

36th District Conference Final Report

09 - 12 June 25

Billings, MT

Theme – “*I Am Not Ashamed*” (Romans 1:16)

Pastoral Voting Delegate – Rev. James Mavis

Lay Voting Delegate – Mr. Kerry Cutting

Day 1 – Floor Committee work.

- **7 Committees (Only 6 active)** - Mission, Specialized Ministries, Human Care, Education and Administration, Registration & Credentials
- **Began study guide** on Romans 1&2
- **District Convention Opening Service** – Trinity Lutheran, Billings
Rev. Dr Scott Murray – 3rd Vice President for LCMS, Pastor @Memorial Lutheran, Houston, TX
Message focus – “Winning by Losing.”
Heaven and earth meet at the cross, Christ reaches out to us, but the world wants him dead, Christ is on a mission to save sinners, and nothing is beyond His grasp. Christ gave His body and His blood. We can’t tell people we “don’t have time to teach our children and grandchildren the bible, but we’ll teach them the rules of football and god forbid hockey?” He bore the cross so we don’t have to, and we should pass that message to everyone.

Day 2 – Elections, Reports and Committee resolutions

- **Tuesday Matins** led by Rev David Behm, Concordia Lutheran, Williston, ND.
- **Tuesday Afternoon Service Prayer** led by Rev. Christopher Brandt, Retired
- **Committee 7 report** – 74 Delegates (40 Lay, 34 pastors) 98 Total attendees
- **Continued the study** on Romans 3-4 (session 2) and Romans 5-7 (Session 3)
- **Received the District President’s report**
 - MT District is not a business enterprise
 - Many congregations have been without a pastor for years, but the Gospel has preserved the message of Christ and what He has done for us.
 - The power of the Gospel, and not our hands, will craft the future.
 - The Gospel will always remain the same.
 - 85% of our congregations have fewer than 100 in attendance, and around 50% have fewer than 50 on any given Sunday.
 - Many pastors serve in multi-congregational roles, and at least 6 are using technology to deliver services. (Minus the Lord’s Supper.)
 - It is the desire of the district to keep all congregations open no matter how small.
 - Added a congregation in Challis ID. MT District now has congregations in ND, ID and looking at Canada next. (not really)
- **Received the District Treasurer’s report**
 - All reports and documents can be found at <https://mtdistlcms.org/treasurer/>
 - Money is a tool used to accomplish the mission
 - Email Kerry for a complete copy of the District Financial Report
 - District 2022-24 final expenses and 2025 budgeted expense breakout are at the end of this report
- **Election Results**
 - **District President** - Rev. Ryan Wendt – Certified Teacher and principal before entering the ministry, Currently Pastor of Christ the King Lutheran, Billings, MT, MT Board of Directors (BOD) since 2015 and was formally the 2nd VP of the MT District. MT District rep. to “Set apart to Serve” initiative. “Much to learn”, asked for patience and prayer. “Looking forward to unique challenges and opportunities to serve.”

- **1st Vice President** - Rev. Arlo Pullmann, St John Lutheran, Laurel, MT
- **2nd Vice President** – Rev Samuel Grayle, 1st Lutheran, Bozeman, MT
- **District Secretary** - Rev. David Behm, Concordia, Williston, ND
- **Ordained Minister BOD** - Rev. Kyle Winter- Church at Creston Lutheran, Creston, MT
- **Commissioned Minister of Religion BOD** - Tom Kosche, Trinity Lutheran, Billings, MT
- **Lay Members BOD-** Eric Corneliusen, Concordia, Williston, ND
Kendall Hartman, Christ the King, Billings, MT
Brian Schneidenbach, Holy Trinity, Belgrade, MT
Andrew Zoeller, Our Savior, Billings, MT
- **Divide Circuit Visitor** - Gideon Pullmann Faith Lutheran, Boulder, MT
- **Election Committee** – Rev Kyle Whaley, MT Calvary/Zion Lutheran, Polson/St Ignatius
Rev Jerry Reseliep – Location unknown
Gideon Schuer, DCE, Trinity Lutheran, Kalispell, MT
1 additional Lay delegate – Unknown
- **Set Apart to Serve Initiative**
 - There is a great need for Pastors, Teacher's, and church workers and we need to care for our church workers.
 - Recruitment of you to serve in the ministry happens at the home congregations when they provide a culture to serve
 - Involve the children in the Word and Sacrament
 - Nurture and encourage youth in genuine relationships
 - Provide opportunities for youth to serve
 - Supporting our youth to participate in like-minded community events
 - Encourage youth in vocational discussion
 - Timothy's grandmother and mother were involved in his education and vocational calling. (I Timothy and II Timothy)
 - Congregations with very few youth or no youth can support the program.
 - Congregations can pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out church workers
 - Pray for the Pastor and care for them
 - Participate in the District "Set Apart to Serve" program
 - Support the seminaries and church work programs at Concordia University's.
 - Encourage and support grandkids, relatives and friends to pursue church work.
 - Consider sending a gift to the "Set Apart to Serve" (SAS) Program to build for the future.
- **Synodical President Presentation** – Rev Dr Matthew Harrison, President LC-MS
 - The 500th Anniversary of the Augsburg Confession is in 2030
 - Currently 35 districts that make up the LC-MS.
 - Try reading the Bible from 1 perspective each year.
 - "We are Book of Concord Lutherans" We live by the creeds and the articles contained within the Book of Concord.
 - When we get tied up in non-scriptural issues, the message of the Gospel gets set aside.
 - President Harrison then went over several articles in the Augsburg Confession
 - Article I – God. We have three creeds in which we acknowledge who God is, what he does and his desire for our salvation. They are unchanged since Christ
 - Article II – Man. Original sin makes us blind
 - Article III – Who is Christ. His blood, "Divine Blood" cleanses us and covers our sin.
 - Article IV – Justification. We do not acquire it by our work. We are justified by grace through faith. Christ is the context of our faith.
 - Article V – Office of the Ministry. God instituted the ministry to present the Gospel and Sacraments. The office has functions. Forgiveness can be given by anyone.
 - Article VI – New Obedience. Faith will bring forth good works. If you walk on a beach, the footprints from you are behind you, not in front of you.
 - Article VII and VIII– The Church. Let us not despair, we have one Holy Apostolic Church. We preach the Gospel in purity. We (LC-MS) are not the only ones saved, and if anyone is preaching that, it will be grounds for removal. In church God serves you. Gives forgiveness of sin. God doesn't need our good works.

- Article IX and X – The Sacraments. The culmination of the Augsburg Confession is Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - We better know “what it is and why we are coming to receive it.” It is the true Body and true Blood for the forgiveness of sin.
 - If a non-member has examined himself/herself and can answer those two questions, then the Pastor has his Pastoral discretion to serve communion.
 - LC-MS Seminaries do not train stupid Pastors.
 - 1st Timothy – The Pastor is the steward of the Lord's resources.

Day 3 – Reports and Committee resolutions

- **Wednesday Matins** led by Rev Gideon Pullman, Faith Lutheran, Boulder, MT
- **Tuesday Afternoon Service Prayer** led by Rev Johnathan Schultz, Trinity Lutheran, Great Falls, MT
- **Continued the study** on Romans 8-9 (session 4) Romans 10-13 (Session 5) and Romans 14-16 (Session 6)
- **The following resolutions were voted on and results are included**
 - **Resolution 1-01 – Passed**
To Study How to Amend the Practice of Issuing “Divine Calls” to Positions Not in the Direct Service of the Proclamation of the Gospel and the Administration of the Sacraments
 - **Resolution 1-02 – Passed**
To Support the Acquisition of a Parsonage for the Congregations at Wolf Point, Plentywood, and Glasgow.
- Note 65K has already been raised through donations and a grant
 - **Resolution 1-03 – Passed**
To speak against trends of Radical Ideologies and Racism in the United States of America
 - **Resolution 1-04 – Passed**
To Encourage the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to produce Sunday School Material for very small Congregations
 - **Resolution 2-01 – DOA. Found to be unnecessary.**
To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process
 - **Resolution 2-02 – Passed**
To Amend Montana District LCMS Bylaw 1.3.2 (m-r)
(Bylaw amended to fall in line with Synodical bylaws and wording)
 - **Resolution 2-03 – Passed**
To Assist Navigation of the Foster and Adoption Processes
 - **Resolution 2-04 – Passed**
To Foster Future Church Worker Recruitment
 - **Resolution 3-01 – Passed**
To Reject the Use of AI-Created Sermons in All Montana District Congregations
- This resolution is against Pastors creating entire sermons from AI.
 - **Resolution 3-02 – Passed**
To Amend Montana District LCMS Bylaw 2.1.3.3
(Bylaw amended to fall in line with Synodical bylaws and wording)
 - **Resolution 4-01 – Passed**
To Request Cessation of Publication of Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications (LLCACA)
- Note this resolution only calls for CPH to cease the sale of the LLCACA as it currently exists (With Essays written by non-LCMS Pastors and lay teachers)
 - **Resolution 5-01 – Fail**
To Condemn the Stone Choir Podcast
(Delegates reviewed a proposed substitution. The convention felt that this resolution brought more attention to the podcast and that because they were not LCMS members, there is little or no admonishment and call for repentance that can be issued.)
 - **Resolution 5-02 – Passed**
To Amend Montana District LCMS Bylaw 2.2.2.2
(Bylaw amended to fall in line with Synodical bylaws and wording)

○ **Resolution 5-03 – Passed**

To Reclaim a Beneficial Understanding of Our Synodical Union

- **Seminaries from Concordia St Louis and Ft Wayne** - Gave presentations on their respective programs.
- **Closing worship, memorials and installation of new District officers**
Service was led by Rev Steven Thomas, St John Lutheran, Libby, MT

POC for this Final Report

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