



Today's Business

Of the 60th Southern Illinois District Convention
Saturday Issue February 22, 2025

CHANGES FROM THE WORKBOOK

Page 102 Commissioned Minister Roster Changes: Denise Hennig transferred into Southern Illinois District, accepted a call to Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School in Centralia, and was installed 08/21/2024 by Rev. James Hennig.

FRIDAY MORNING DEVOTIONS

The second day of the Southern Illinois District Convention began with Responsive Prayer 1 led by Convention Chaplain Rev. Dr. Tony Troup. Rev. Dr. Art Eichorn accompanied the congregation on the opening hymn "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (LSB 807). The message was based on 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 and the theme verse 20 "For all the promises of God find a Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory." Rev. Dr. Troup reminded those present that Jesus has fulfilled all God's promises, especially to raise us up on the last day and that our real joy, peace, and fullness is always found in Christ.



THEOLOGICAL STUDY WITH REV. DR. BRIAN SAUNDERS

"The Certainty of Hope" is the title of Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders' Convention theological study. The presentation is based on Titus 3:3-7. Saunders, the District President of Iowa District East, began his presentation on Friday morning. Before starting the study, Dr. Saunders took a moment to congratulate Present-Elect Curtis and to express thankfulness to President Scharr for his service to the Synod and the Southern Illinois District. He also conveyed extreme gratitude to President Scharr for his friendship.

“Bad news, good news, and new news.” This three-fold outline expressing Law and Gospel is how Dr. Saunders structured his presentation. Friday morning’s presentation focused on the “bad news” Titus 3:3 presented. At the start, Dr. Saunders explained the unbelieving context of the island of Crete and discussed Titus’ endeavor to train pastors to fill the Office of the Ministry so that people can obtain justifying faith. Yet to obtain justifying faith, first the law has to kill. Paul killed with the law in Titus 3:3. Dr. Saunders, in Friday’s presentation, thoroughly described the terms Paul wrote in this verse to describe the people of Crete’s citizens, applying these terms to a congregation’s life together of pastors and laypeople. Dr. Saunders then amplified the law-filled accusatory message of Titus 3:3 by connecting it to the Lutheran Confessions’ treatment of original sin. Citing Augsburg Confession II, XIX, as well as Formula of Concord Epitome I, and even quoting the hymn “All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall” (*LSB* 562), Dr. Saunders summarized the powerful law message Paul charged Titus to preach—the same powerful message that Pastors preach today.



Based on this Titus 3:3 discussion, Dr. Saunders counseled delegates with these words: “Don’t rip and tear the church bound together under blood that was shed for every lost soul in the world.” His parting words encouraged delegates to return on Saturday to hear the “good news” part of his presentation, during which he’ll also discuss “new news.”



SYNOD REPORT WITH FIRST VICE PRESIDENT PETER LANGE

LCMS First Vice-President Peter Lange began his report by complimenting President Scharr for his faithful, pastoral service. He also welcomed Rev. Heath Curtis as President encouraging his focus on visiting churches and schools, a part of Rev. Lange’s job that he particularly enjoys.

Vice-President Lange reported that during the 2025 Convention Cycle, President Harrison is focusing on “Book of Concord Lutheranism”. To aid with that focus, President Harrison prepared a video for convention delegates, emphasizing the Book of Concord’s importance to our life together as confessional Lutherans.

Highlights from Rev. Lange’s Synod report include topics on Office of National Mission, All Nations Ministry, Life Ministry, Disaster Response, Stewardship, Church Relations, Office of International Mission, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

Vice-President Lange also reported that the Synod Board of Directors has authorized a redo of the Synod's website including both digital platform and website enhancements. The transition is in progress and should be unveiled within the next couple of months.

Lastly, Rev. Lange reported that the Synod’s finances are healthy.

During the Questions and Answers time, Vice-President Lange and Second Vice-President Benjamin Ball answered delegate questions about the Concordia University System, primarily CUWAA, Concordia Portland, and CTX. Additional questions were asked about the Ethiopian Lutheran Church, prison ministry, non-residential paths to the pastoral office, the Center for Missional and Pastoral Leadership, immigration, and progress on the CTCR document “The Philosophy and Theology of Christian Education.”



LWML



Southern Illinois District Lutheran Women’s Missionary League President Carol Walther addressed the assembly with greetings and shared that the LWML is pleased to partner with the District. The LWML focuses on two things: being in God’s Word and collecting mites. The ladies of the LWML want to partner in the mission of sharing the Gospel by assisting with projects so delegates are encouraged to visit the LWML booth in the exhibit hall and also to visit the LWML website to learn about all the current projects in the SID. Finally, if you are at a congregation that doesn’t have an active LWML or has a dying LWML group, please talk to Carol Walther and Lucy Thompson at the booth as they would love to help you reinvigorate the love of service by the ladies of your congregation.

The impact of the LWML is far reaching. Bill Becker, DCE at St. John's in Red Bud, noted the great impact that he has seen the LWML have in his life, "During the Greeting from LWML given by Mrs. Carol Walther on Friday afternoon I, too, became emotional. I shared with Carol how when I was attending Concordia University, River Forest (Chicago), for my undergraduate degree that I received funding from Southern Illinois District LWML all four years." Becker continues that he has spent 26 of his 31 years of ministry in the Southern Illinois District. During this time, the generosity of the Southern Illinois District LWML has impacted several generations, as they helped to fund his son's education at Concordia University, Wisconsin. This son who now in turn, serves as a Lutheran teacher. Bill notes, "I told Carol the work that the ladies of LWML has not been in vain and has been appreciated for over 30 years in ministry to me and my family."



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT REPORTS

Several reports were presented to the Convention. To begin, the Schools and General Executive, Jeff Fick, spoke on the theme "Heirs of Eternal Life". He continued that there are 34 Lutheran education sites with a total of 3,701 students. Some more wonderful numbers include the 91 students baptized and 164 adults either baptized or confirmed. The teacher base salary range for the staff that runs these schools is: \$26,000-\$40,817.

Reports continued with the Treasurer, Gary Hemmer. A full Treasurer Report is available in the Convention Workbook, found online at sidlcms.org. A helpful recap was provided clarifying that

all bills are paid, new accounting procedures are in place, new staff have been hired, the LCMS audit is almost complete, there are \$1.6 million in SID funds, and Unity Lutheran Christian School's payroll and Lutheran Witness subscriptions have been simplified.

Rev. Dr. Willie Stallworth presented the Mission Board Report. He summarized the efforts of the disaster response committee, prison ministry, Dominican Republic ministry, the Landsdowne Community Initiative in East St. Louis, and Advocates for Life.

Scott Roberts, the new Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice President for Southern Illinois District, he informed us of the rebranding: Financial Solutions Together in Faith. There was also a video presentation by LCEF President Bart Day who spoke about the opportunity of joining a loan pool to benefit the expansion in the church.

Finally, LCMS Foundation President Dave Fiedler, and Senior Gift Planning Counselor, Scott Radden gave the report of the LCMS Foundation. They presented how the Foundation currently manages more than \$1.4 billion in assets, including funds entrusted to by more than 600 LCMS organizations, last year distributing \$62.3 million to LCMS ministry organizations. In 2024, the Foundation assisted LCMS members in creating estate plans worth about \$144 million in future gifts for churches, schools and other ministries.



EVE'S RESTORATION HOME

Amanda Douglas, founder and president of Eve's Restoration Home, approached the podium with conviction to share a passion project, years in the making. Douglas shared how she has a history of serving organizations that help women who struggle with things like addiction and self-harm. To help combat this need, Douglas created Eve's Restoration Home. This ministry is a housing ministry which plans to open in 2028 with 3-4 residents and for staff to be in the home supporting these women during their time of need. Eve's Restoration Home officially secured its 501(c)3 non-profit status. Those who desire to help are encouraged to raise awareness for this ministry. Amanda welcomes invitations to speak to churches and groups. The organization would also appreciate everyone praying for and supporting the fundraising efforts for the immediate needs of \$55,000 and future expenses as the ministry grows.



SET APART TO SERVE

Rev. Dr. James Baneck, executive director of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, spoke passionately about the central theme of Set Apart to Serve which is about bringing the promise of eternal salvation to all God's people using future church workers. In 2019, the first steps were taken to help and Set Apart to Serve was born.

One aspect of this theme recognizes that before we make church workers we have to make Christians and be intentional with encouraging youth. Research has distinguished the most influential time that youth consider going into church work is between the ages of 12-14 (when young teens are being confirmed). There are two categories of church work vocations: Ordained–Pastors and Commissioned–Lutheran School Teacher, Director of Christian Education, Director of Church Ministries, Deaconess, Director of Christian Outreach, Director of Family Life Ministries, and Director of Parish Music.

Synod institutions such as Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (Vocatio), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne offer programs that help build the culture addressing the need for church workers to serve the church. Church work is being pushed front and center in the Concordias and there is work being done to make this education more affordable for church work students.

Because of these efforts, enrollment at Concordia University St. Paul, Concordia University Irvine, and Concordia University Nebraska, among others, have all increased the number of students wishing to pursue careers serving the church.

To learn more about this incredibly active group and all of their resources, please visit the Synod's website lcms.org.

ELECTION RESULTS



Friday morning Convention business began with delegates continuing to elect Southern Illinois District leaders. First on the ballot was the election of the two District Vice-Presidents. Rev. Dr. Stephen Krenz (St. Paul's, Columbia) won the election of First Vice-President on the first ballot. On the third ballot, Rev. Mark Surburg (Good Shepherd, Marion) was elected Second Vice-President. Following the Vice-Presidential elections, convention delegates elected Rev. Lyle Buettner (St. Paul's, New Athens and Trinity,

Darmstadt) on the second ballot to serve as District Secretary, succeeding Rev. Peter III (Trinity, Millstadt). Elections continued with Gary Hemmer reelected to serve as District Treasurer.

Positions on the District Board of Directors were the next focus for convention elections. For commissioned ministers (three positions), William Becker (St. John's, Red Bud) and John Schaff (Trinity, Hoyleton) were elected on the first ballot, with Ken Krueger (Trinity, Edwardsville) elected on the third ballot. Lay Board members (seven positions) Matt Bierman, Larry Barringer, Kevin Koenigstein, Paul Bertels, Kurt Johnson, Don Stallmann, and Dr. James Munden were elected on the first ballot with George Trammel elected on the third ballot.

Morning elections continued with elections for the District Board of Missions. For the three ordained positions, delegates elected on the first ballot Rev. Dr. David Schultz (St. Paul's, Wood River) and Rev. David Otten (Hope, Jerseyville) and on the third ballot Rev. John Sedwick (Immanuel, Campbell Hill and St. Paul's, Steeleville).

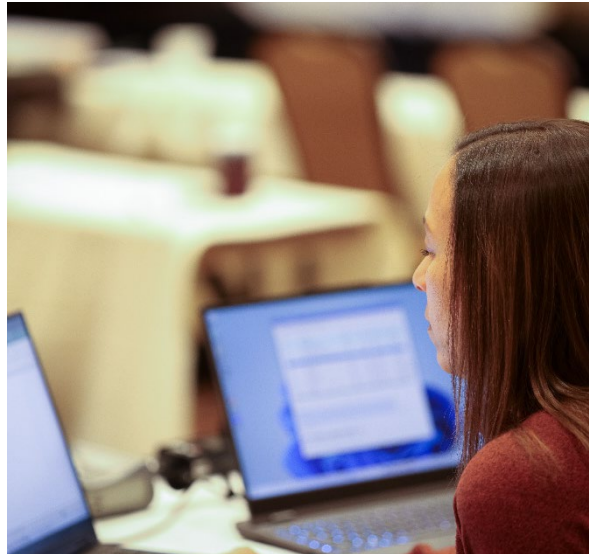
Continued balloting for District Board of Missions took place in the afternoon session. At that time, the assembly elected the following individuals to the Board of Missions: Commissioned Minister Joseph Meador (first ballot) and lay people Frank Glaub (first ballot), Walter Blotevogel (second ballot), Alice Decker (second ballot), and Sharon Holcomb (fifth ballot). After all lay members were elected, delegates elected Rev. Dr. David Schultz the Chair of the Board of Missions.

Balloting for the Commission on Nominations for the 2028 Convention followed. Those elected to serve were Derek Johnson (lay, Circuit 2), Rev. David Otten (ordained, Circuit 2), Mark Schoenleber (lay, Circuit 3), Rev. Scott Schilbe (ordained, Circuit 4), Don Hutchinson (lay, Circuit 5), Jerry Miller (lay, Circuit 6), Rev. James Henning (ordained, Circuit 7), Matt Bierman (lay,

Circuit 8), Rev. Mark Harriss (ordained, Circuit 9), Jeff Mueller (lay, Circuit 10), and Matthew Christian (lay, Circuit 11). Commissioned Ministers at large included Deaconess Elizabeth Koester and Edith Laufer.

Delegates ratified the slate for Circuit Visitors, with Rev. Dr. Stephen Krenz removed due to his election, and substituted with Rev. Ralph Laufer. For the Board of Spiritual Care, delegates elected Rev. Christen Prumm on the second ballot. The concluding elections focused on the lay representative to the 2026 LCMS Nominating Committee. On the second ballot, Jeff Schwarz won the election, with Zach Stegman elected to be the alternate.

With elections concluded, Rev. Benjamin Ball, the chairman of Floor Committee 3 (Nominations and Elections) and District President Scharr thanked the members of the committee for their faithful service.



ADVISORY DELEGATES CAUCUS TO SYNOD CONVENTION

Advisory Delegates and alternates were selected during the morning caucus to represent the Southern Illinois District at the next Synod convention. The ordained advisory delegate will be Rev. Dr. George Gude and Rev. René Castillero was selected to serve as the alternate. Our four commissioned ministers selected to be advisory delegates include Bill Becker (St. John, Red Bud); Dcs. Elizabeth Koester (St. Paul, Hamel); Dr. Jay Krause (Metro-East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville); and Zach Schnare (St. Paul, Hamel). Sarah Gaffney (St. Paul, Hamel) and Edith Laufer (Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville) will serve as first and second alternate respectively.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED/DECLINED

(Listed as presented by the Floor Committee.)

Resolution 1-07: To Combine the Finance Committee and the Fund Advisory Committee

After Rev. John Shank read the rationale, the motion was carried by a voice vote.

Resolution 1-05: To Encourage Continued Prison Ministry Support

After two speakers stood to speak in favor of the resolution to encourage continued prison ministry support, the motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Resolution 1-04: To Amend the SID Salary Scale Regarding Pulpit Supply

The resolution to amend the SID salary scale regarding pulpit supply was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Resolution 1-06: To Build a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment

After an impassioned report on Set Apart to Serve, the motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

Resolution 1-03: To Provide Reimbursement to Circuit Visitors

With no comments or questions, this motion carried after a voice vote.

Resolution 1-01: To Empower the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors Authority to Determine Campus Ministry Funding

After questions, clarifications and comments from seven delegates, this resolution was voted on with the voting devices. The motion carried.

Resolution 1-08: To Thank God for the Ministry of the Rev. Michael P. Walther

After 1 brief comment thanking the committee for allowing this late overture, the motion carried by a unanimous voice vote and the assembly rose to sing "Now Thank We All Our God." Convention Chaplain Rev. Dr. Tony Troup offered prayers for the SID campus ministries and for Pastor Michael Walther.

Resolution 1-02: Concerning the Lack of Use of the Name Lutheran by Congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

The Floor Committee declined to bring Resolution 1-02 to the floor. It was brought to their attention that there was an issue with the wording which would likely conflict with the CCM.

Resolution 1-09: To Declare President Scharr as President Emeritus

Resolution 1-09 was submitted by President-Elect Heath Curtis as a late overture to name President Rev. Timothy J. Scharr as President Emeritus. This motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the assembly rose to sing the common doxology. President Scharr excused Floor Committee One with much thanks for their service.

CONVENTION GREETINGS

The assembly received greetings from Jonathan D. Schultz, President and CEO of Concordia Publishing House. Dr. Schultz shared three main updates the Lutheran Study Bible App has over 20,000 downloads, CPH is producing a new study series tied to the Concordia commentaries that will be released later this year, and this spring the Church Resource Center program will be launching – where laity can be advocates for CPH products and promote CPH resources in their congregations in return for a discount and free shipping.

The assembly received greetings from Jonathon Giordano, member of the Concordia University System Board. He provided an update on total enrollment across the CUS and encouraged those present to pray and speak well of the Concordias. We are encouraged to use the resources at *cus.edu* as we speak with young people that would benefit from attending a Concordia or as we encourage them to go into church work.

The assembly received greetings from most of the universities in the Concordia University system either via video or in person including CSP President Brian Friedrich, CUWAA President Erik Ankerberg, CUNE President Bernard Bull, and CUC Associate Vice-President for Church Relations and Mission Dr. Chad Kendall.

The assembly received a joint update from representatives of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (Rev. Tom Schlund) and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (Rev. Matthew Montgomery). A video greeting from President Thomas Egger (CSL) and President Jon Bruss (CTSFW) was also shared to highlight how the two seminaries are working jointly to recruit future men and women to attend these institutions.



FRIDAY'S CLOSE

The second day of the Southern Illinois District Convention closed with Evening Prayer led by Convention Chaplain Rev. Dr. Tony Troup. The congregation sang “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” (*LSB* 594). The message was based on Romans 8:14-17 and reminded all present to focus on our close and loving relationship with God, our true Father. We were born sinners, but we are adopted into God’s family through holy baptism and He claims us as His own.