01, Res. 7-08
Ov. 5-43	Omnibus A	Ov. 6-45	Res. 6-08	Ov. 7-02	Res. 7-01, Res. 7-08
Ov. 5-44	Res. 5-13	Ov. 6-46	Res. 6-06, Res. 6-07	Ov. 7-03	Res. 7-01, Res. 7-08
Ov. 6-01	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-47	Res. 6-06, Res. 6-07	Ov. 7-04	Res. 7-07
Ov. 6-02	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-48	Res. 6-06, Res. 6-07	Ov. 7-05	Res. 7-07
Ov. 6-03	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-49	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-06	Res. 7-06, Res. 7-07
Ov. 6-04	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-50	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-07	Res. 7-07
Ov. 6-05	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-51	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-08	Omnibus B
Ov. 6-06	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-52	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-09	Res. 7-03
Ov. 6-07	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-53	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-10	Res. 7-02
Ov. 6-08	Res. 6-01	Ov. 6-54	Res. 6-06, Res. 6-09	Ov. 7-11	Res. 7-10
Ov. 6-09	Res. 6-08	Ov. 6-55	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-12	Omnibus A
Ov. 6-10	Res. 6-10	Ov. 6-56	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-13	Res. 7-10
Ov. 6-11	Res. 6-12	Ov. 6-57	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-14	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05
Ov. 6-12	Res. 6-12	Ov. 6-58	Res. 6-02, Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-15	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05
Ov. 6-13	Res. 6-12	Ov. 6-59	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-16	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05
Ov. 6-14	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-60	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-17	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05
Ov. 6-15	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-61	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-18	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05
Ov. 6-16	Res. 6-05	Ov. 6-62	Res. 6-06	Ov. 7-19	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05

Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)	Overture	Proposed Action(s)
Ov. 7-20	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05	Ov. 9-17	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-11	Res. 10-07
Ov. 7-21	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05	Ov. 9-18	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-12	Res. 10-01, Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-22	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05	Ov. 9-19	Res. 9-13	Ov. 10-13	Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-23	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05	Ov. 9-20	Res. 9-13	Ov. 10-14	Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-24	Res. 7-04, Res. 7-05	Ov. 9-21	Res. 9-15	Ov. 10-15	Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-25	Omnibus B	Ov. 9-22	Res. 9-15	Ov. 10-16	Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-26	Omnibus C	Ov. 9-23	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-17	Res. 10-02
Ov. 7-27	Res. 7-09	Ov. 9-24	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-18	Res. 10-07
Ov. 7-28	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-25	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-19	Res. 10-07
Ov. 7-29	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-26	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-20	Res. 10-02
Ov. L7-30	Res. 7-01, Res. 7-08	Ov. 9-27	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-21	Res. 10-02
Ov. 8-01	Res. 8-02	Ov. 9-28	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-22	Res. 10-02
Ov. 8-02	Res. 8-02	Ov. 9-29	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-23	Res. 10-02
Ov. 8-03	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-30	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-24	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-04	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-31	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-25	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-05	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-32	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-26	Res. 10-07
Ov. 8-06	Res. 8-07	Ov. 9-33	Res. 9-13	Ov. 10-27	Res. 10-03
Ov. 8-07	Res. 8-05	Ov. 9-34	Omnibus B	Ov. 10-28	Res. 10-03
Ov. 8-08	Res. 8-05	Ov. 9-35	Omnibus B	Ov. 10-29	Res. 10-03
Ov. 8-09	Res. 8-04	Ov. 9-36	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-30	Res. 10-03
Ov. 8-10	Res. 8-04	Ov. 9-37	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-31	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-11	Res. 8-04	Ov. 9-38	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-32	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-12	Res. 8-04	Ov. 9-39	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-33	Res. 10-07
Ov. 8-13	Res. 8-06	Ov. 9-40	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-34	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-14	Res. 8-06	Ov. 9-41	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-35	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-15	Res. 8-03	Ov. 9-42	Omnibus B	Ov. 10-36	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-16	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-43	Omnibus B	Ov. 10-37	Omnibus A
Ov. 8-17	Res. 8-01	Ov. 9-44	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-38	Res. 10-06
Ov. 8-18	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-45	Res. 9-17	Ov. 10-39	Res. 10-06
Ov. L8-19	Omnibus A	Ov. 9-46	Res. 9-06		
Ov. 9-01	Res. 9-01	Ov. 9-47	Res. 9-07		
Ov. 9-02	Res. 9-02	Ov. 9-48	Res. 9-17		
Ov. 9-03	Res. 9-14	Ov. 9-49	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-04	Res. 9-03	Ov. 9-50	Omnibus B		
Ov. 9-05	Res. 9-04	Ov. 9-51	Omnibus B		
Ov. 9-06	Res. 9-11	Ov. 9-52	Res. 9-17		
Ov. 9-07	Res. 9-11	Ov. 10-01	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-08	Res. 9-12	Ov. 10-02	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-09	Res. 9-08	Ov. 10-03	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-10	Res. 9-09, Res. 9-10	Ov. 10-04	Res. 10-04		
Ov. 9-11	Res. 9-16	Ov. 10-05	Res. 10-04		
Ov. 9-12	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-06	Res. 10-02		
Ov. 9-13	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-07	Res. 10-07		
Ov. 9-14	Omnibus A	Ov. 10-08	Res. 10-02		
Ov. 9-15	Res. 9-05	Ov. 10-09	Omnibus A		
Ov. 9-16	Res. 9-06	Ov. 10-10	Res. 10-01		

