



Today's Business

Of the 60th Southern Illinois District Convention
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MORNING DEVOTION

Chaplain Rev. Dr. Tony Troup led the morning devotion, using "Daily Prayer for Individuals and Families Morning" from *LSB*. Following the singing of "With the Lord Begin Your Task" (*LSB* 869) and the reading of 1 Peter 4:7-10, Rev. Troup proclaimed a meditation entitled "Using God's Gifts," encouraging us to use the gifts that God has given us to glorify God and to build up the church and each other, looking to and remaining focused on Jesus.



DR. SAUNDERS CLOSING THEOLOGICAL STUDY

Saturday brought "good news" and "new news" to convention delegates! President of Iowa District East, Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders continued his theme "The Certainty of Hope". He focused Saturday's study on Titus 3:4-7 which spoke words of Gospel and God's good news applied to the sin-corrupted world that Titus 3:3 described in Friday's study. Dr. Saunders emphasized the good news that Jesus "hitched" himself to those maladies that Gospel preaching includes attaching Jesus to these maladies, as 2 Corinthians 5:21 confesses.

Dr. Saunders commented that Paul sent Titus to train pastors to preach and to administer the sacraments so that sinners could hear the Gospel words "I forgive you." Pastors today follow that same purpose, applying that message through Word and Sacrament to the people entrusted to their care.

Titus 3:4-7 contains many good news words and Dr. Saunders devoted time to explaining each term, underscoring these words with quotations from the Book of Concord. After commenting on the "good news," Rev. Saunders turned attention to the "new news" of Titus 3:8. He encouraged delegates to stand strong by carefully confessing and practicing this good news in the new lives the trustworthy Gospel bestows.

The theological study concluded with the reassurance that we have a share—an inheritance—in this authoritative Gospel promise pastors deliver in baptism, absolution, and in the Lord’s Supper. Through Jesus, we are “Heirs of Eternal Life.”



PRESENTATION ON THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Jeff Fick, Schools and General Executive of the Southern Illinois District, shared about the LCMS partnership with the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Confesional of the Dominican Republic to support the development the Seminario Concordia El Reformador, a Lutheran Seminary that trains church workers to serve throughout Latin America.

Located on the third floor of a mission building that also houses a Lutheran school and congregation, the seminary offers pre-seminary, deaconess, and seminary training in both residential and distance learning formats. They also provide continued education for church workers. More than 250 church workers have been trained since the seminary’s launch in 2017.

Congregations in Southern Illinois District are encouraged to get involved by spreading awareness and uplifting the Latin American seminary work in prayer. Financial goals for this mission include funding scholarships for students and the seminary’s future goals like creating married student housing, new developments for the deaconess program, addressing internet needs, and well as acquiring Spanish books for the library.



CLOSING SERVICE AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The closing service was led by Rev. Tony Troup and Second Vice-President of the District Rev. Mark Surburg offered an Easter message based on Luke 24. After hearing and confessing scriptures, Rev. Heath Curtis was installed as the District President. The cross of Christ was placed about his neck, the Word of God and the Book of Concord were placed into his hands, and he was given the handbook of the LCMS, all of which he will use to lead and guide the District. President Curtis proceeded to install Rev. Steven Krenz and Rev. Mark Surburg as Vice-Presidents of the Southern Illinois District. Our newly elected Circuit Visitors and Board of Directors took turns standing side by side for their installation, promising to carry out the duties of their respective offices. Finally, the men and women elected or appointed to other boards and commissions were installed.

The service concluded with a hymn, *LSB 856*, to send us on our way with these words,

*“Send us on ways where faith
Transcends timidity,
Where love informs and hope sustains
Both life and ministry.”*



A FAREWELL FROM PRESIDENT SCHARR

“As the Lord Wills”

In an address to delegates, President Scharr reminisced about his path to the District President with the 2010 election of Rev. Herbert Mueller as Synod First Vice-President. He confided that he had contemplated whether or not to let his name stand after serving nearly 15 years of service. He prayed for God’s discretion.

President Emeritus Scharr also chronicled his recent health struggles and the intense treatments he has undergone to keep them at bay. Those struggles again led him to contemplate whether or not to withdraw his name. Ultimately, he allowed his name to stand and decided to trust the Lord to guide the process by letting the District make the decision. On Thursday evening, delegates answered the prayer asking for the Lord’s will to be done.

In referencing Ecclesiastes 3, President Emeritus Scharr reminded delegates that for everything there is a season. With gratitude for his season as District President, Rev. Scharr shared that the next season of life will be about healing. He shared his excitement for new leadership in all District roles and trusted in the Lord for the future. He informed the delegates that a two month transition exists for both newly installed President Curtis and himself. President Emeritus Scharr will continue his work with calling congregations during the transition so there is no slowing of their processes.

He thanked the delegates for the opportunity to serve the District these fourteen-plus years. He thanked the District for its partnership in the Gospel. He counted it a privilege and honor to represent the Southern Illinois District within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.



“You’ve given me the opportunity to serve you the past fourteen and a half years—thank you. And it’s time now for new leadership. Pastor Curtis is an excellent pastor, a scholar, is well respected in the Synod—across the Synod. He’s a good speaker. He will serve you faithfully...The work doesn’t change, it’s the Word and Sacrament ministry. That’s going to continue with the people who are new to the offices.”

Delegates responded to President Scharr’s comments by giving President Scharr a standing ovation.

