



One Lord, One Faith, One Body

Lutheran Church–Canada Thirteenth Regular Convention

June 12-15, 2026

Winnipeg, Manitoba

CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS



FOREWORD

Under the theme “*Together One*”, based on Ephesians 4:4-6, just over 400 pastors, deacons, congregational delegates, advisory delegates, members of the Board of Directors, various representatives of Lutheran organizations and entities, Synod staff, volunteers and guests gathered in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the Thirteenth Regular Convention of Lutheran Church – Canada.

These *Proceedings* are provided as the official record of the decisions, elections, and activities of the Convention that met from June 12-15, 2026. I encourage everyone who receives these *Proceedings* to make them available to the members of their respective congregations, and others, so that this information may reach as many as possible regarding the theological positions of the Synod, along with the directions to be taken in the future mission and ministry of the Synod.

Friday afternoon, President Teuscher led the delegates through information that would prove helpful for the rest of the convention, including standing rules and adoption of the agenda for the weekend. The highlight of the day was the opening worship service where President Teuscher preached on the convention theme “*Together One*” and emphasised that our unity is in Christ, and not something manmade.

Throughout the convention, delegates voted on various resolutions that sought to enhance how several boards and committees of Synod were populated and function. There were several resolutions that sought to amend the Bylaws so that Synod could better meet the needs and opportunities faced by our church. This is not surprising, as this was only the second convention since restructuring. There will likely be further fine-tuning to the Bylaws as the Synod adapts to the changing landscape in Lutheran Church–Canada and the world in which we minister.

This was also the second convention where a digital voting system was used. There were the occasional hiccups that left some delegates a little frustrated, but most delegates appreciated how this voting system saved countless hours of counting and recounting that marked past conventions. I found it interesting, and somewhat humorous, how quickly expectations shifted through the various votes as delegates began to question why we didn’t have the voting results already – as we had been waiting, in a couple of cases, for 1-3 minutes! It would be good to note for all that the one instance of significant delay was not within the control of “Data on the Spot (DOTS)”, but broader internet connectivity.

The convention had times of rejoicing Friday night and then Saturday. The first opportunity was when two congregations were welcomed into Synod and signed the constitution. The second was when 27 pastors and one deacon, who received calls since the last convention, became members of Synod.

The convention also had the joyful opportunity of declaring fellowship with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) and Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A). The LM-A was formed by congregations and pastors who remained faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions following the action of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) voting in convention to approve the ordination of women. This joy was somewhat tempered by the fact that the convention also had to ratify the breaking of fellowship that resulted from the actions of the LCA in convention. Both the LCP and LM-A plan to ratify the mutual recognition of the fellowship we declared at their conventions in October.

Elections for positions of service in our Synod are always a large and important part of the convention’s activity. This proved true once again, especially as President Teuscher and Regional Pastor Robert Mohns (West Region)

chose not to let their names stand for re-election. Rev. David Haberstock, formerly the Regional Pastor for the Central Region, was elected to succeed President Teuscher as President, and Rev. Michael Schutz (Concordia Lutheran, Penticton, BC) was elected to succeed Regional Pastor Mohns. As the position of Regional Pastor, Central Region, was left vacant with Rev. Haberstock's election to the position of Synod President, a new Regional Pastor was needed for this Region. Rev. Aaron Gust was elected to serve as Regional Pastor for the Central Region. Rev. Marvin Bublitz was re-elected to serve as Regional Pastor in the East Region.

Convention Essays were presented by Rev. Dr. Alex Vieira ("Koinonia") and Rev. Dr. James Kellerman ("Ephesians 2:4-6"). The Convention received greetings from our sister synods: The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison), The Lutheran Church in the Philippines (Rev. Antonio del Rio Reyes), Lutheran Mission – Australia (Rev. Matt Anker), and The Evangelical Church of Haiti (Rev. Eliona Bernard), as well as numerous groups within our synodical family.

While this forward points out some of the highlights of this convention, rather than touching on every decision and discussion held (after all, that's what the following *Proceedings* seeks to do) I would suggest you read the *Proceedings* and look to

<https://www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca/synod-convention-2026/>

where you can find video recordings of all sessions, digital copies of *The Standard* (an excellent source for a summary of daily highlights and happenings) the convention Workbook, *Today's Business*, (containing recent additions to the convention workbook), and convention documents containing additional helpful information. Much, if not all of the information on the webpage above, is thanks to the skill and hard work of our new Director of Communications, Dr. Tasheney Francis.

I would like to take a moment to personally thank Grace Henderson, whose assistance in getting ready for the convention was invaluable, and Lois Griffin, who served as Assistant Secretary for the Convention; her wealth of knowledge and keen eye for typos, errors, and omissions were an invaluable resource during my first Convention as Secretary. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who worked so diligently in various capacities—local volunteers, Convention Resolutions Committees, Communications Personnel, the Synod office staff and Iris Barta, who served as Convention Manager.

A convention is much more than resolutions and elections. It is also a time for Koinonia, for the study of Scripture, for the worship of our Lord and His service to us in Word and Sacrament. We ask you to pray that the Holy Spirit will sustain and guide our pastors, deacons, and congregations in the one true saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. May He guide us as we carry out those decisions that have been adopted, and bless the service of all who have been elected to various positions.

Soli Deo Gloria!


Rev. Tom Kruesel

Lutheran Church-Canada Board of Directors

Secretary

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CONVENTION DELEGATES

(in attendance)

CENTRAL REGION**ASSINIBOINE CIRCUIT**

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Churchbridge, Trinity	Rev. Airtion Glitz	None
Grandview, Hope Inglis, Holy Trinity	Rev. Timothy Schneider	None
Landestreu, Immanuel Langenburg, Christ MacNutt, Christ	Rev. Shiekh Mauricio	None
Roblin, St. Matthew's Zorra, Grace	Rev. Barry Wood	Jude Frey
Yorkton, Zion	Rev. Kai Buck	Lawrence Kitz

NORTHLAND CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Hudson Bay, Good Shepherd Melfort, St. Paul's Mistatim, Zion Nipawin, Zion	Rev. Christopher McLean	Bradley Adelman
Humboldt, St. John's	Rev. Clinton Magnus	Justin Keller
La Ronge, La Ronge Lutheran Fellowship	Rev. John Blum	None
Middle Lake, Faith	Rev. Jakob Valsson	Lyal Heidecker
Prince Albert, Redeemer	Vacant	Hunter Monseler

ONTARIO CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Atikokan, Faith Evangelical	Vacant	None
Dryden, Our Saviour Vermilion Bay, St. Mark	Rev. Carl Thiele	Christopher Hill
Fort Frances, Church of the Lutheran Hour	Vacant	None
Ignace, Faith	Vacant	Erik Thingstad
Kakabeka Falls, Redeemer	Vacant	Keith Nett
Kenora, Good Shepherd	Vacant	None
Nipigon, Immanuel	Vacant	None
Red Lake, Christ	Vacant	None
Thunder Bay, Calvary	Rev. Edivar Govaski	Frank Grant
Thunder Bay, Christ	Rev. Peter Noble	Wilfred R. Sainio
Thunder Bay, Epiphany	Vacant	None

Thunder Bay, Lappe	Vacant	None
Thunder Bay, Trinity	Vacant	None

QU'APPELLE CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Grenfell, Peace Wolseley, Zion	Vacant	Ron Kraushaar
Cupar, St. Paul Southey, Emmanuel	None	None
Fort Qu'Appelle, Our Saviour	Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach	Jazmin Kurtenbach
Melville, Zion	Vacant	Larry Miller
Moosomin, Trinity	Vacant	Darcy Rambold
Neudorf, Trinity	Vacant	None

RED RIVER CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Beausejour, Grace Evangelical	Rev. Thomas Prachar (vacancy)	None
Brandon, Grace	Rev. Edmund Mielke	Brett Klassen
Morden, Zion Winkler, Trinity	Rev. Alexander Klages	Matthew Neufeld
Neepawa, Christ	Vacant	Jeremy Vogt
Plumas, Zion	Rev. James Vosper	Don Kunzelman
Portage la Prairie, Redeemer	Vacant	None
Winnipeg, Beautiful Saviour	Rev. Cameron Schnarr	Kalyn Bomback
Winnipeg, Holy Cross	Vacant	Rene Fontaine
Winnipeg, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Rev. Harold Borchardt	Rick Fenske
Winnipeg, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	Rev. Shaun Manning	Timothy Stebner
Winnipeg, Peace	Rev. Glenn Worcester	Brian Layer
Winnipeg, Saint James	Rev. Richard Beinert	Jeremy Maron
Winnipeg, Shalom	Rev. Asefa Aredo	Bedane W. Kefeni

SASKATOON CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Bergheim, St. Paul's Warman, St. John's	Rev. Peter Knelson	Jason Schmiedge
Luseland, Holy Trinity	None	None
Saskatoon, Faith	Rev. Rudy Pastucha	Ferne Wagner
Saskatoon, Grace	Vacant	Terry Frank

Saskatoon, St. Paul's	Rev. Murray Keith	Jacob Kitsch
St. Walburg, Trinity	Rev. Quentin Adams	None
Unity, Lutheran Church of Unity	Vacant	None
Wilkie, Trinity	Vacant	None

SOUTHLAND CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Estevan, St. Peter's	Vacant	Keith Habersstock
Frobisher, St. John Oxbow, St. Peter	Rev. Adrian Kramer	Garry Bartolf
Maple Creek, Mt. Calvary	Vacant	None
Moose Jaw, Emmanuel	Rev. Daniel Barr	David Buck
Ponteix, Trinity Swift Current, Mt. Calvary	Rev. Travis Heide	Suzanne Heide
Wordsworth, Trinity	Vacant	None

WASCANA CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Regina, Good Shepherd	None	Len Ewert
Regina, Grace Evangelical	Rev. Arron Gust	Curtis Buck
Regina, Mount Olive	Rev. Vasilios Christoforidis	Mike Bloos
Regina, New Beginnings	Rev. Paulo Brum	Alan Jorgensen
Regina, Prince of Peace	Rev. Nigel Prozenko	Daryl Hoffman

EAST REGION

HAMILTON CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Beamsville, Emmanuel	Vacant	None
Burlington, Prince of Peace	Rev. David Zakel	Valerie Edward
Dunnville, Faith Port Colborne, St. Peter's	Rev. Michael Meleg	Carol Nagel
Fisherville, Trinity	Rev. Andrew Cottrill	Jim Rohrbach
Grimsby, Christ Our Saviour Hamilton, Redeemer	Rev. Jason Gillard	Ruth Coe
Hamilton, Pilgrim	Rev. Peter Gatluak	Phyllis Dagg

HANOVER CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Clifford, St. John's Hanover, First St. Matthew's	Rev. Jody Rinas	Rick Hill
Collingwood, Christ Our Hope	Rev. Kenneth Maher	Robert Klages
Desboro, Faith Evangelical	Rev. Brian Dunlop	Kim Kuhl
Kurtzville, Trinity (Gowanstown) Southampton, Southampton	Rev. Kurt Reinhardt	None
Mount Forest, St. John's	None	Leeanne Lange

KITCHENER CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Elmira, St. Paul's	Rev. Jayanta (Joe) Das	Anna Fierling
Kitchener, Bethel	Rev. Davi Schmidt	Jim Gardiner
Kitchener, Faith	Vacant	Bud Brown
Kitchener, Grace	Rev. Robin Korsch	Daniel Smilek
Kitchener, Historic St. Paul's	Rev. James Keller	Steve Klages
Kitchener, Holy Cross	Rev. Paul Roggow	Kassandra Griffin
Petersburg, Emmanuel	None	None
Waterloo, Messiah	Rev. John Rapp	Jon Oberholzer
Waterloo, Redeemer	Rev. Joel Kuhl	Delton Zehr
Wellesley, First St. Paul's	Rev. Andre Schroth	Paul Neeb

LONDON CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
London, Faith	None	Heather Crane
London, Good Shepherd	Rev. Siem Manna	Linda Welke
London, Our Saviour St. Thomas, Redeemer West Lorne, Grace	None	None
Simcoe, St. Peter's	Rev. Dan Abraham	Eric Blitherwyk
Tillsonburg, Peace	Rev. Paul Schallhorn	Joel Rock

NIAGARA CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Fonthill, Concordia Port Colborne, St. John (Gasline)	Rev. David Hamp	Jonathan Hamp

Niagara Falls, Our Saviour	None	None
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Trinity	Rev. Larry Ritter	Matthew Lush
St. Catharines, Christ	Rev. Todd Hoeffs	Thomas Kuhl
St. Catharines, Grace	Rev. Richard Juritsch	James Alexander
St. Catharines, Resurrection	Rev. Kurt Lantz	Rachel Lantz
Stevensville, St. John's (Snyder)	Rev. Saulo Bledoff	James Priebe

OTTAWA CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Bowman, St. Paul (Poltimore) Gatineau, Our Redeemer Inlet, St. Matthew (Mulgrave)	None	None
Cornwall, St. Matthew's	Rev. Connor Longaphie	Jacob Lefebvre
Eganville, St. Luke's Eganville, Zion (Augsburg)	Vacant	Charles (Bert) Firlotte
Halifax, St. Andrew's	Vacant	Aidan Cyr
Kanata, Christ Risen	Rev. Milton Lam	Ann Seguin
Moncton, Good Shepherd	Rev. David Milette	Daniel Fawcett
Montreal, Eglise Luthérienne de l'Ascension	Rev. David Somers	Katherwe Joan Harrison
Ottawa, Our Saviour	Vacant	None
Ottawa, St. Luke	Rev. Aaron Astley	Peter Dobias
Pembroke, Christ (Petawawa)	Rev. Matthew Habermas	Pierre Cronier
Pembroke, Grace (Locksley)	Rev. Paul Williams	Ron Groskleg
Sherbrooke, Église Évangélique Luthérienne de la Réconciliation	Rev. Razafy Razafindrakoto	None
Sudbury, Redeemer Timmins, Christ	Rev. David Smilek	None

STRATFORD CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Dashwood, Zion Goderich, Berea-By-The-Water	Rev. John Trembulak III	Tim Steinson
Logan, First (Mitchell) Monkton, Redeemer	None	Mark Higenell
Seebach's Hill, First St. John Wartburg, Second St. John	Rev. William Ney	Dennis Feltz
Stratford, St. Peter's	Rev. Jack Hetzel	Mark Rohfrietsch
Tavistock, St. Paul	Vacant	None

TORONTO CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Barrie, Good Shepherd	Rev. Stephen Omoregie	None
Bowmanville, Clarington	Vacant	Kevin Dunsmoor
Bradford, Holy Trinity Toronto, Korean	Rev. Seungwoo “Sam” Choi	Roy Hopkins
Brampton, Redeemer (Bramalea)	None	None
Cobourg, St. Paul's	None	None
Georgetown, Immanuel Mississauga, Risen Christ	Rev. Vishal Paul	Roy Nero Drepaul
Mississauga, Christ Our King	Vacant	Wendy Chant
Oshawa, Grace	Rev. Guntars Baikovs	Michael Latimer
Toronto, Our Saviour	Rev. Joseph Singh (vacancy)	Renee Khan
Toronto, Trinity Evangelical	Rev. Ling Pui Yeong	Matthew Rogalski

WINDSOR CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Amherstburg, Good Shepherd	Rev. Dionatan Ferreira	Andrew Erickson
Harrow, Christ	None	None
Windsor, First	Rev. Robert Bugbee	Mathew Zvric

WEST REGION**CALGARY CIRCUIT**

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Calgary, Foothills	Rev. David Bode (vacancy)	Michelle Heumann
Calgary, Grace	Vacant	Miriam Kentel
Calgary, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Rev. David Dressler	Roger Saint
Calgary, Oromo Evangelical Church of Calgary	Rev. Ephrem Gemta	Dawit Biftu
Calgary, Shepherd of Peace	Rev. Mark Rekken	Larry Walter
Calgary, St. Matthew	Rev. Markus Zeuch	Thomas Weitz
Canmore, Shepherd of the Valley	Rev. Mark Lobitz	Liam Elkins
Didsbury, Redeemer	Vacant	None
Drumheller, Grace	Rev. Martin Jagnow	None
Golden, Trinity	Vacant	None
Torrington, Trinity	Rev. Nick Wasylowich	Arnold Lachman

CARIBOO CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
100 Mile House, Christ the King	Vacant	Karen Broughton
Kitimat, Redeemer	Rev. Daniel Cunningham	None
Prince George, Zion Vanderhoof, Vanderhoof	Rev. Kyle Eddy	None
Quesnel, Trinity	Rev. Wayne Lunderby (vacancy)	Frances Petersen
Williams Lake, St. John	Rev. Noel Smith	Mai Pedersen

EDMONTON CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Edmonton, All Saints	Rev. John Maxfield	Sean Hare
Edmonton, Bethlehem	Rev. Scott Lyons	Loren Pearson
Edmonton, Christ the King	Rev. David Kihn	None
Edmonton, Concordia	Rev. Mark Hennig	Emily Sambhudyal
Edmonton, Cross of Christ of the Deaf	None	None
Edmonton, Grace	Rev. Neil Stern	Bruce Eidick
Edmonton, Redeemer	Rev. James Fritsche (vacancy)	Tery Ann Diachok
Edmonton, Riverbend	None	Barbara Darrah
Sherwood Park, Bethel	Rev. James Avery	Jayson Galbraith
St. Albert, King of Kings	Rev. Jan Pastucha	Jeanine Pastucha

ELK ISLAND CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Bruce, Immanuel Vegreville, St. John	Vacant	None
Bruderheim, Bethlehem	None	None
Fort McMurray, Trinity	Vacant	None
Fort Saskatchewan, Bethany	Rev. Jeffery Dul	Jim Young
Fort Saskatchewan, Christ	Rev. Vincent Moore	Daniel Hanneman
Lloydminster, First McLaughlin, Zion	Rev. John Haycock	None
Vermilion, Faith	Vacant	None

GREATER VANCOUVER CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Abbotsford, Trinity	Rev. Henock Teklemariam	Susan Trithardt

Aldergrove, Immanuel	None	None
Chilliwack, St. Paul's	Rev. Keith Haberstock	Amanda Gervais
Delta, Saviour	Vacant	Hans Gust
Langley, Walnut Grove Surrey, St. Luke	Rev. James Paulgaard	Steve Kroeger
New Westminster, Mount Calvary	Rev. Gregory Johnson	None
Port Coquitlam, Hope	Rev. Lucas Albrecht	Jennifer Watson
Richmond, Trinity	Rev. Brian Falkenholt	Braydan Pastucha
Surrey, Faith	None	Andrew MacAdam
Surrey-Cloverdale, Hillside	Rev. Craig Tufts	Andrew Keilbart
Vancouver, Bethlehem	None	None
Vancouver, Killarney Community	Rev. Mark Chiang	None
Vancouver, Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf	Rev. Gregory Desrosiers	Linda Desrosiers

LETHBRIDGE CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Duchess, Duchess	None	None
Lethbridge, Immanuel	Rev. Lee Loveridge	John Harstad
Magrath, St. John's Milk River, St. Matthew	Vacant	Mark Charleswoth
Medicine Hat, St. Paul	Rev. Kenneth Edel	Simon Hersey
Pincher Creek, Trinity	Rev. Wendel Ritz	Micah Beatty

OKANAGAN CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Creston, Redeemer	Rev. Connor Buck	None
Grand Forks, Christ	None	None
Kamloops, Lord of Life Salmon Arm, Shepherd of the Valley	Rev. Andrew McDonald	Mark Hersey
Kelowna, The Sanctuary	Rev. Tyler Moore	Jessica Krebs
Oliver, St. Paul Osoyoos, Grace	Rev. Darren Siegle	Karin Siegle
Penticton, Concordia	Rev. Michael Schutz	Deb Belden
Summerland, St. John's	Rev. Scott Gamble	None
Trail, Peace	Vacant	None
Vernon, St. John's	Rev. James Wood (vacancy)	Christopher Michael Mayer

West Kelowna (Westbank), Redeemer	Vacant	Valerie Kraushar
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PEACE RIVER CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Dawson Creek, St. Paul's Grande Cache, Mount Carmel Wembley, St. John's	Rev. Kenneth Eifert	
Fairview, Trinity	Vacant	None
Grande Prairie, Faith	Rev. Jaime Ventura	Nathan Goebel
High Prairie, Redeemer	Rev. Terrance Goerz	None
Peace River, Prince of Peace	None	None
Valleyview, Good Shepherd		Henry Krueger

STONY PLAIN CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Beach Corner, St. John's	Rev. Eric Moffett	Tiffany Playter
Devon, Victory Spruce Grove, Peace	None	Paul Laslop
Drayton Valley, Emmaus Tomahawk, Immanuel	Vacant	Ron Pischke
Evansburg, Advent	Rev. James Heinbuch (vacancy)	None
Golden Spike, Zion	Vacant	None
Mellowdale, Christ	Rev. Donald Schiemann	None
Rochfort Bridge, Trinity	None	None
Stony Plain, St. Matthew	Rev. Rod Buck	Shaun Visser

VANCOUVER ISLAND CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Campbell River, Bethany	Rev. Alexander Timm	Brendan Wallace
Courtenay, Faith	Rev. Roland Kubke	Heidi Wagner
Duncan, Trinity	Vacant	None
Nanaimo, St. Paul's	Rev. R. Fraser Coltman	Elaine Murphy
Parksville, Our Saviour	Rev. Stephen Chambers	Jutta Storey
Port Alberni, Grace	Vacant	None
Sidney, Peace	Rev. Erik Trovall	Marlene Keanie
Victoria, Hope	Rev. Adam Chandler	Deborah Gruben
Victoria, Redeemer (Langford)	Rev. Phillip Washeim	Dan Grant

WETASKIWIN CIRCUIT

PARISH	CLERGY DELEGATE	LAY DELEGATE
Camrose, Grace	Rev. Donald Hennig (vacancy)	None
Lacombe, Trinity Sylvan Lake, Faith	Rev. Robert Clifford	Theo Siebenga
Leduc, St. Peter's	Vacant	Brenda Reimer
Red Deer, Mount Calvary	Rev. Scott Brayall	Karl Witzke
Rimbey, Zion Usona, Immanuel Wetaskiwin, Zion	Rev. Mark Schultz	Blaine Cross
Rocky Mountain House, Immanuel	Rev. Brian Amison	Archie Richardson
Spruce View, King of Kings	Rev. Allen Lewis (vacancy)	Melanie Kuhn

ADVISORY DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES

ADVISORY DELEGATES

Clergy

Central Region

Rev. Daryl Solie
Rev. Howard Ulmer

East Region

Rev. Vijay Samuel
Rev. Kevin Walrath
Rev. Orland Welke

West Region

Rev. Charles Cooley
Rev. Mark Danielson
Rev. Joseph Nhial

Deacon

Central Region

Dcn. Amanda Hastings

East Region

Dcn. Lenora Simpson

West Region

Dcn. Michael Gillingham

Deacon at Large

Dcn. Kathleen Cornish

ADVISORY REPRESENTATIVES

President

Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher

President Emeritus

Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan

Past President

Rev. Dr. Robert Bugbee

Vice-President

Rev. Michael Schutz

Secretary

Rev. Tom Kruesel

Treasurer

Dwayne Cleave

Regional Pastors

Rev. David Habershtock

Rev. Marvin Bublitz

Rev. Robert Mohns

Board of Directors

Clergy members:

Rev. Theodore Giese, Rev. Thomas Kruesel
(Secretary), Rev. Michael Schutz (Vice-
President), Rev. Mark Hennig, Rev. Dr. Timothy
Teuscher (President)

Lay members:

Arnold Drung (Vice -Chair), Lois Griffin, Grace Henderson, Doug Petersen (Chair) Kirsten Guggenmos

Deacon member:

Dcn. Amanda Hastings

Communication & Technology Committee
Lisa Jackson

International Missions Committee
Rev. Kurt Reinhardt

Commission on Adjudication

Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure
Ron Faulkner, Grace Henderson, Rev. Alex Klages, Timothy Lach; Cameron Pelzer, Rev. Paul Schallhorn (Chair), Rev. Daryl Solie, Delton Zehr

Commission on Nominations & Elections
Rev. Dr. Richard Beinert, Dcn. Kathy Cornish, Rod Johnson, Rev. Kurt Lantz, Allison Schieman, Reg Tiegs (Chair), Rev. Philip Washeim

Commission on Theology and Church Relations
Rev. Michael Keith

Lutheran Church–Canada Financial Ministries
Allen Schellenberg

Board of Directors - Worker Benefit Services
Ron Walter

Board of Regents - CLS Edmonton, AB
Dcn. Miriam Winstanley

Board of Regents - CLTS St. Catharines, ON
Rev. Dr. Thomas Winger

CONVENTION APPOINTMENTS

Convention Manager
Iris Barta

Local Arrangements
Iris Barta

- *Registration & Hospitality:* Rev. Tom Kruesel, Sandra Timm, Vira Askin (staff)
- *Head Page:* Abbie Tang
- *Transportation:* Glen Jorundson, John Robins
- *IT Support:* Tim Bayha, Josh Haberstok, Andrew Jackson

Host Congregation
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church

Assistant to the Secretary
Lois Griffin

Convention Chaplain
Rev. Cameron Schnarr

Resolutions Committee 1
Structure and Handbook
Rev. Aaron Astley (chair), Anna Fierling, Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach, Jeremy Maron, Rev. Darren Siegle

Resolutions Committee 2
Theology and Church Relations
Rev. Adam Chadler, Adrian Cyr, Rev. Brian Dunop (chair), Dcn. Michael Gillingham, Rev. Adrian Kramer

Resolutions Committee 3
Financial and Sundry
Wendy Chant, Rev. Fraser Coltman (chair), Lyal Heidecker, Rev. Vishal Paul, Larry Walter

REPORT: PRESIDENT OF LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

Part 2

Synodical Bylaw 2.013 of the 2022 Handbook of Lutheran Church—Canada states that at one of the first sessions of the convention “the president shall make his presidential address and submit his official report.” The first part of my report is contained in the Convention Workbook that went out a few months ago. I would now take a few minutes for an oral address that will be published later in the Convention Proceedings.

“Together One.” This convention theme permeates nearly all of the New Testament epistles as we will hear throughout our convention; and, I would especially point out, this apostolic exhortation is plural in nature. Statutory Bylaw 1.01 of our 2022 Handbook thus defines the word ‘synod’ as “the voluntary ecclesiastical bond shared by Member Congregations and Individual Members (that is, pastors and deacons) walking together to carry out the ministry and mission given by Christ to His Church.” Notice – ‘walking together’; or as we might say, ‘Together One’.

The word *‘together’* comes from an Old English word meaning ‘to gather’; indicating when two or more people or entities are gathered with each other, assembled in a group, and joined with each other. The word *‘one’* conveys the idea that everything is interconnected and part of a larger whole, a unified entity of two or more components which are in agreement with shared beliefs, practices, and common goals.

We see this, for example, in the way the Scriptures speak of the estate of marriage – ‘the two shall become one flesh’ (Gn 2:24; Mt 19:5). Or in how the Athanasian Creed speaks of the relationship of the three persons of the Holy Trinity: “So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God” (AQV 15-16). And also of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ” (AQV 32).

Now, often we can get a better understanding of what something is by considering what it isn’t. So, for instance, to be outwardly joined ‘together’, whether it be with members in our local congregation or with other congregations as part of our Synod, but not one in belief, teaching and practice is called ‘unionism’ or ‘syncretism’. Conversely, to be ‘one’ in what we believe, teach and confess but not together is ‘schismatic’ or ‘separatistic’.

St. Paul addresses both of these aberrations in many of his epistles. In the last chapter of Romans, for instance, he says on the one hand: “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine you have been taught; avoid them” (Rm 16:17). And, then, on the other hand, he writes in First Corinthians these words: “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Co 1:10).

Now, as the church militant we struggle with and always will struggle with both of these aberrations until the Lord of the church returns. The devil, after all, is always at work to sow seeds of discord in Christ’s church, whether it be in our congregations or in our synod. And which is why, as we heard last evening in the Gospel Reading, these words in His high priestly prayer: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17:21).

Now, how does this being ‘Together One’ manifest itself whether it be on a personal, congregational, or synodical level? Why is such of upmost importance? The Large Catechism

answers that in connection with the Third Article of the Creed in these words which I have quoted almost *ad nauseam* on many an occasion . . . and notice those ‘Together One’ first person plural pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’. “Everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through signs (or the Sacraments) appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live” (LC II.55). And do you remember what the Small Catechism goes on to say? “Where this is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation” (SC, 1, The Sacrament of the Altar).

Notice, ‘everything . . . is so ordered’ for this purpose. The word ‘ordered’ meaning ‘to be arranged, to set in place, to organize.’ “All things should be done decently and in order,” (1 Co 14:40) is how St. Paul puts it in First Corinthians. Which leads us to the big question: ‘What things are to be so ordered?’

In the first and foremost place, there is the order of worship or the Divine Service – that is, the form in which the Word and the Sacraments are to be proclaimed and administered. “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching,” (1 Tm 4:13) the apostle Paul writes, for instance, to his young colleague Timothy. Or as he says in Colossians: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16).

The devil knows this, too; and one common theme running throughout the Scriptures has to do, as such, with this matter of worship . . . or more specifically, with disorderly, improper, and false worship. The English writer, Daniel Defoe, put it this way: “Wherever God erects a house of prayer, The Devil always builds a chapel there; And 'twill be found upon examination The latter has the largest congregation.”

We recall, for instance, the children of Israel who “made for themselves a golden calf and

worshiped it and sacrificed to it” (Ex 32:8), and with the result that three thousand men of the people were put to death (Ex 32:28). Ironically, such took place at the very same time when Moses had gone up Mount Sinai to receive from the Lord, not just the Ten Commandments, but also detailed instructions concerning worship covering twelve chapters.

Or take Josiah’s reforms of Solomon’s temple and the false worship that had been taking place therein and which is described in these words: “The king brought out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven and burned them outside Jerusalem. . . . He deposed the priests who made offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah. . . . He broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes who were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for Asherah” (2 Ki 23:4-5, 7).

Or Jesus’ cleansing of Herod’s temple that he had built to bring it up to the glory days of Solomon’s temple. So St Matthew records it: “And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers” (Mt 21:12-13).

Or in his first letter to the Corinthians the apostle Paul having to spend seven chapters on worship-related matters that were causing confusion, division and disorder – eating food offered to idols, head coverings, abuses surrounding the Lord’s Supper, roles of service in the church, and the like. “All things should be done decently and in order” (1 Co 14:40), he concludes.

And then notice also these significant words a few verses prior: “as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Co 14:33). In other words, ‘Together, One’ whether it be in Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Rome in the 1st century . . . or, yes, in Ottawa, Toronto, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton,

Vancouver, or even here in Winnipeg in the 21st century.

It is not without reason, as such, that a number of articles in the Augsburg Confession – to which all of our congregations, pastors, and deacons have subscribed – address this matter of orderly worship. In Article XV, for instance, we read these words: “With regard to church usages that have been established by men, it is taught among us that those usages are to be observed which may be observed without sin and which contribute to peace and good order in the church” (AC XV.1). Or as Article XXVI states: “We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church” (AC XXVI.40).

So, too, Dr. Luther addressed this matter on many an occasion. For example, in his 1525 letter entitled ‘A Christian Exhortation to the Livonians Concerning Public Worship and Concord’ he says: “I exhort your preachers [to] conduct themselves that they establish and preserve unity of mind and spirit among themselves. . . . We should consider the edification of the lay folk more important than our own ideas and opinions. Let each one surrender his own opinion and . . . come to a common decision about these external matters so that there will be one uniform practice . . . instead of disorder—one thing being done here and another there – lest the common people get confused and discouraged. . . . Therefore, when you hold mass; sing and read uniformly, according to a common order—the same in one place as in another—because you see that the people want and need it and you wish to edify rather than confuse them” (Luther’s Works 53:45, 47, 48).

Likewise, C.F.W. Walther, founding father of our mother church – The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, addressed this matter numerous times. For instance, in his 1862 convention essay entitled, ‘The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation’, he says: “We

should seek to preserve agreement in expressions and thoughts, in endeavors and customs; thus we may be kept from divisions. Those who bear one and the same name derived from Christ should be one, should teach one and the same thing, and confess one and the same thing” (p. 166). In other words, ‘Together, One.’ And which is why he goes on to say: “The congregation shall see to it that only doctrinally pure books, approved by the orthodox church, are introduced and tolerated in church and school and that confessional ceremonies are not discontinued” (p. 104).

Well, in the second place then, and which naturally follows, there is the order or office of the holy ministry which Christ Himself has established or instituted. So St. Paul writes in Ephesians: “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph 4:11-13). The Small Catechism puts it this way: “The office of the keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners.” And then it goes on to say: “What do you believe according to these words? I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they . . . absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself” (SC, I, Confession).

Related to this are a number of things. First, the calling of a pastor by a congregation; or, if congregations cannot afford to call a pastor or if no pastors are available, joining together with sister congregations into dual or multi-point parishes so that they might have a pastor. This is not an optional matter, but has been mandated, ordered by Christ Himself. So the Augsburg Confession puts it: “No one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV).

Second, the synod assisting congregations in the calling process through the Regional Pastor and Circuit Counsellor, much like what we see in the New Testament. So, for instance, we read at the end of St. Paul's first missionary journey: "And when (Paul and Barnabas) had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Ac 14:23).

Third, congregations providing for the physical welfare of their pastor and his family in accordance with these words of St. Paul: "(T)he Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Co 9:14).

And fourth, the theological education and training of pastors at our seminaries. Congregations encouraging young men to go to the seminary and providing on-site vicarage training of future pastors. The Preface to the Book of Concord puts it this way: "We desire particularly that the young men who are being trained for service in the church and for the holy ministry be faithfully and diligently instructed therein, so that the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be preserved and perpetuated among our posterity through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious advent of our own Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Preface, Book of Concord, p. 12).

And all this ordered and instituted by the Head of the church and its Saviour, our Lord Jesus Himself, for what purpose? Just this: "that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and (the Sacraments) appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live."

Well, thirdly, then, there is the order or purpose of 'missions' . . . of 'evangelism' . . . of 'catechesis' (that is, Sunday School, Bible Class, Confirmation Class and the like). What, exactly, is the reason for the work that we are doing

together internationally in places like Nicaragua, Cambodia, Thailand or Ukraine; or also here in Canada whether it be in our major urban centres, among various ethnic groups, or in areas where there is no confessional Lutheran presence? Why is providing evangelism resources and training for members of our congregations a high priority? Why the emphasis on catechesis and the study of God's Word; and concern over the lack thereof in some of our congregations?

When all is said and done, one reason . . . one purpose; namely, "to make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) by baptizing and teaching, as our Lord says in that familiar 'Great Commission' passage as the end of St. Matthew's Gospel; that is, to bring people from every nation, people and language into the worship life of the church so that they might receive those heavenly gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation which are offered, bestowed and proclaimed by pastors in the Divine Service. After all, remember: "Everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through the Sacraments appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live" (LC II.55).

Or to put it another way: the worship of God is its own end, as we confess in the Athanasian Creed, and as we read in the last chapter of the book of Revelation; while missions, evangelism, and catechesis are means to that end. We see this, for example, in the book of Acts on the Day of Pentecost when those who heard and received Peter's sermon were baptized, "and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Ac 2:41). And then they are described, significantly, in terms of worship: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Ac 2:42) – the basic template or outline, as it were, of the order of worship or the Divine Service.

In the fourth place, then, there is also the order of church government whether it be on the

congregation or synod level, complete with constitutions, bylaws, policy manuals, and the like. In our congregations we have church councils or board of directors, elders, altar guilds, trustees or property committees, treasurers and financial secretaries, ushers, custodians, Sunday School teachers, organists and choir directors, and the like. In our synod we have a President, Regional Pastors and Circuit Counsellors, a Board of Directors, various commissions and committees, Regional Mission and Ministry Councils, office staff personnel, and so forth.

And while those who serve in these positions have various tasks and duties, whether it be in congregations, circuits, regions, or in our synod; all are ordered, put in place, and done – regardless, I would point out, of how important or menial they might seem – for one primary reason and one chief purpose: namely, “Everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through signs (or the Sacraments) appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live” (LC II.55).

And that brings us, fifthly and finally, to the order or purpose of, yes, money. Actually, not our money but God’s money that He has given to us; as the prophet Haggai writes: “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts” (Hg 2:8).

Now, all these things that I have mentioned – whether it be the provision for the physical needs and welfare of pastors and their families, the training of pastors at our seminaries, the maintenance of a place of worship and provision of materials needed for our worship services, the support of our missions and missionaries, or the compensation of those who serve in various synodical offices and positions, and the like – require our tithes and offerings.

St. Paul addresses this in many of his epistles. He reminds the church in Corinth, for example, concerning financial aid for the poverty-stricken

church in Jerusalem, that “(The churches of Macedonia) gave according to their means, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints” (2 Co 8:3-4). And further: “(T)he ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. . . . (T)hey will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others” (2 Co 9:12-13).

In the explanation of the Fourth Commandment from the Large Catechism we thus read these words: “There is a need to impress upon the common people that they who would bear the name of Christians owe it to God to show ‘double honor’ to those who watch over their souls and to treat them well and make provision for them. God will adequately recompense those who do so and will not let them suffer want. But here everybody resists and rebels; all are afraid that their bellies will suffer, and therefore they cannot now support one good preacher although in the past they filled ten fat paunches. For this we deserve to have God deprive us of His Word and His blessings. . . . Those who keep their eyes on God’s will and commandment, however, have the promise that they will be richly regarded for all they contribute to their spiritual fathers, and for the honor they render them. Not only shall they have bread, clothing, and money for a year or two, but long life, sustenance, and peace, and afterwards abundance and blessedness forever” (LC I.161-164).

Then, too, in connection with the First Article of the Creed, the Large Catechism says: “Since everything we possess . . . is daily given and sustained by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank Him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to His service, as He has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments. . . . (God) gives us all these things so that we may sense and

see in them His fatherly heart and His boundless love toward us. Thus our hearts will be warmed and kindled with gratitude to God and a desire to use all these blessings to His glory and praise” (LC II.19, 23).

Our ‘Together One Campaign’ is not simply about acquiring earthly treasures for the synod’s coffers; but rather, providing heavenly treasures for four things in particular: first, to “tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done” (Ps 78:4); second, to “declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples” (Ps 96:3); third, to “take part in the relief of the saints” (2 Co 8:4); and fourth, to ensure that “those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel” (1 Co 9:14).

And why? To what end? Just this: “Everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through the Sacraments appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live” (LC II.55).

The Preface to the Book of Concord sums all this up this way . . . and notice again those ‘Together One’ plural pronouns: “We should diligently

care for the things that apply to this life and the life to come. We should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and our utmost ability, to attend to those matters that promote the extension of God’s name and glory; the spread of His Word from which alone we hope for salvation; the peace and tranquility of church and schools; and the instruction and consolation of disturbed consciences. . . . (With) the Spirit of the Lord aiding us, we intend to persevere constantly, with the greatest harmony, in this godly agreement and work of concord, by which God’s glory and the common welfare may be promoted in both temporal and eternal things.” (Preface, Book of Concord, p. 18, 19).

To that end, let us pray in these words from Article XI of the Formula of Concord and which reflect our convention theme of ‘Together One’: “May Almighty God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant the grace of His Holy Spirit so that we may all be one in Him and steadfastly remain in this Christian unity, which is well pleasing to Him. Amen.” (FC Ep XI.23).

Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher, President
June 13, 2026

MINUTES – Session 1

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the first session to order at 4:06 pm (CDT)

Registration Committee Report – Rev. Tom Kruesel, Chairman

Voting Pastor Delegates – 111
Voting Lay Delegates – 115
TOTAL VOTING - 226

Advisory Delegates – 9
Advisory Representatives – 18
Registered Visitors – 12
Invited Guests – 8
TOTAL – 47

Exhibitors – 7
Staff/ Contractors – 28
Spouses -34
TOTAL - 69

Statutory Bylaw 9.07 of Lutheran Church–Canada’s Handbook states that, “A quorum for Convention shall consist of at least 25% of the eligible delegates.” President Teuscher declared that Quorum was achieved and the Convention proceeded.

Induction Rite for Delegates – President Teuscher

President Teuscher used the Rite of Installation of delegates from page I.3 in “Today’s Business” for the Induction of delegates and then declared the convention open.

Introductions – President Teuscher

The individuals who are serving in various capacities for the Convention were introduced.

Convention Orientation - President Teuscher

President Teuscher led the delegates through an orientation based on the pertinent pages in “Today’s Business H and I. It was noted that Rev. Alex Klages is serving as Parliamentarian for the Convention.

Special Standing Rules – President Teuscher

Using page H.3 in the “*Convention Workbook*”— the Special Standing Rules were reviewed.

C26-01 Motion: To adopt the Special Standing Rules

ACTION: Adopted

Adoption of Agenda – President Teuscher

Using page A.3 in the Workbook, the Agenda was proposed to the delegates.

C26-02 Motion: To adopt the proposed Agenda

ACTION: Adopted

Resolutions Committee #3 Acceptance of New Congregation Members

-Rev. Fraser Coltman, Chairman

**RESOLUTION 26.3.11 TO RECEIVE ST. MATTHEW’S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
CORNWALL, ONTARIO INTO MEMBERSHIP OF LUTHERAN CHURCH—
CANADA**

(Reference Overture 3.15)

- WHEREAS the congregation of St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cornwall, Ontario has applied for membership in Lutheran Church—Canada; and
- WHEREAS the constitution and bylaws of St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran Church have been submitted and reviewed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors of LCC in accordance with Synodical Bylaw 1.007 a; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cornwall, Ontario be joyfully received as a member of Lutheran Church—Canada.

Committee #3

C26-03 Motion: To adopt Resolution 26.3.11

ACTION: Adopted

The pastor and representatives from St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, Cornwall, Ontario were called forward to sign the Constitution of Lutheran Church-Canada. The “*Common Doxology*” was sung to welcome the congregations into the Synodical family.

Acceptance of New Pastor Members – President Teuscher

New pastors and deacons have received calls to congregations and other entities of Synod since the Synod convention in 2022 by Ordinations and Installations; by Colloquy; or by Transfer. Using pages E.18, E.19 and E.22 in the “*Convention Workbook*” the new members were called forward to sign the Constitution of Lutheran Church—Canada. The hymn, “*Thy Strong Word*,” was sung during the signing of the Constitution.

Electronic Voting – Reg Tiegs, Chairman Commission on Nominations and Elections/Data on the Spot (DOTS)

Instruction in using the electronic voting system was provided to delegates.

Greetings from Lutheran Laymen’s League Canada – Lisa Jackson

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Recess – President Teuscher called the first session to close at 5:00 pm (CDT)

MINUTES – Session 2

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the second session to order at 8:16 am (CDT)

Essay – Rev. Dr. Alex Vieira

Dr. Vieira presented an essay in light of our convention theme of “Together One” centred on the use of the Greek word ‘koinonia’ in the New Testament.

Registration Committee Report – Rev. Tom Kruesel, Chairman

Voting Pastor Delegates – 142

Voting Lay Delegates – 148

TOTAL VOTING – 290

Advisory Delegates – 12

Advisory Representatives – 20

Registered Visitors – 18

Invited Guests – 11

TOTAL– 61

Exhibitors – 10

Staff/ Contractors – 28

Spouses – 38

TOTAL – 76

Quorum remains and the Convention continued.

Approval of Minutes

Using pages J.17 through J.19 in the latest issue of “*Today’s Business*”— the minutes of the previous session were presented

Motion C22–04: That the minutes of the 13th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church–Canada, June 12, 2026, Session 1 be adopted as presented.

ACTION: Adopted

Report of the President – President Teuscher

President Teuscher shared comments on the theme of “Together One”.

Elections for President – Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

President Teuscher explained the nomination process for President and Vice–President.

Yuval Kamani explained the mechanics of the voting software.

Reg Tiegs informed the convention that Rev. Michael Schutz withdrew his name.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

Prior to voting, Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain, led the Convention in prayer.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

First Ballot

Rev. David Haberstock – 125 (45.5%)
Rev. Ted Giese – 80 (29.1%)
Rev. Joel Kuhl – 70 (25.5%)

Since no candidate received a majority, Rev. Joel Kuhl name was dropped from the next ballot and a second ballot was presented to delegates.

Second Ballot

Rev. David Haberstock – 154 (55.2%)
Rev. Ted Giese – 125 (44.8%)

Rev. David Haberstock was declared elected President of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Elections for Vice–President – Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
Prior to voting, Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain, led the Convention in prayer.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results – Vice–President

First Ballot

Rev. Ted Giese – 140 (49.8%)
Rev. Joel Kuhl – 97 (34.5%)
Rev. Kurt Lantz – 22 (7.8%)
Rev. David Zakel – 22 (7.8%)

Since no candidate received a majority, the names of Rev. Kurt Lantz and Rev. David Zakel were dropped from the next ballot and a second ballot was presented to delegates.

Second Ballot

Rev. Ted Giese – 151 (53.9%)
Rev. Joel Kuhl – 129 (46.1%)

Rev. Rev. Ted Giese was declared elected Vice–President of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Nominations/Elections for Regional Pastors

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman
Reg Tiegs, Chairman (CNE) presented the slate.

Rev. Teuscher asked if there are any nominations from the floor for Central Regional Pastor of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Nominations from the Floor

Rev. Aaron Gust

Rev. Teuscher asked if there are any nominations from the floor for East Regional Pastor of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Nominations from the Floor

None

Rev. Teuscher asked if there are any nominations from the floor for West Regional Pastor of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Nominations from the Floor

None

Reg Tiegs presented the amended slate.

Prior to voting, Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain, led the Convention in prayer.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results – Regional Pastor, Central

First Ballot

Rev. Aaron Gust – 64 (91.4%)

Election Results – Regional Pastor, East

First Ballot

Rev. Marvin Bublitz – 65 (69.9%)

Rev. Vishal Paul – 28 (30.1%)

Election Results – Regional Pastor, West

First Ballot

Rev. Jan Pastucha – 57 (48.7%)

Rev. Michael Schutz – 60 (51.3%)

President Teuscher declared Rev. Aaron Gust elected Regional Pastor for the Central Region of Lutheran Church–Canada.

President Teuscher declared Rev. Marvin Bublitz elected Regional Pastor for the East Region of Lutheran Church–Canada.

President Teuscher declared Rev. Michael Schutz elected Regional Pastor for the West Region of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Nominations/Elections for Circuit Counsellor – Commission on Nominations and Elections
– Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Reg Tiegs, Chairman (CNE) presented the slate.

Rev. Tim Teuscher explained the process by which nominations could be made from the floor and asked if there were any nominations for Circuit Counsellor from the Central, East or West Regions of Lutheran Church – Canada.

Nominations from the Floor for Circuit Counsellor:

Central Region: None

East Region: None

West Region: Jeffrey Koenig (Okanogan Circuit)

Reg Tiegs presented the amended slate.

Prior to voting, Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain, led the Convention in prayer.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results – Circuit Counsellor

Central Region – Candidates for Election

Assiniboine Circuit

Rev. Barry Wood - 5

President Teuscher declared Rev. Barry Wood elected.

Northland Circuit

Rev. Jakob Valsson – 7

President Teuscher declared Rev. Jakob Valsson elected.

Ontario Circuit

No nominations

Qu'Appelle Circuit

Rev. Brad Julien - 1

Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach – 4

President Teuscher declared Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach elected.

Red River Circuit

Rev. Dr. Richard Beinert - 19

President Teuscher declared Rev. Richard Beinert elected.

Saskatoon Circuit

No nominations

Southland Circuit

Rev. Travis Heide - 7

President Teuscher declared Rev. Travis Heide elected.

Wascana Circuit

No nominations

East Region – Candidates for Election

Hamilton Circuit

Rev. Andrew Cottrill - 3

Rev. David Zakel – 7

President Teuscher declared Rev. David Zakel elected.

Hanover Circuit

Rev. Kenneth Maher - 6

President Teuscher declared Rev. Kenneth Maher elected.

Kitchener Circuit

Rev. James Keller – 17

President Teuscher declared Rev. James Keller elected.

London Circuit

Rev. Dan Abraham -3

Rev. Paul Schallhorn - 4

President Teuscher declared Rev. Paul Schallhorn elected.

Niagara Circuit

No nominations

Ottawa Circuit

Rev. Aaron Astley - 9

Rev. Matthew Habermas - 9

Rev. Milton Lam – 0

The Circuit will meet to elect their Circuit Counsellor and report to the Convention.

Stratford Circuit

No nominations

Toronto Circuit

Rev. Vishal Paul – 13

President Teuscher declared Rev. Vishal Paul elected.

Windsor Circuit

No nominations

West Region – Candidates for Election

Calgary Circuit

Rev. David Dressler – 14

President Teuscher declared Rev. David Dressler elected.

Cariboo Circuit

Rev. Noel Smith - 5

President Teuscher declared Rev. Noel Smith elected.

Edmonton Circuit

No nominations

Greater Vancouver Circuit

Rev. Lucas Albrecht - 12
President Teuscher declared Rev. Lucas Albrecht elected.

Lethbridge Circuit

Rev. Lee Loveridge – 6
President Teuscher declared Rev. Lee Loveridge elected.

Okanagan Circuit

Rev. Jeffrey Koenig – 12
President Teuscher declared Rev. Jeffrey Koenig elected.

Peace River Circuit

Rev. Terrance Goerz - 6
President Teuscher declared Rev. Terrance Goerz elected.

Stony Plain Circuit

No nominations

Vancouver Island

Rev. Stephen Chambers – 14
President Teuscher declared Rev. Stephen Chambers elected.

Wetaskiwin Circuit

Rev. Brian Amison – 11
President Teuscher declared Rev. Brian Amison elected.

President Teuscher informed the convention that for Circuits where there are no nominations, the Regional Pastor shall appoint someone.

Greetings – Lutheran Women’s Missionary League–Canada – Marilyn Witte, President

Greetings from International LLL – Kurt Buchholz – President/CEO

Noon Daily Prayer – Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Recess

President Teuscher declared the second session in recess until 1:30 pm at 12:01 pm (CDT)

MINUTES – Session 3

WBS Stretch Break – Sasha Lipskaia

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the third session to order at 1:37 pm (CDT)

Rev. Cam Schnarr, Convention Chaplain, opened the session with prayer.

Resolutions Committee #3 – Finance and Sundry Matters – Rev. Fraser Coltman, Chairman

**RESOLUTION 26.3.14 TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS AND AUDITORS REPORT THEREON FOR FISCAL
YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 2026**

(Reference Overture 3.18)

WHEREAS the comparative financial statements for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2026 were prepared by management and audited by KPMG in April 2026; and

WHEREAS the audited financial statements and the accompanying auditor's report thereon were reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on May 26, 2026; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the members of Lutheran Church–Canada, assembled in convention, hereby acknowledge receipt of the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2026.

Motion C26.05: To adopt Resolution 26.3.14

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.12 TO APPOINT AUDITORS FOR LUTHERAN CHURCH–CANADA

(Reference Overture 3.16)

WHEREAS the statutory Bylaws (Article V – provision 5.01) state the delegates present at Convention appoint an auditor for auditing the financial statements of LCC; therefore be it

RESOLVED that KPMG be appointed auditors of LCC and be retained until the next Convention

Motion C26.06: To adopt Resolution 26.3.12

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.03 TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF REV. DR.
TIMOTHY TEUSCHER**

(Reference Overture 3.04)

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Teuscher is joyfully received as a gift bestowed by the exalted Lord on His church for her good (Eph. 4:8, 11); and

WHEREAS our Lord worked in and through Rev. Dr. Teuscher to give exceptional leadership to Lutheran Church–Canada as she has grown in her role in Canadian and worldwide Lutheranism; and

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Teuscher has given unselfishly of his time and energy in fulfilling his duties; and

WHEREAS in the summer of 2026, Rev. Dr. Teuscher will be retiring from full time service as a pastor, after serving two terms as President of Lutheran Church–Canada; therefore, be it

RESOLVED the Lutheran Church–Canada give thanks to God for the rich blessings poured out upon this church body through the leadership of Rev. Dr. Teuscher as pastor, First Vice President of the East District and President of Lutheran Church – Canada, and commend Rev. Dr. Teuscher to the Lord’s continued blessing and direction; and be it

RESOLVED that Rev. Dr. Teuscher be granted the title Past President; and be it finally

RESOLVED that at such time as Rev. Dr. Teuscher retires, he receive the official designation President Emeritus.

Motion C26.07: To adopt Resolution 26.3.03

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.13 TO RECEIVE THE LCC QUADRENNIAL WORK PROGRAM (2027–2030)

(Reference Overture 3.17)

WHEREAS the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Directors of Lutheran Church–Canada have prepared a Quadrennial Work Program (QWP) for the years 2027–2030; and

WHEREAS LCC leadership and key stakeholders were given opportunity to provide input into the QWP through participation in an October 2025 Planning Conference and a joint RMMC meeting in January 2026; and

WHEREAS with respect to Domestic Missions, congregations and mission outreach initiatives, including language ministry, were invited to submit applications for financial assistance for consideration within the QWP; and

WHEREAS the QWP advances both ongoing and emerging domestic mission priorities, including provision for a Missionary–at–Large (MAL) to engage with an Indigenous community, alongside the strategic exploration and development of a new urban ministry initiative in a major metropolitan setting; and

WHEREAS the QWP can only be implemented by the cooperation and action of congregations, regions, and by the receipt of necessary funds; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada, assembled in Convention, receive the QWP (2027–2030) for information, study, and action by the Board of Directors.

Motion C26.08: To adopt Resolution 26.3.13

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.15 TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF REV. ROBERT MOHNS

(Reference Overture 3.19)

WHEREAS Rev. Robert Mohns is joyfully received as a gift bestowed by the Lord on His church for her good (Eph. 4:8, 11); and

- WHEREAS Rev. Mohns served faithfully congregations in the West Region of Lutheran Church—Canada for 28 years; and
- WHEREAS Rev. Mohns has given unselfishly of his time and energy in fulfilling his duties as Regional Pastor of the West Region of Lutheran Church—Canada over these past seven years; and
- WHEREAS Rev. Mohns will be retiring from fulltime service in the church at the end of this quadrennium; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church—Canada give thanks to God for the rich blessings poured out upon our church body through the leadership and service of Rev. Robert Mohns, and commend him to the Lord’s continued blessing and direction.

Motion C26.09: To adopt Resolution 26.3.15

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.01 TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND AFFIRM FLEXIBILITY IN COLLECTING CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

(Reference Overture 3.02)

- WHEREAS Section 2.023 of the Synodical Bylaws of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) provides that convention assessments, and registration fees are to be determined on the basis of the approved convention budget, without prescribing a specific method of calculation; and
- WHEREAS earlier editions of the Handbook (2011 and 2014) explicitly referenced a per communicant member levy as the basis for such assessments, while the 2017 and 2022 Handbooks no longer include such explicit direction; and
- WHEREAS it has been the longstanding practice of LCC to collect assessments on a per communicant member basis in order to fund conventions, and pastor and deacon conferences; and
- WHEREAS overture 3.02 has emphasized the importance of fairness, equity, and predictability in the sharing of such costs among member congregations; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in Convention acknowledge the historical practice of per communicant member assessments while recognizing that the current Synodical Bylaws do not prescribe a single required method for the collection of such assessments; and be it further
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in Convention affirm that, within the provisions of the existing Bylaws, assessments will be analyzed by the Board of Directors in a timely manner and may be structured using a combination of approaches, including per communicant member assessments and fixed or base amounts applied to member congregations, as may be deemed equitable; and be it further

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada encourage its delegates and member congregations to remain informed regarding the purpose of such assessments, their historical basis, and considerations that may guide future methodologies; and be it finally

RESOLVED That this resolution be understood as declaratory in nature, affirming existing practice and flexibility under current Bylaws, and not requiring any amendment to the Synodical Bylaws.

Motion C26.10: To adopt Resolution 26.3.01

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.02a TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF LCC’S “GUIDELINES FOR CARING FOR CALLED WORKERS”

(Reference Overture 3.03)

WHEREAS Called church workers are a precious resource, a gift the Lord has given to lead, teach, and nourish the church; and

WHEREAS the gifts of God that they share and administer, as well as their personal talents, training, and sacrifices are of immense value; and

WHEREAS the church on earth suffers temptation, sin, and spiritual attack, which may lead to church workers not always being generously nurtured and supported in their vocations, which often leads to burnout and to workers leaving their calls; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Church–Canada has responded to the need to support church workers by providing its congregations with “Guidelines for Caring for Called Workers” (September 9, 2025) and

WHEREAS the Regional Ministry and Mission Councils (RMMCs) are to serve as “an important conduit for the sharing of information from LCC and other regions with the congregations, pastors and deacons”, and the use of other LCC resources, which may include the Worker Benefit Services Wellness resources, and be it therefore

RESOLVED that the RMMCs be encouraged to promote the adoption of the “Guidelines for Caring for Called Workers” among the congregations, and be it further

RESOLVED that the RMMCs engage in further study of the LCMS Kansas District “Church Worker Care Team Manual to evaluate its local applicability, and be it finally

RESOLVED that the RMMCs and the Regional Pastors will encourage church workers to seek private confession and absolution on a regular basis.

Motion C26.11: To adopt Resolution 26.3.02a

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.07 TO GIVE THANKS FOR CONCORDIA LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ST. CATHARINES, AT HER 50TH ANNIVERSARY

(Reference Overture 3.10)

- WHEREAS the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod at her 1975 convention authorized Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, to establish an extension site in Canada; and
- WHEREAS the Ontario District in her 1976 convention selected St. Catharines to be the site of the new seminary; and
- WHEREAS the first classes were held in September 1976 in the basement of Resurrection Lutheran Church; and
- WHEREAS the seminary was incorporated by provincial charter in November 1976, established an Affiliation Agreement with Brock University in 1982, built a fine new building on its campus in 1983, and received the right from the provincial government to give degrees in her own name in 2024; and
- WHEREAS over her fifty years of service CLTS has delivered some 240 graduates, both ordained and lay, into the church’s service; and
- WHEREAS CLTS continues to serve Lutheran Church–Canada and her sister churches around the world through pastoral formation, education of lay leaders, teaching the faithful, supporting mission work, and publishing confessional Lutheran theological writings; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention express thanks to God for fifty years of service to the church provided by Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, and commend her to the prayers and support of God’s people.

Motion C26.12: To adopt Resolution 26.3.07

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.10 TO RATIFY AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS

(Reference Overture 3.14)

- WHEREAS upon review of changes to various congregation constitutions and subsequent recommendation of the President, the Board of Directors has approved the revisions and amendments to these constitutions; and
- WHEREAS such actions by the Board are to be “submitted to the next Convention for ratification” (Synodical Bylaw 1.007.b); therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Convention ratify the actions of the Board pertaining to its approval of amendments and revisions to the constitutions of the following congregations:

Central Region
Faith, Atikokan, ON
Trinity, Churchbridge, SK

Our Saviour/St. Mark, Dryden/Vermilion Bay, ON
Zion Evangelical, Morden, MB
New Beginnings, Regina, SK
Mt. Calvary, Swift Current, SK
Calvary, Thunder Bay, ON
Trinity, Winkler, MB
Peace, Winnipeg, MB
Immanuel, Winnipeg, MB
Saint James, Winnipeg, MB

East Region

St. Matthew's, Cornwall, ON
Faith, Kitchener, ON
St. Paul's, Kitchener, ON
Good Shepherd, London, ON
Grace, Oshawa, ON
Southampton, Southampton, ON
St. Luke, Ottawa, ON
Trinity, Kurtzville, ON

West Region

Shepherd of Peace, Calgary, AB
Grace, Drumheller, AB
Christ, Fort Saskatchewan, AB
St. Matthew's Lutheran, Calgary, AB
Bethlehem, Edmonton, AB
Faith, Grande Prairie, AB
Redeemer, High Prairie, AB
First (The Sanctuary), Kelowna, BC
Our Saviour, Parksville, BC
Trinity, Quesnel, BC
St. Matthew, Stony Plain, AB
St. John's, Vernon, BC

Motion C26.13: To adopt Resolution 26.3.10

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.05 TO CLARIFY TERMS FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS IN THE HANDBOOK**

(Reference Overture 3.07)

Whereas	the Handbook of LCC uses the expressions “Canadian Missions” but LCC in her actions and communications regularly uses the expression “Domestic Missions”, and
Whereas	the Handbook of LCC uses both the expressions “World Missions” and “International Missions” (as well as the expression “Foreign field”) but LCC in her actions and communications regularly uses the expression “International Missions”, therefore, be it
Resolved	that, in order to avoid confusion and promote unity in our speaking and work together, the Handbook of LCC be updated to use the term “Domestic Missions” rather than “Canadian Missions,” “International Missions” rather than “World Missions.”

Motion C26.14: To adopt Resolution 26.3.05
Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.09 TO REVIEW SYNODICAL BYLAW VII. RECONCILIATION,
RESTORATION, AND ADJUDICATION**

(Reference Overture 3.12)

WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw VII has proved to be unwieldy in implementation; therefore be it
RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention assign the President to oversee a review of
Synodical Bylaw VII in consultation with the PMC, CTCR, and CCMS; and be it finally
RESOLVED that he bring forward recommendations regarding Synodical Bylaw VII to the 2030
Convention for discussion and implementation.

Motion C26.15: To adopt Resolution 26.3.09
Action: Adopted

Report from Together One Campaign – Dwayne Cleave (LCC CAO), David Friesen (Director of
Advancement), Alan Zacharius (LCC Campaign Consultant)

Resolutions Committee #2 – Theology and Church Relations – Rev. Brian Dunlop, Chairman

**RESOLUTION 26.2.03 TO RECOGNIZE THAT LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA (LCC) IS
NO LONGER IN ALTAR AND PULPIT FELLOWSHIP WITH THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
(LCANZ)**

(Reference Overture 2.03)

WHEREAS Holy Scripture clearly teaches that only qualified men should be called and ordained into
the office of the holy ministry (see 1 Timothy 2-3, 1 Corinthians 14, LCC’s CTCR
Report, ‘Theses on the Role of Women in the Church’, that was adopted for guidance and
reference at our 1996 Convention and reaffirmed at our 2022 Convention); and
WHEREAS the LCANZ officially approved the ordination of women into the pastoral office at its
October 2024 Convention, and is now ordaining women into the pastoral office; and
WHEREAS on March 21, 2025 the Board of Directors of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), of
which Lutheran Church–Canada is a full member, removed the Lutheran Church of
Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) from membership in the ILC over its decision to
depart from the clear teaching of Scripture and the doctrinal standards of the ILC by
approving the ordination of women; and
WHEREAS differences in doctrine and practice exist between the LCC and the LCANZ, not only on
this issue of the ordination of women to the pastoral office, but also on other matters such

as the authority of the scriptures, the scriptural understanding of church fellowship, and the doctrine and practice of close[d] communion; and

WHEREAS LCC understands altar and pulpit fellowship to be a gift of God that exists by His grace on the basis of agreement in doctrine and practice; therefore be it

RESOLVED that with deep sorrow and regret Lutheran Church—Canada declare its recognition that it is no longer in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand; and be it finally

RESOLVED that LCC commit itself to pursuing further doctrinal discussions with the LCANZ in the hope that by God’s grace our church bodies might once again attain agreement in doctrine and practice and so enjoy the gift of God-given and God-pleasing altar and pulpit fellowship.

Motion C26.16: To adopt Resolution 26.2.03

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.2.04 TO RECOGNIZE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LUTHERAN MISSION
– AUSTRALIA**

(Reference Overture 2.04)

WHEREAS as a result of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) approval and sanctioning of the ordination of women into the office of the holy ministry at its 2024 Convention, which is clearly contrary to the Scriptures; some pastors, lay members, and congregations have left that church body and established Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A); and

WHEREAS Lutheran Church–Canada in a previous adopted resolution sadly recognized that this action on the part of the LCANZ has severed the bond of fellowship between our two churches; and

WHEREAS discussions have taken place between representatives of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) and Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A); and

WHEREAS these discussions have revealed a clear unity in the doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles and in the right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and

WHEREAS LCC’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has reviewed the report of these discussions and has concurred with this mutual agreement between LCC and LM-A; and

WHEREAS the CTCR views the benefits of fellowship to be a future blessing from the Lord of the Church for both church bodies; therefore be it

RESOLVED that LCC recognize that a state of altar and pulpit fellowship exists between Lutheran Church–Canada and Lutheran Mission – Australia.

Motion C26.17: To adopt Resolution 26.2.04

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.2.05 TO RECOGNIZE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE PHILIPPINES (LCP)**

(Reference Overture 2.05)

- WHEREAS the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) dates to 1946 when missionaries from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) arrived in Manila; and
- WHEREAS in 1971 the Lutheran Church in the Philippines was received as a partner church with the LCMS; and
- WHEREAS the Lutheran Church in the Philippines is a full member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), along with Lutheran Church–Canada, both churches subscribing to the doctrinal provision of the ILC; and
- WHEREAS discussions have taken place between representatives of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) and the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), revealing a clear unity in the doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles and in the right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and
- WHEREAS the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of LCC has reviewed the report of these discussions and has concurred with this mutual agreement between LCC and the LCP; and
- WHEREAS the CTCR views the benefits of fellowship to be a future blessing from the Lord of the Church for both church bodies – e.g. LCC assisting the LCP in theological education at their seminary, and LCP assisting LCC mission outreach to Filipino immigrants in Canada; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC recognize that a state of altar and pulpit fellowship exists between Lutheran Church–Canada and the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

Motion C26.18: To adopt Resolution 26.2.05

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.11 ON MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID)

(Reference Overtures 2.07, 2.13, and 2.14)

- WHEREAS God has created all human beings in His image, and bestows upon all human life intrinsic sacredness, worth and value regardless of the quality or worth—or lack of it—perceived by the world or by one's self, and,
- WHEREAS such sacredness of human life is constantly desecrated and belittled by sin, death and the devil, yet God restores fullness of life to fallen man in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Church, and,
- WHEREAS the Christian's life of faith consists not only of placing one's whole day-to-day life into God's hands and direction, but also one's death, allowing such to happen at the time and place of God's choosing, and,

- WHEREAS it is the sacred role of government, instituted by God as His instrument, to uphold and protect all human life, from conception to natural death, especially that of the frail and vulnerable, and,
- WHEREAS through the present policies concerning MAID, the government of Canada has been grossly derelict of its solemn responsibility to protect life and has advocated and put into practice a worldview and philosophical perspective that desecrates life and strips it of intrinsic sanctity and value, and,
- WHEREAS since the initial legalization of MAID for restricted purposes intended only for the terminally ill and suffering, there has been a relentless dangerous trend of wider expansion of its eligibility also to those who are mentally ill, depressed, lonely, or merely unhappy with life, and,
- WHEREAS the faithful of the church are suffering from increasing temptation to consider MAID as an option for end of life and increasing pressure not to oppose or speak against its practice; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC reaffirm before the church, the governing authorities and the public at large her unwavering commitment to the sacredness of all human life from conception to natural death, and therefore also her firm opposition to the practice of MAID, with its belittling and desecration of the sacredness of life, along with the philosophical perspectives underlying it, and also to encourage all to a blessed end by faith in Jesus Christ, commending their last hour to the time and place of God's choosing, and, be it further
- RESOLVED that the Convention would request the CTCR to formulate Pastoral Guidelines for pastors and laity struggling with MAID and its consequences, further
- RESOLVED that LCC encourage governing authorities to repeal the legislation of MAID and return to its God-given duty to reverence life, and be it finally
- RESOLVED that LCC and her auxiliary agencies, such as Lutherans for Life-Canada, and her pastors encourage a vibrant confession and ministry to respond to the threats of the temptation of MAID by providing relevant Bible studies, literature, and guidance for ministry to the faithful of LCC concerning this topic, and encourage programs and agencies within the church and/or in our communities at large which provides for the lonely, the depressed and the vulnerable, beneficial care and loving alternatives to MAID.

Motion C26.19: To adopt Resolution 26.2.11
Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.2.06 TO CELEBRATE THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION**

(Reference Overture 2.06)

- WHEREAS the Augsburg Confession is the foremost confession of faith of our Evangelical Lutheran Church; and

-
- WHEREAS the Preface to the Book of Concord states: “Our disposition and intention has always been directed toward the goal that no other doctrine be treated and taught in our lands, territories, schools, and churches than that alone which is based on
- the Holy Scriptures of God and is embodied in the Augsburg Confession . . . so that the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be preserved and perpetuated among our posterity through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious advent of our Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ” (p. 12); and
- WHEREAS Article II of our Synodical Constitution states that “every Member of Lutheran Church–Canada accepts without reservation . . . the Unaltered Augsburg Confession . . . as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God” (p. 9); and
- WHEREAS every constitution of an LCC congregation contains a provision along these lines from the ‘Sample Constitution and Bylaws for LCC Congregations’: “Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public worship of this congregation and in all ministerial acts as to conform to the confessional standard of Article III. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such books shall be used as conform to this standard” (p. 3); and
- WHEREAS every pastor and deacon of LCC, at the time of their ordination/consecration/installation into office, confesses the Unaltered Augsburg Confession “to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church;” and promises to “perform the duties of [their] office in accordance with these Confessions“ (*Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, p. 179, 220); and
- WHEREAS in his essay at the 1863 Convention of the LCMS, C. F. W. Walther said: “When we discover how little most of our congregations know about the Symbols (confessional writings), it must humble us deeply, and on the other hand become for us a mighty incentive to familiarize the people with them and urge them to read [and study] them diligently” (C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, Vol. I, p. 78); and
- WHEREAS the year 2030 will be the 500th Anniversary of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Synod President, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, strike an anniversary committee to prepare and gather study guides, provide worship materials, articles for *The Canadian Lutheran* periodical, and the like on the Augsburg Confession; and be it further
- RESOLVED that pastors, deacons and congregations be encouraged to make use of such materials; and be it further
- RESOLVED that circuit forums and convocations, regional gatherings, church workers conferences, youth and young adult gatherings, LWMLC zone rallies, and the like be focused on this anniversary; and be it further
- RESOLVED that such materials be made available for dissemination to the pastors, deacons, and congregations of LCC at least two years prior to our 2030 Convention; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the theme of the 2030 Synod Convention be based upon the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession.

Motion C26.20: To adopt Resolution 26.2.06

Action: Adopted

Responsive Prayer 2 – Rev. Vince Moore

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Recess

President Teuscher declared the third session in recess until 7:00 pm at 3:56 pm (CDT)

MINUTES – Session 4

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the fourth session to order at 7:00 pm (CDT)

Rev. Schnarr opened the session with a word of prayer.

Registration Committee Report – Rev. Tom Kruesel, Chairman

Voting Pastor Delegates – 143

Voting Lay Delegates – 148

TOTAL VOTING – 291

Advisory Delegates – 12

Advisory Representatives – 20

Registered Visitors – 18

Invited Guests – 11

TOTAL – 61

Exhibitors – 11

Staff/ Contractors – 28

Spouses – 38

TOTAL – 77

President Teuscher reported that the Ottawa Circuit met to vote for Circuit Counsellor.

First Ballot

Matthew Habermas – 8

Aaron Astley – 7

President Teuscher declared Rev. Matthew Habermas elected.

Elections for Board of Directors – Commission on Nominations and Elections, Rod Johnson, Co-Chairman

Nominations from the Floor for lay members on the BOD:

None

Rod Johnson presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

James Frey (Central) - 142 (57.3%)
David Patrick (Central) -100 (40.3%)
Lois Griffin (East) – 124 (50%)
Darryll Holland (East) – 122 (49.2%)
Reg Tiegs (East) – 116 (46.8%)
Delton Zehr (East) – 74 (29.8%)
d’Arcy Gamble (West) – 92 (37.1%)
Doug Petersen (West) – 134 (54%)
Shaun Visser(West) –122 (49.2%)

Pres. Teuscher declared James Frey and Doug Peterson elected to the BOD. Delton Zehr received the lowest number of votes and was dropped from the second ballot.

Rod Johnson presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Second Ballot

David Patrick (Central) 123 (49.6%)
Lois Griffin (East) – 132 (53.2%)
Darryll Holland (East) – 121 (48.8%)
Reg Tiegs (East) – 94 (37.9%)
Shaun Visser(West) –123 (49.6%)
d’Arcy Gamble (West) – 98 (39.5%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Lois Griffin elected to the BOD. Reg Tiegs received the lowest number of votes and was dropped from the third ballot.

Rod Johnson presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Third Ballot

David Patrick (Central) – 105 (43.4%)
Darryll Holland (East) – 130 (53.7%)
Shaun Visser(West) – 117 (48.3%)
d’Arcy Gamble (West) – 94 (38.8%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Darryll Holland elected to the BOD. D’Arcy Gamble received the lowest number of votes and was dropped from the third ballot.

Rod Johnson presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Fourth Ballot

David Patrick (Central) – 107(45.5%)
Shaun Visser(West) – 128 (54.5%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Shaun Visser elected to the BOD.

Nominations from the Floor for pastor/clergy members on the BOD:

None

Rev. David Dressler and Rev. Aaron Gust were removed as they were previously elected to other positions.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

Rev. Alex Klages (Central) – 200 (75.8%)
Rev. Aaron Astley (East) – 184 (69.7%)
Rev. Kurt Lantz (East) – 124 (47.0%)
Rev. Mark Hennig (West) – 137 (51.9%)
Rev. Tom Kruesel (West) -120 (45.5%)

Rev. Alex Klages, Rev. Aaron Astley and Rev. Mark Hennig were elected to the BOD.

Nominations from the Floor for deacon member on the BOD:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

Dcn. Amanda Hastings (Central) – 131 (51.6%)
Dcn. Lenora Simpson (East) – 123 (48.4%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Dcn. Amanda Hastings elected to the BOD.

Greetings – Seminary Presidents –

Rev. Jonathan Kraemer, Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, President
Rev. Dr. Thomas Winger, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, President

Elections for Commission on Nominations and Elections

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Nominations from the Floor for the Commission on Nominations and Elections:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First ballot

Rod Johnson (Central) - 176 (70.4%)

Wendy Chant (East) - 153 (61.2%)

Rhonda Abando (West) - 85 (34.0%)

Josh Bentley (West) - 94 (37.6%)

Karen Hildebrandt (West) - 86 (34.4%)

Elizabeth Schieman (West) - 106 (42.4%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Rod Johnson and Wendy Chant elected to the CNE. Rhonda Abando received the lowest number of votes and was dropped from the second ballot.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Second Ballot

Josh Bentley (West) - 74 (29.1%)

Karen Hildebrandt (West) - 78 (30.7%)

Elizabeth Schieman (West) - 102 (40.2%)

Josh Bentley received the lowest number of votes and was dropped from the second ballot.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Third Ballot

Karen Hildebrandt (West) – 99 (40.1%)

Elizabeth Schieman (West) -148 (59.9%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Elizabeth Schieman elected to the CNE.

Clergy Members for the CNE

Nominations from the Floor for clergy members the Commission on Nominations and Elections:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

Rev. Glenn Worcester (Central) – 184 (71.3%)
Rev. Kurt Lantz (East) – 193 (74.8%)
Rev. Kurt Reinhardt (East) – 192 (74.4%)
Rev. Scott Brayall (West) – 170 (65.9%)
Rev. Phillip Washeim (West) – 208 (80.6%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Rev. Glenn Worcester, Rev. Kurt Lantz, Rev. Kurt Reinhardt, Rev. Phillip Washeim elected to the CNE.

Greetings from Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) – Rick Hiemstra

Elections for the Commission on Theology and Church Relations

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Nominations from the Floor for the lay member on the Commission on Theology and Church Relations:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

Mathew Block (Central) - 226 (87.3%)
Shane Kelly (East) – 46 (17.8%)
Daniel Smilek (East) - 127 (49.0%)
Archie Richardson (West) - 98 (37.8%)

Matthew Block was declared elected to the Commission on Theology and Church. Since no other candidates received a majority, Shane Kelly's name was dropped from the next ballot and a second ballot was presented to delegates.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Second Ballot

Daniel Smilek (East) – 140 (56.7%)
Archie Richardson (West) - 107 (43.3%)

Daniel Smilek was declared elected to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

Nominations from the Floor for clergy member Commission on Theology and Church Relations

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot

Rev. Jack Hetzel (East) – 65 (25.8%)
Rev. Joel Kuhl (East) – 188 (74.6%)
Rev. Paul Williams (East) – 56 (22.2%)
Rev. Mike Keith (West) – 176 (69.8%)

Rev. Joel Kuhl and Rev. Mike Keith were declared elected to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Close of the Day Daily Prayer – Rev. Cam Schnarr

Recess – President Teuscher declared the convention in recess until 8:15 am at 8:43 pm (CDT)

MINUTES – Session 5

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the fifth session to order at 8:16 am (CDT)

Office of Matins – Rev. Kurt Lantz and Rev. Robert Mohns

Bible Study – Rev. Dr. James Kellerman

Rev. Dr. Kellerman led us in a study of Ephesians 2, reflecting on the convention theme.

Registration Committee Report – Rev. Tom Kruesel, Chairman

Voting Pastor Delegates – 143

Voting Lay Delegates – 148

TOTAL VOTING – 291

Advisory Delegates – 12

Advisory Representatives – 20

Registered Visitors – 18

Invited Guests – 11

TOTAL– 61

Exhibitors – 11

Staff/ Contractors – 28

Spouses – 38

TOTAL - 77

Quorum remains and the Convention continued.

Approval of Minutes

Using pages K.5 through K.34 in the latest edition of “*Today’s Business*”—the minutes of the previous session were presented

Motion C26-21: That the minutes of the 13th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church-Canada, June 13, 2026, Session 2, 3 and 4 be adopted as amended (page K.8: The results of voting need to be switched Rev. Jan Pastucha – 57 (48.7%), Rev. Michael Schutz – 60 (51.6%) Page K.10: Inserted a line regarding the election for Circuit Counsellor for the Hanover Circuit “President Teuscher declared Rev. Kenneth Maher elected.” Page K.11: For the Circuit Counsellor for the Peace River Circuit the line “President Teuscher declared Rev. Vishal Paul elected.” was changed to “President Teuscher declared Rev. Terrance Goerz elected.” Page K30: The voting results were corrected as follows: David Patrick - 107 (45.5%), Shaun Visser 128 (54.5%). Page K.7 The results of the election for Rev. Joel Kuhl were corrected as follows: 129 (46.1%). An editorial error in the numbering of motions was corrected.

ACTION: Adopted

Greetings from Concordia University Chicago (CUC) – Dr. Chad Kendall

Resolutions Committee #1 (Handbook and Structure) – Rev. Aaron Astley, Chairman

RESOLUTION 26.1.02a TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE STATUTORY BYLAWS OF LUTHERAN CHURCH – CANADA

(Reference Overture 1.02, 1.08, and 1.09)

- WHEREAS the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (CCMS) of LCC has as one of its mandates to “Conduct a continuing review of the structure of LCC...” (Cf. Synodical Bylaw 2.063a.1); and
- WHEREAS this review has been completed; and
- WHEREAS it would take too much Convention time to approve each update one at a time; and
- WHEREAS sufficient time on the Convention floor to discuss and approve additional changes to the proposed LCC 2026 Handbook will be allotted at this Convention; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED that LCC in Convention approve the following changes to the Statutory Bylaws as a whole:

Statutory Bylaws

- 8.19 Each region shall send one advisory delegate for every 30 advisory pastors (or fraction thereof) and one advisory delegate for every 30 deacons (or fraction thereof) on the roster of the Synod assigned to the region. Any rostered pastor is advisory if he is not a voting delegate. Each region shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category. Additionally, one deacon at large shall be elected so that a minimum of four deacons (at least one from each region by numerical representation and one deacon at large) shall act as advisory delegates at convention. Whether the election occurs in person or remotely, nominations should be sought from the region’s advisory pastors (in relation to the pastoral advisory delegate) and the region’s deacons (in relation to the diaconal delegate) prior to voting. The election of the deacon at large shall be made by a paper or electronic ballot arranged by the ~~Regional Pastor~~ *secretary*, with nominations from the deacons of LCC preceding the election and with each deacon on the roster eligible to participate. The elections of the regional diaconal delegates and the election of the deacon at large shall not run concurrently so as to allow unelected nominees from one election to be nominated for the other. Such elections must be completed at least 90 days prior to the opening day of the Convention. ~~The Regional Pastor will inform the Secretary of the Synod of the results.~~
- 11.21 The Board may fill any vacancy on the Board, or in the office of the vice-president, *or regional pastor*, by appointment of a qualified individual to hold such office for the balance of the unexpired term.
- 11.23 The Board shall appoint the chief administrative officer who shall be an employee of LCC. The chief administrative officer shall discharge the non-ecclesiastical responsibilities assigned to the chief administrative officer by the Board. The chief administrative officer shall be responsible for preparing annual budgets to be presented to the Board as well as preparing a four-year forecast to be presented to each quadrennial Convention. The chief administrative officer shall encourage offerings for the work of LCC on regional, national and international levels; keep an exact record of all moneys received and expended by LCC; administer LCC’s financial affairs; and at

any time submit to an examination of the chief administrative officer's books and accounts by an auditing committee when so ordered by the Board or a Convention.

and be it finally

RESOLVED that these changes be incorporated into the 2026 Handbook of LCC.

Motion C26.22: To adopt Resolution 26.1.02a

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.11 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE SYNODICAL BYLAWS

(Reference Overture 1.02)

WHEREAS the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (CCMS) of LCC has as one of its mandates to "Conduct a continuing review of the structure of LCC..." (Cf. Synodical Bylaw 2.063a.1); and

WHEREAS this review has been completed; and

WHEREAS it would take too much Convention time to approve each update one at a time; and

WHEREAS sufficient time on the Convention floor to discuss and approve additional changes to the proposed LCC 2026 Handbook will be allotted at this Convention; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that LCC in Convention approve the following changes to the Synodical Bylaws as a whole:

Synodical Bylaws

- 1.009 Every pastor and every deacon shall, in accordance with ~~his~~ *their* vocation, ~~his~~ *their* ability, and the means at ~~his~~ *their* command, diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word, deed, and adequate financial support.
- 1.011d A pastor or a deacon who is an Individual Member serving an educational institution which is a part of the Synodical Family shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the ~~president~~ *regional pastor*.
- 1.013b During the period that the suspension is in effect, the Member shall have "Suspended Status" as provided by bylaw 5.037 and shall be ineligible for service in Lutheran Church-Canada ~~or a congregation~~. All records of Lutheran Church-Canada shall reflect this fact.
- 1.019b The elected officers of Lutheran Church-Canada serve ~~LCC~~ in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them by the Statutory Bylaws, Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws or by a Convention.
 - c. The Board of Directors serves ~~LCC~~ in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to it by the Statutory Bylaws, Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws or by a Convention.
 - d. Each commission ~~also~~ serves ~~LCC~~ in a specific area of program or ministry in accordance with the Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws.
- 2.003 Congregations shall not require their delegates to vote in accordance with specific instructions, but every delegate shall be permitted to vote according to his/her own

- conviction. Delegates are nevertheless responsible to their congregation, whom they represent, and shall attempt to discover the sentiment of the communicant members thereof. They shall be expected to be faithful in attendance at all sessions of the Convention. After each Convention they shall report the actions of the Convention to their congregation. *The delegate will serve until the next Convention.*
- 2.031 Individuals shall be elected with one appointment by the president ~~at Convention~~ to the following commissions:
- d. A Commission ~~for on~~ Nominations and Elections (CNE)
- 2.069c The president, ~~in consultation with the vice-president,~~ shall appoint one additional member
- 2.087b The president, ~~in consultation with the vice-president,~~ shall appoint one additional member.
- 2.093 The president, vice-president and the regional pastors shall form the President's Ministry Council. The Council shall meet at least bi-annually and in addition at the call of the president or at the request of ~~one-third~~ *two* of the members of the President's Ministry Council:
- 2.093d ~~To give guidance regarding inter-church relations: (re-letter the subsequent bullet points)~~
- 2.099a The CNE shall nominate candidates for all individual and group positions except the president, ~~or vice-president,~~ *regional pastors, and circuit counsellors.*
- 2.099g.6 The CNE shall notify each candidate and shall secure his approval in writing for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot. Each candidate shall reply within ten (10) ~~days~~ as to his willingness to serve if elected.
- 2.099h.6 The CNE shall notify each candidate and shall secure his approval in writing for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot. Each candidate shall reply within ten (10) ~~days~~ as to his willingness to serve if elected.
- 2.101j Candidates shall be vetted by the ~~president in consultation with the Regional Pastors. Regional pastors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process delegates in the nominating and election processes.~~
- 2.101k *Regional Mission and Ministry Councils*
Candidates shall be vetted by the delegates in the nominating and election processes.
- 2.101kl Candidates shall be vetted by the ~~regional pastor in consultation with the other pastors and deacons in the same circuit. Circuit counsellors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process delegates in the nominating and election processes.~~
- 2.101lm The CNE shall confirm the previous vetting of anyone nominated from the floor for any elected position *except for the offices of president, vice-president, regional pastor, and circuit counsellor.* Nominations from the floor shall be accepted if the conditions for candidacy including vetting are fulfilled.
- 2.103e An elected officer can hold an appointed position in addition to their elected office but not another elected office. (Cf. Synodical Bylaw ~~2.75~~ *2.051*)
- 2.103f.3 Regional Pastors *to be elected only by voting delegates of that region.*
- 2.103f.4 Circuit Counsellors *to be elected only by voting delegates of that circuit.*
- 2.103f.10 Regional Mission and Ministry Councils *to be elected only by voting delegates of that region.*
- 3.005 The expectations of a regional pastor include:
- a. Visit each Member located in his region ~~annually~~ *at least once every four years* in addition to specific invitations he may receive from Member Congregations and Individual Members in that region,

- 4.001 *At least two years before each Convention, Regional Pastors and Regional Mission and Ministry Councils shall review the composition of Circuits in their region and recommend re-drawing ~~Each~~ circuit boundaries* such that each shall consist of not less than ~~three~~ *six* or more than twelve congregations ~~involving~~ *comprising* an aggregate communicant membership of a maximum of ~~8,000~~ *10,000*. ~~Exceptions to these requirements and limitations can be made only by the president upon request of a Regional Mission and Ministry Council.~~
- ~~4.005 Every Member congregation in each circuit shall nominate as candidates for the office of circuit counsellor two men from among the pastors of congregations of the circuit or from among the emeriti who hold membership in one of the member congregations of that circuit. The nominations shall be made at least three months prior to the elections and shall be submitted to the secretary. Candidates shall be vetted by the Regional Pastor in consultation with the other pastors and deacons in the same circuit. Circuit Counsellors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process. The qualifications for this position include:~~
- ~~a. Membership in good standing on the roster;~~
- ~~b. Demonstrated spiritual and pastoral leadership;~~
- ~~— The names of the vetted candidates shall be submitted to the Commission on Nominations and Elections. The Commission on Nominations and Elections shall provide an open ballot at the Convention providing the Commission on Nominations and Elections has confirmed the vetting of anyone nominated from the floor and that such candidates meet the conditions for candidacy. The election of circuit counsellor shall be made by the delegates of the respective circuit providing the Commission on Nominations and Elections has confirmed the vetting of anyone nominated from the floor and that such candidates meet the conditions for candidacy. The regional pastor, in consultation with the president, shall fill any vacancies for circuit counsellor that may occur between Conventions.~~
- (Renumber B. Officers 1. Circuit Counsellor)*
- ~~4.009c The regional pastor, in consultation with the president, shall fill any vacancies for circuit counsellor that may occur between Conventions.~~
- 4.013 *A Non-member congregation is one that has not had a congregational constitution submitted to Synod for review and approval.* The jurisdiction of circuit counsellors shall include non-member congregations whose pastors are Members of LCC, but for the purpose of official visits in such a congregation the consent of the congregation shall first be secured
- 4.023e Allow for *confidential* sharing *of* cases of ~~ecclesial~~ *ministry anomalies and challenges* ~~in confidence~~ within the circuit pastors group.
- 5.001a.2 Member Congregations which violate this requirement and persist in such violation shall after due admonition ~~from the Regional Pastor~~ forfeit their membership in Lutheran Church-Canada.
- 5.001b.1 The term "deacon" shall include both male and female Members of the diaconate who have accepted a call having been:
- (i) Prepared and certified in our church's professional church worker program ~~(e.g. teacher, director of parish services, parish nurse);~~
- (ii) Prepared and certified through a certified program of the LCMS ~~(e.g. teacher, Director of Christian Education, Director of Evangelism, deaconess, parish worker, lay minister).~~
- 5.003 Member Congregations shall seek the advice of the respective regional pastors *and Circuit Counsellor* when calling pastors or deacons.

- 5.005a a. Lutheran congregations not members of LCC making application to LCC for pastors or deacons to serve them shall also have the benefit of such official advice from the appropriate regional pastor *and Circuit Counsellor*.
- 5.009 A pastor if requested by a ~~non-Lutheran~~ congregation *outside of our Synodical fellowship* without a minister to fill its pulpit, may do so for a longer or shorter period of time, in order that such a congregation may hear the Word of God expounded in its truth and purity. Under such circumstances a pastor will not ~~publicly~~ celebrate the Lord's Supper *with any person* in that congregation. If such a congregation desires to extend a regular call to a pastor, the conditions as provided in bylaw 5.007c must be observed.
- 5.013a.1 He shall have completed the prescribed courses of study and have received a diploma from a seminary which has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding or have fulfilled the requisites for colloquy according to the Handbook, Bylaws 5.047 to ~~5.061~~ *5.063*, or have completed all requisites for the PAT program according to 5.089.
- 5.035e The records maintained by the respective regional pastor shall reflect the restricted status. In addition, the regional pastor shall notify in writing the president and all other ~~district presidents~~ *regional pastors* of such restricted status. The regional pastor shall also notify the congregation or other agency being served by the Member of the restricted status to take appropriate action so that the rights of both the Member and congregation or other agency are preserved.
- 5.043 The order for the ordination and commissioning, or commissioning of a missionary called into a foreign field shall be issued ~~upon the request of by the Board~~ *upon the request of the International Missions Committee by the regional pastor of that region in which the missionary resides*. The order for the commissioning of missionaries for service within a region of the Synod shall be issued *by the Board upon the request of the regional pastor of that region*.
- 5.073 After the regional pastor has furnished the Committee with the required documents the committee shall publish the request of the applicant in the official periodical(s) of LCC. ~~Within a reasonable amount of time the~~ *The* Committee shall either accept or deny the application based on the information it receives in the application process *and render its decision within six months*. Its decision shall not be subject to any appeal.
- 5.083 The PAT Committee is composed of four members who serve ~~two~~ *four*-year terms: the PAT Coordinator *appointed by the PAT Committee*, one member appointed by each seminary and one member of the President's Ministry Council, who shall serve as chairman of the PAT Committee.
- 5.089b The program includes onsite training under the tutelage of a local mentoring pastor. Regular interviews will be conducted with the PAT student by regional pastors, seminary representatives, and the ~~supervisor~~ *coordinator* of the program.
- 5.089d In consultation with the PAT Committee, the ~~supervisor~~ *coordinator* shall administer the appropriate qualifying program and, when all requirements have been met, the PAT Committee will recommend the student to the President's Ministry Council for certification.
- VI. HIGHER EDUCATION ~~Section 1.~~ Seminaries
- 12.001a Requirements. An organization desiring auxiliary status may apply to the Convention, through the Board, if it satisfies the following requirements:
5. It is classified by Canada ~~Customs and~~ Revenue Agency as a charitable organization;
- 12.001b Responsibilities. An approved auxiliary shall:
4. ~~K~~*keep* LCC advised of any new program under consideration;
and be it finally

RESOLVED that these changes be incorporated into the 2026 Handbook of LCC.

Motion C26.23: To adopt Resolution 26.1.11

Action: Adopted

Resolution 26.01.12 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO SYNODICAL BYLAW 2.007F.

WHEREAS Resolution 17.03.05 was passed by the 2017 Synodical Convention; and

WHEREAS the wording of Resolution 17.03.05 was inadvertently omitted from the 2017 Handbook.

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the wording of Resolution 17.03.05 be included in the 2026 Handbook

and be if finally

RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 2.007f read as follows

All reports and overtures accepted by the president in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs shall be referred by him to convention committees appointed by him in the name of the Convention from among the voting delegates and advisors. Pastors, deacons (to the extent possible), and laymen shall be represented on all committees. The president shall notify committee members of their appointment and of the time and place of their first meeting no later than twelve (12) weeks before the start of the Convention. The committee rosters shall be published in the official periodicals of LCC, at least one of which must appear no less than 10 weeks before the Convention.

In order to expedite the transaction of business, the President shall refer all overtures submitted, with the exception of those listed in Synodical Bylaw 2.007c to the convention to Resolutions Committees. The purpose of the Resolutions Committees is to organize the overtures received and present them as resolutions to the convention. It is not the purpose of the Resolutions Committees to change the intent of the overtures submitted. They can, however, combine overtures on a similar topic into one resolution. They can also recommend to decline an overture.

The Resolutions Committees shall not create or present resolutions that do not originate from properly submitted reports and overtures. If the president deems it advisable, he may convene any committees prior to the opening of the Convention. The first issue of Today's Business shall be issued containing tentative resolutions. This issue of Today's Business shall be sent to all registered delegates of the Convention and to each Member Congregation.

Motion C26.24: To adopt Resolution 26.1.12

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.10 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.019 TO ALLOW SUB-REGIONAL PASTORS AND DEACONS CONFERENCES TO SUBMIT OVERTURES TO CONVENTION

(Reference Overture 1.12)

WHEREAS the West and Central Regions of LCC are geographically vast; and

WHEREAS these distances make travel costs to a Pastors and Deacons conference of the full Region exorbitant, so that in both Regions full Regional conferences only happen once a quadrennium, and sub-Regional conferences for the Pastors and Deacons are the norm, and those sub-Regions have been for many years defined as follows (Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba/northwest Ontario); and

WHEREAS East Region's travel and room and board costs are such that they are able to have official conferences of the full region twice a year; and

WHEREAS this circumstance disadvantages West and Central Regions from discussing, considering, and submitting overtures for the benefit of Lutheran Church-Canada;

Therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Conferences of sub-Regions (as defined by the PMC) be authorized to submit overtures to Convention; and be it finally

RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 3.019.c be amended as follows:
c. The plenary and the sectional meetings of official conferences and of official conferences of sub-Regions (as defined by the PMC) may adopt and submit overtures to the Convention.

Motion C26.25: To adopt Resolution 26.1.10

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.03 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.009.a.1

(Reference Overture 1.03)

WHEREAS the current structure of the Regional Mission and Ministry Councils (RMMCs) does not include rostered deacons; and

WHEREAS deacons are valuable members of Synod who serve in designated deacon roles on other boards and commissions, and in advisory roles at Convention; and

WHEREAS the current wording of the Bylaw 3.009.a.1 excludes deacons from having an official role on the RMMCs; and

WHEREAS excluding deacons from serving their regions with their unique and specific perspective and gifts is a loss to the Synod; therefore be it

RESOLVED that if possible, each RMMC should include one deacon currently serving in the applicable region; and be it finally

RESOLVED that Bylaw 3.009.a.1 be amended to include the following as the final sentence: “If there is a deacon in a region who is willing and able to serve on the RMMC, he or she shall be appointed to the RMMC by the Regional Pastor.”

Motion C26.26: To adopt Resolution 26.1.03

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.04 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 5.039 REINSTATEMENT

(Reference Overture 1.04)

WHEREAS the Synodical Bylaws provide provision for reinstatement of a Pastor or Deacon to the roster of LCC (Synodical Bylaw 5.039); and

WHEREAS the current procedure allows for only a yes or no by the President’s Ministry Council; and

WHEREAS there may be situations where it is more appropriate for the President’s Ministry Council to conditionally reinstate a Pastor or Deacon; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the text of Synodical Bylaw 5.039 be amended to read:

All applications for reinstatement to the clergy or diaconal roster shall be addressed to the regional pastor of the region in which the applicant resided at the time his/her membership was suspended. The regional pastor shall review the matter and report it to the President’s Ministry Council, with or without recommendation. ~~The President’s Ministry Council shall decide the issue by means of a written ballot.~~

The President’s Ministry Council may decide yes, no, or a conditional reinstatement. A conditional reinstatement may include provisions of necessary supervision, internship, training, and the like. The applicant shall be made aware of the conditions and expectations required to remove the conditions.

If the applicant is reinstated, the Regional Pastor shall announce this fact in the official periodicals of LCC;

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.27: To adopt Resolution 26.1.04

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.05 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAWS REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT IN RESTRICTED AND SUSPENDED STATUS

(Reference Overture 1.05)

WHEREAS prior to restructuring, the individual Districts were separately incorporated entities; and

WHEREAS as such the District President was the chief ecclesiastical officer of the District and therefore it was appropriate that the District President was responsible for restricting or suspending members; and

WHEREAS since restructuring there is only one corporation with the Synod President as chief ecclesiastical officer (Statutory Bylaw Article XI 11.11); therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Synodical Bylaws be amended to provide that the Synod President as chief ecclesiastical officer be responsible for restricting or suspending members; and be it further

RESOLVED that the following amendments be made to the Synodical Bylaws to reflect this, namely:

1.013.a be amended to read:

If information with respect to a pastor or deacon who is a Member of Lutheran Church-Canada is made known to or becomes known by the Regional Pastor and the Regional Pastor, after a reasonable investigation, believes that there may be a basis, given the nature of the circumstances, for suspending the membership of the person, the regional pastor *shall make report to the President. The President in consultation with the PMC* may suspend that person's membership until the matter is satisfactorily resolved or the applicable reconciliation and adjudication procedures, as set forth in Chapter VII of these Bylaws, can be completed.

And 5.035.a be amended to read:

a. A pastor or deacon may have his/her status restricted to the extent deemed necessary and appropriate by the ~~regional pastor who has ecclesiastical supervision of the Member.~~ *President as chief ecclesiastical officer. The President in consultation with the PMC* ~~The regional pastor~~ may take this action if information with respect to such Member provides a substantial basis to conclude that such a Member...

And 5.035.d be amended to read:

d. Restricted status shall normally be limited to one year. To extend the restricted status beyond this period, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall ~~secure the approval of~~ *consult with* the President's Ministry Council. ~~Such approval must be secured~~ *This extension shall* be reviewed annually until such time as the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* removes this status. In such cases, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall thereafter notify the pastor or deacon on restricted status in writing as to the reasons for such continuance of restricted status...

And 5.035.e be amended to read:

e. The records maintained by the ~~respective regional pastor~~ *President* shall reflect the restricted status. In addition, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall notify in writing the ~~president and all Regional Pastors~~ and ~~other LCMS~~ district presidents of such restricted status. The ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall also notify the congregation or other agency being served by the Member of the restricted status to take appropriate action so that the rights of both the Member and congregation or other agency are preserved.

And 5.037.c be amended to read:

c. When a Member is placed on suspended status, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* as chief ecclesiastical officer shall

2. notify, in writing, ~~the president~~ all ~~other~~ regional pastors of the affected Member's suspended status; And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.28: To adopt Resolution 26.1.05

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.01a TO DECLINE OVERTURE 1.01

(Reference Overture 1.01)

WHEREAS Statutory Bylaw 15.11 states that the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors “shall develop policies to be administered by the chief administrative officer governing the employment and remuneration of all executive staff and employees of LCC”; and

WHEREAS the proposed change to the title of the Associate Director – Family Ministries would require a corresponding change to the position's remuneration; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that Overture 1.01 be respectfully declined; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the title change proposed in Overture 1.01 be referred to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors for consideration.

Motion C26.29: To adopt Resolution 26.1.01a

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.06 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.005

(Reference Overture 1.06)

WHEREAS prior to restructuring the District Presidents were “entitled to attend and to participate in meetings of the Board as non-voting advisors.” (Statutory Bylaw 11.04, 2014 LCC Handbook); and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are the equivalent successor role to that of the District Presidents; and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are the closest source of information for the Board of what is happening amongst the pastors, deacons, and congregations of Lutheran Church–Canada; and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are not merely staff of LCC but rather are called Pastors exercising ecclesiastical oversight in their respective regions and through the PMC; and

WHEREAS the right to provide input at the Board of Director meetings was removed from the 2017 Handbook; therefore be it

RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 3.005 be amended as follows:

- d. Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors, exercising voice but no vote.
- ~~d.e.~~ Attend all meetings of the Regional Mission and Ministry Council,
- ~~e.f.~~ Attend all meetings of the President's Ministry Council.
- ~~f.g.~~ Work collaboratively with the president, the Regional Mission and Ministry Council, circuit counsellors and the Members in that region,
- ~~g.h.~~ Negotiate other expectations in the annual review process.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.30: To adopt Resolution 26.1.06

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.07 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 5.033

(Reference Overture 1.07)

WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw 5.033 provides for pastors and deacons to be on Candidate Status in such a way that requires their ability to perform the full duties of 5.029 (Active Status); and

WHEREAS there are situations where a pastor or deacon may be able to serve in a limited capacity; therefore be it

RESOLVED that bylaw 5.033 be amended as follows:

CURRENT:

5.033 Candidate Status

a. A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices of ministry specified in bylaw 5.029 but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for such status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the candidate status beyond two consecutive years, a bi-annual application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for candidate status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.

b. Among criteria for determining whether candidate status should be granted or extended are: the health of the applicant; family considerations; the extent of his/her current involvement on a part-time and assisting basis in the ministry of Word and Sacrament; a demonstrated history and current ability of being able to perform the duties of an active pastor or deacon serving a Member Congregation or other position recognized by LCC; a demonstrated willingness to consider a call or appointment to a position recognized by LCC.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

5.033 Candidate Status

- a. A pastor or deacon may apply for either Full Candidate Status or Limited Candidate Status.
- b. **Full Candidate Status:** A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices specified in bylaw 5.029 but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for Full Candidate Status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the candidate status beyond two consecutive years, a biennial application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for Full Candidate Status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.
- c. While on Full Candidate Status, the pastor or deacon is eligible for a call.
- d. **Limited Candidate Status:** A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices of ministry specified in bylaw 5.029 in a limited capacity but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for Limited Candidate Status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the Limited Candidate Status beyond two consecutive years, a biennial application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for Limited Candidate Status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.
- e. While on Limited Candidate Status, the pastor or deacon is not eligible for a call.
- f. Among the criteria for determining whether a candidate shall be granted or extended either Full or Limited Candidate Status are: the health of the applicant; family considerations; the extent of his/her current involvement on a part-time and assisting basis in ministry; a demonstrated history and current ability of being able to perform the duties of an active pastor or deacon serving a Member Congregation or other position recognized by LCC; a demonstrated willingness to consider a call or appointment to a position recognized by LCC.
- g. A candidate or his/her Regional Pastor may request a change from Limited Candidate Status to Full Candidate Status if circumstances change. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not such a request shall be granted.

Motion C26.31: To adopt Resolution 26.1.07

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.08 TO REQUEST THAT A NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING COMMITTEE BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(Reference Overture 1.10)

WHEREAS LCC's National Youth Gathering (NYG) has been a valuable triennial event for youth and adults across LCC; and

WHEREAS the NYG was operated under the auspices of the LCC Board for Parish Services (BPS) which oversaw all Synodical Youth programming from 1989 to 2002

- WHEREAS the NYG has operated independently since the BPS was dissolved in 2002 and desires to be within the formal structure of LCC for the purposes of support, encouragement, resource sharing, and the like; and
- WHEREAS the Board of Directors and the NYG Committee have been working together over the past quadrennium to formalize the relationship between the NYG and LCC; and
- WHEREAS the Board of Directors approved a motion in October of 2025 making the National Youth Gathering Committee an Ad Hoc Committee of LCC with the goal of seeking approval at the 2026 LCC Convention for making the National Youth Gathering Committee a Standing Committee of LCC; therefore be it
- RESOLVED That Article XV Section 15.03 of the Statutory Bylaws be amended by adding to the list of standing committees the following “National Youth Gathering Committee”; and be it finally
- RESOLVED That a new section be added to Article XV as follows “The National Youth Gathering Committee shall plan, organize, and carry out the National Youth Gathering every three years or at some other time frame as may be established.”

Motion C26.32: To adopt Resolution 26.1.08

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.09 TO REQUEST THAT AN ARCHIVES COMMITTEE BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(Reference Overture 1.11)

- WHEREAS In October of 2023 the Board of Directors of LCC approved the appointment of an ad hoc Archives Committee to formulate, review, and recommend policies relating to the orderly acquiring, preserving, processing, and making available the records and cultural properties of Lutheran Church-Canada, its Boards, Committees, Regions, Agencies, Institutions, Auxiliaries, and Listed Service Organizations; and
- WHEREAS In November of 2024 the Board of Directors of LCC approved a motion stating that the Lutheran Church-Canada Board of Directors adopts as a long-term goal to have a centralized archive for Synod; and
- WHEREAS LCC has recently taken over ownership of the Malinsky Archives, formerly owned by Lutheran East District; and
- WHEREAS In October of 2025 the Board of directors of LCC approved a motion to sponsor an overture to the 2026 Convention to amend the Handbook to create an Archives Standing Committee; therefore be it
- RESOLVED That Article XV Section 15.03 of the Statutory Bylaws be amended by adding to the list of standing committees the following “Archives Committee”; and be it finally
- RESOLVED That a new section be added to Article XV as follows “The Archives committee shall formulate, review, and recommend policies relating to the orderly acquiring, preserving, and making available the records and cultural properties of Lutheran

Church-Canada, its Boards, Committees, and Regions and, upon request, assist where possible, its Agencies, Institutions, Auxiliaries, and Listed Service Organizations with the same.

Motion C26.33: To adopt Resolution 26.1.09

Action: Adopted

Elections for the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Nominations from the Floor - Lay:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Election Results

First Ballot - Lay

Barbara Darrah (West) - 75 (29.1%)
Valerie Edward (lawyer) (East) – 205 (79.5%)
Ronald Faulkner (West) – 107 (41.5%)
Timothy Lach (lawyer) (Central) – 208 (80.6%)
Cam Pelzer (Central) – 74 (28.7%)
Delton Zehr (East) – 82 (31.8%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Valerie Edward and Timothy Lach elected to the CCMS. Cam Pelzer received the lowest number of votes, so his name was dropped from the next ballot and a second ballot was presented to delegates.

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

Second Ballot

Barbara Darrah (West) - 75 (28.1%)
Ronald Faulkner (West) – 112 (43.1%)
Delton Zehr (East) – 73 (28.9%)

Because no candidate received a majority, and Delton Zehr received the lowest number of votes, his name was dropped from the next ballot and a third ballot was presented to delegates.

Third Ballot

Barbara Darrah (West) - 103 (41%)
Ronald Faulkner (West) – 148 (59%)

President Teuscher declared Ronald Faulkner elected to the CCMS.

Address to the Convention – President-elect Rev. David Haberstock

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Noon Daily Prayer – Rev. Cam Schnarr

Recess – President Teuscher declared the convention in recess until 1:30 pm at 12:12 pm (CDT)

MINUTES - Session 6

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the second session to order at 1:41 pm (CDT)

Prayer for the Afternoon's Work

Elections for the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Rostered Workers

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

First Ballot

Rev. Jeffery Dul (West)
Rev. Andrew McDonald (West)
Rev. Brian Falkenholt (West)

Pres. Teuscher declared Rev. Jeffery Dul, Rev. Andrew McDonald, Rev. Brian Falkenholt by acclamation to the CCMS.

Elections for the Regional Mission and Ministry Councils

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

First Ballot

Nominations from the Floor for RMMC:

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.
President Teuscher called for voting on the Ballot.

First Ballot

Results

Larry Durand (Northland Circuit) – 5 (71.4%)
Kirsten Guggenmos (Northland Circuit) – 2 (28.6%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Larry Durand elected to the Central Region RMMC

Josh Bentley (Edmonton Circuit) – 8 (53.3%)

Darla Hennig (Edmonton Circuit) – 7 (46.7%)

Pres. Teuscher declared Josh Bentley elected to the West Region RMMC
Elections for the remaining positions will occur later in the day.

President Teuscher turned the chair over to Rev. Michael Schutz

Recognition of Retiring President and Regional Pastor

Rev. Schutz paid tribute to Rev. Mohns, who is retiring as West Regional Pastor. He then invited Rev. Bugbee forward to pay tribute to Rev. Teuscher, who is retiring as Synodical President. CAO Dwayne Cleave presented gifts to Rev. Mohns and Rev. Teuscher on behalf of the members of Synod.

Rev. Michael Schutz called Rev. Quast forward to introduce representatives of the LSO's and other entities and guests. He then turned the chair back to President Teuscher

Recognition of LSO's and Other Entities and Guests

The following representatives were introduced to the convention:

LSO's	
Andrew Jackson, Chair	Haiti Lutheran Mission Society
Doug Petersen, Chair	BC Mission Boat Society
Rev. Ron Mohr, Executive Director	Lutheran Bible Translators of Canada
Rev. Howard Ulmer, President	Malabar Mission Society
Rev. Robin Korsch, President	Philoxenia/Hospitality Ministry
Rev. Adam Chandler, President	Lutherans for Life Canada
Allen Schellenberg, Executive Director	Lutheran Foundation Canada

The following special guests were also recognized:

<u>OTHER ENTITIES AND GUESTS</u>	
Rev. Rick Hiemstra, Director of the Centre for Research on Church and Faith	The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC)
Rev. Dr. Cary Larson, Presiding Pastor	The American Association of Lutheran Churches
Rev. Niran Temsakun, Director of Missions	Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church
Rev. Michael Frese, Deputy Director of Church Relations	The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Greetings from the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod - Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison

Elections for the Regional Mission and Ministry Councils

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Election of the Remaining Slate for the Regional Mission and Ministry Councils

Reg Tiegs presented the slate.

In the following regions and circuits there was only one candidate nominated for each position.

Central Region

Assiniboine Circuit

Gloria Rathgeber

Ontario Circuit

Howard Fiskar (Ontario Circuit)

Red River Circuit

Gelane Bahiru (Red River Circuit)

Saskatoon Circuit

Denise Timm (Saskatoon Circuit)

Wascana Circuit

Barb Schentag (Wascana Circuit)

East Region

Hanover Circuit

Kim Kuhl (Hanover Circuit)

Kitchener Circuit

Anna Fierling (Kitchener Circuit)

Niagara Circuit

Scott Allan (Niagara Circuit)

Ottawa Circuit

Peter Dobias (Ottawa Circuit)

Stratford Circuit

Mark Rohfrietsch (Stratford Circuit)

Toronto Circuit

David Chant (Toronto Circuit)

Windsor Circuit

Matthew Zvrlic (Windsor Circuit)

West Region

Cariboo Circuit

Charles von Hahn (Cariboo Circuit)

Greater Vancouver Circuit

Braydan Pastucha

Okanagan Circuit

Hope Mendes (Okanagan Circuit)

Peace River Circuit

Rick Slater (Peace River Circuit)

Stony Plain Circuit

Tiffany Playter (Stony Plain Circuit)

Vancouver Island Circuit

Sonja Bland (Vancouver Island Circuit)

Motion C26.34: That the convention recognize the above people as the members for their respective RMMCs.

Action: Adopted

Circuits where there were no nominations will have a member appointed by the Regional Pastor.

Resolutions Committee #3 – Finance and Sundry Matters – Rev. Fraser Coltman, Chairman

**RESOLUTION 26.3.04 ON THE ROLE AND JURISDICTION OF LEGAL COUNSEL
WITHIN SYNOD**

(Reference Overture 3.05, 3.06, 3.13)

WHEREAS Lutheran Church–Canada recognizes in her Handbook that Holy Scripture is the only rule and norm of all doctrine and practice within our Synod, as is also expressed and defined in the witness of the Lutheran Confessions to which all pastors and congregations freely give their loyalty and assent, and

WHEREAS the Synodical Bylaws of LCC gives provision for legal counsel in the Synod's work and ministry to ensure that all things are done decently and in order with all due honour, respect, and harmony with the government and its laws, and

WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw 2.007c states that "overtures, which, upon the advice of legal counsel, may subject LCC or the corporate officers of LCC to civil liability, shall not be accepted for Convention consideration," and

WHEREAS LCC's unconditional subscription to Biblical and Confessional authority governs its entire Handbook, including Synodical Bylaw 2.007c;

WHEREAS the Synod's confession and public proclamation of its doctrine is not limited to only to what is permitted by civil law as defined by legal counsel, and

WHEREAS Scripture teaches that "we must obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29); therefore be it

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention affirm that legal counsel is needed, encouraged and welcomed to serve LCC with guidance and expertise with respect to matters pertaining to her life and work within the laws of the state; and be it further

RESOLVED that LCC affirms that the proper roles and limits of legal counsel in the life, policies, and theological confession of the Synod are subject to Holy Scripture as the sole rule and norm of all doctrine and practice; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the Synod President and CCMS be tasked with reviewing the Handbook over the next quadrennium, ensuring clarity with respect to the proper role and limits of the work of legal counsel.

Motion C26.35: To adopt Resolution 26.3.04

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.08 TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUING FORMATION FOR PASTORS AND
DEACONS**

(Reference Overture 3.11)

WHEREAS LCC convention resolution 17.02.07 requested guidance from the PMC regarding continuing education expectations for all church workers; and

WHEREAS growth in maturity in faith and life never ends in a Christian's earthly life; and

-
- WHEREAS no pastor or deacon is "fully formed" at the completion of formal church work programs and each one benefits from ongoing growth as he or she serves in their work; and
- WHEREAS the Biblical qualifications of church workers are grounded not only in professional competency but primarily in Christian's character and therefore it is appropriate to use a broad heading of "formation" which includes both; and
- WHEREAS LCC's core objectives explicitly include the effort to "recruit and train pastors, deacons, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth" (Constitution, Article III); and
- WHEREAS every pastor makes the commitment to diligence in the study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions and every deacon makes the commitment to growth in love and excellence in skill; and
- WHEREAS pastors and deacons face ever-changing challenges during the course of their work in the church; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Member Congregations of LCC and Synodical leadership strongly encourage LCC workers to be involved in continuing education and formation for their own benefit and the benefit of the whole church; and be it further
- RESOLVED that each pastor and deacon strive to develop and carry out a plan for his or her own continuing education and formation over the next quadrennium; and be it further
- RESOLVED that congregations, as recommended by LCC's Compensation Guidelines, strive to contribute to existing funding structures and opportunities for their pastors and deacons; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that LCC in convention direct the PMC to develop further guidance and expectations for continuing formation within the next quadrennium.

Motion C26.36: To adopt Resolution 26.3.08

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.06 TO RESPECTFULLY DECLINE OVERTURES 3.08 AND 3.09

(Reference Overture 3.08 and 3.09)

- WHEREAS the oversight of Domestic Missions has changed under Lutheran Church–Canada's new structure; and
- WHEREAS its organization is developing through the work of the Director of Domestic Missions, whose responsibilities are defined in an LCC job description, in partnership with Regional Pastors, RMMC's and congregations; and
- WHEREAS there are some "mission tools" like "Recognized Mission Congregations" and "Strategic Mission Areas" that have been successfully used; and

WHEREAS such knowledge can be shared with the Director of Domestic Missions and RMMC's with a view to preserving them and their utility without enshrining the practices in the synodical bylaws; be it therefore

RESOLVED that Overtures 3.08 and 3.09 be respectfully declined.

Motion C26.37: To adopt Resolution 26.3.06

Action: Adopted

Greeting from the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod – Rev. Dr. Matt Harrison

Resolutions Committee #2 – Theology and Church Relations – Rev. Brian Dunlop, Chairman

RESOLUTION 26.2.01a TO STUDY THE TERM “BISHOP” AND THE TIME LIMIT OF CALLS

(Reference Overtures 2.01 and 2.02)

WHEREAS Resolution 2.01 proposed calling Regional Pastors and Synod Presidents without time limit, removing the necessity to be re-elected at subsequent conventions until they retire, accept another call, are incapacitated, or removed for appropriate Scriptural reasons from their call; and

WHEREAS Resolution 2.02 proposed Regional Pastors be called “Regional Bishops,” Synod President be called “Synodical Bishop,” and Synodical Vice President be called “Assistant to the Synodical Bishop,” and the Synod Handbook be adjusted accordingly; and

WHEREAS there are significant issues involved that cannot be fully explored in the context of a convention; and

WHEREAS all theological matters ought to be decided on the basis of thorough study of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be charged with producing study materials on the time limit for calls to LCC's ecclesiastical supervisors and the terminology of “bishop” as it is used in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; with special attention to earlier studies of both matters within LCC and the LCMS and be it finally

RESOLVED that such materials be distributed to the synod no later than two years prior to the next convention, which then should be used for study at circuit forums, Winkels, pastoral conferences, and congregational studies.

Motion C26.38 To insert “with special attention to earlier studies of both matters within LCC and the LCMS” in the first RESOLVED

Action: Adopted

Motion C26.39: To adopt Resolution 26.2.01a as amended

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.2.12 TO STUDY TERMINOLOGY REGARDING THE DIACONATE OF
LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA**

(Reference Overtures 2.15 and 3.01)

- WHEREAS Genesis 1: 31 says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” And this created order is a great blessing to be taught and celebrated; and
- WHEREAS movements in our society have sought to confuse those sexual distinctions, and call evil what God has called good; and
- WHEREAS “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace” and “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40); and
- WHEREAS it is always desirable to align our terminology with Scriptural language to the highest degree we can; and
- WHEREAS 1 Timothy 3:8-13 refers to an office of “deacon” (diakonos) limited to men; and
- WHEREAS women such as Phoebe (in Romans 16:1) were referred to with a gendered form of “deacon” translatable as “servant” or “deaconess”; and
- WHEREAS our current practice in LCC is to refer to all synodically trained professional church workers who do not hold the Office of Holy Ministry as the “diaconate” collectively, and as “deacon” individually regardless of gender, and
- WHEREAS clarity of terminology and understanding is desirable for peace and concord within the church; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC in convention assign the President to conduct a review of the foundational documents on the establishment of the diaconate, the uniqueness and blessing of male deacons and female deacons (or deaconesses), terminology, nomenclature and any differences of service; and be it further
- RESOLVED that this review be done in consultation with the PMC, CTCR, laity, diaconate and pastors; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that he bring forward recommendations through the PMC for presentation at the 2030 Convention.

Motion C26.40: To adopt Resolution 26.2.12

Action: Adopted

Commendation of the Faithful Departed

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Recess – President Teuscher declared the convention in recess until 8:15 am Monday morning at 4:03 pm (CDT)

MINUTES – Session 7

Call to Order

President Teuscher called the seventh session to order at 8:15 am (CDT)

Service of Prayer and Preaching – Rev. Vishal Paul and Rev. David Habershtock
The pastors led the Convention in this time of worship.

Registration Committee Report – Rev. Tom Kruesel, Chairman

Voting Pastor Delegates – 136

Voting Lay Delegates – 143

TOTAL VOTING – 279

Advisory Delegates – 11

Advisory Representatives – 20

Registered Visitors – 17

Invited Guests – 9

TOTAL – 57

Exhibitors – 6

Staff/ Contractors – 26

Spouses – 38

TOTAL - 70

Quorum remains and the Convention continued.

Approval of Minutes

Using pages L.5 through L.32 in the latest issue of *“Today’s Business”*—the minutes of the previous session were presented

Motion C26-41: That the minutes of the 13th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church–Canada, June 12, 2026, Sessions 5 and 6 be adopted as amended (Two editorial corrections were made)

ACTION: Adopted

Greetings – The Lutheran Church in the Philippines – Rev. Antonio del Rio Reyes

Rev. Antonio del Rio Reyes, President of The Lutheran Church in the Philippines, brought greetings from the Lutheran Church in the Philippines. Following his greetings, he and President Teuscher signed the partnership agreement between Lutheran Church–Canada and the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

Greetings – Lutheran Mission – Australia – Rev. Matt Anker

Rev. Matt Anker, President of Lutheran Mission-Australia, brought greetings from Lutheran Mission – Australia. Following his greetings, President Teuscher signed the partnership agreement between Lutheran Church–Canada and Lutheran Mission–Australia. Rev. Anker will sign the agreement at the LMA Convention in August.

President Teuscher dismissed Committee #1 with thanks and gratitude for their work in dealing with all matters pertaining to Handbook and Structure.

Greetings – The Evangelical Church of Haiti – Rev. Eliona Bernard, President of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti

President Teuscher dismissed Committee #3 with thanks and gratitude for their work in dealing with all matters pertaining to Financial and Sundry Matters

Resolutions Committee #2 – Theology and Church Relations – Rev. Brian Dunlop, Chairman

RESOLUTION 26.2.09 TO RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS ON PAT GRADUATE FIELDS OF SERVICE

(Reference Overture 2.11)

WHEREAS the Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) programme was introduced to provide pastoral care in exceptional circumstances; and

WHEREAS through call and ordination PAT graduates are authorised to carry out the Word and Sacrament duties of the pastoral office in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS PAT graduates receive a limited theological education that does not meet the standards of a full, residential seminary pastoral formation programme; and

WHEREAS the church recognises that pastors differ in gifts, abilities, and training, and therefore seeks to order the ministerium accordingly; and

WHEREAS PAT placements are “site-specific” (Synodical Bylaw 5.093); and

WHEREAS similar site-specific programmes in sister church bodies include limitations on the field of service for their graduates; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.095 Restrictions on Synodical Service

A PAT graduate may not:

- a. be elected to an office of ecclesiastical supervision, including Synodical President, Vice-President, Regional Pastor, or Circuit Counsellor;
- b. serve as a member of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; or
- c. supervise a vicar.

And be it further

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.097 Place of Service

A PAT graduate is not eligible for call to another congregation without the express consent of the President’s Ministry Council.

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.099 Removal of Restrictions

A PAT Graduate may have such restrictions (5.095, 5.097) removed by completing a full program of seminary training.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.42: To adopt Resolution 26.2.09

Motion C26.43: To amend Motion C26.42 by striking from Resolution 26.2.09: in 5.095 (a) the words “Circuit Counsellor”; and altering 5.097 by adding “, or for service as a Circuit Counsellor”, changing “without” to “with”, and changing “is not” to “may be”, so that 5.097 will read “A PAT graduate may be eligible for call to another congregation, or for service as a Circuit Counsellor, with the express consent of the President's Ministry Council.”

Action: Adopted

Motion C26.44: To table amended Resolution 26.2.09

Action: Declined

The vote was then taken on amended motion C26.42 (to adopt resolution 26.2.09, as amended.)

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.10 TO AMEND ORDINATION TIMING FOR PAT STUDENTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

(Reference Overture 2.12)

WHEREAS the Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) programme was introduced to provide pastoral care in exceptional circumstances; and

WHEREAS through call and ordination PAT graduates are authorised to carry out the Word and Sacrament duties of the pastoral office in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS the current LCC Synodical bylaws (5.013) do not permit ordination to take place until a PAT student has completed the full requirements of the programme; and

WHEREAS full, regular Word and Sacrament ministry at a PAT site may be delayed for many years while the candidate completes the programme; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the LCC Synodical Bylaws be amended to include section c:

5.013: Prerequisites for Ordination

- c. In exceptional circumstances, where the congregation has insufficient access to pastoral care, a PAT congregation may petition the PMC for call and ordination of its PAT student before the full programme is completed.
 - i. Such permission shall only be granted by the PMC (in consultation with the PAT committee) after it is satisfied that the student has completed sufficient training.

- ii. The student is obligated to complete the remaining programme requirements post-ordination. If he fails to remain active in the programme (i.e. by taking at least one course per year), his status on the LCC roster shall be suspended.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the President's Ministry Council formulate guidelines to ensure local supervision of such ordained PAT students by an experienced, ordained seminary graduate.

Motion C26.45: To adopt Resolution 26.2.10

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.08 TO AVOID SCHEDULING SYNODICAL CONVENTION ON SUNDAYS

(Reference Overture 2.09)

WHEREAS both the 2022 and 2026 LCC national conventions have been scheduled to occur during Sundays, and

WHEREAS almost all pastors of Synod will be attending the convention, representing all the congregations of Synod, which will result in almost all the members of LCC being without a pastor to lead them during the Divine Service occurring during convention, and

WHEREAS it can be difficult for many congregations without retired or non-delegate pastors nearby to find lay members to lead services, and impossible for them to offer the Lord's Supper; therefore be it

RESOLVED that future LCC synodical conventions be scheduled to avoid Sunday so that all pastors may be free to be with their congregations to lead Divine Services as they were called to do.

Motion C26.46: To adopt Resolution 26.2.08

Action: Defeated

RESOLUTION 26.2.07 FOR CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH A LUTHERAN RESPONSE TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

(Reference Overtures 2.08 and 2.10)

Whereas Lutheran Church – Canada at her 2022 Edmonton Convention, through Resolution 22.02.07, adopted the CTCR document, *A Lutheran Response to Contemporary Issues*, in order to address, as indicated in the resolution's 'whereas', "sharp disagreements in congregations and amongst clergy and congregations" about "how we as Christians should respond when laws are proposed and presented, deliberated, and then eventually passed by the secular government which impact the Church's teaching and freedom of religion," and

Whereas in this resolution, the Synod also commended this CTCR document to the pastors, deacons, and congregations of Synod for further and continued "*study and response*," and

Whereas the intention of such resolution is that the Synod's unity and concord is best fostered and cultivated when continued open and mutual discussion upon these matters on the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions is encouraged as widely as possible throughout Synod; therefore be it

Resolved that any significant response to the document *A Lutheran Response to Contemporary Issues* be brought to the attention of the Synod at large in order to promote and encourage the widest, most free and open discussion as possible on these issues upon the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as called for by Resolution 22.02.07 for the continued cultivation of godly harmony and unity of doctrine and practice within our Synod.

Motion C26.47: To adopt Resolution 26.2.07

Action: Adopted

Greetings from Concordia Lutheran Mission Society - Rev. Dr. Mark Lobitz

Elections for the Commission on Adjudication (COA)

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Nominations from the floor

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate

ROSTERED WORKERS (Central)

Rev. Murray Keith (Central) – 52 (92.9%)

Rev. Adrian Kramer (Central) – 45 (80.4%)

President Teuscher declared Rev. Murray Keith and Rev. Adrian Kramer elected to the COA

ROSTERED WORKERS (East)

Rev. Dr. Kevin Fast (East) – 54 (65.8%)

Rev. John Rapp (East) – 62 (75.6%)

Rev. Paul Roggow (East) – 41 (50.0%)

Rev. Teuscher declared Rev. John Rapp and Rev. Dr. Kevin Fast elected to the COA

ROSTERED WORKERS (West)

Rev. Don Hennig (West) – 65 (67.7%)

Rev. Vincent Moore (West) – 59 (61.5%)

Rev. Darren Siegle (West) – 67 (69.8%)

Rev. Teuscher declared Rev. Darren Siegle and Rev. Don Hennig elected to the COA

Elections for the Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Note: The results from these elections will be forwarded to Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, and will be taken under advisement when they select members for their Board of Directors. As they are a separate corporation, LCC cannot elect members to their board.

Nominations from the floor

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate
Rev. Schnarr led us in prayer.

Election Results

Jamie Muir (Central) – 46 (92.0%)
Philip Prozenko (East) – 24 (31.2%)
Daniel Smilek (East) – 34 (44.2%)
Reg Tiegs (East) – 19 (24.7%)
Ivan Boles (West) – 68 (94.4%)
Rev. Kai Buck (Central) – 35 (62.5%)
Rev. Timothy Schneider (Central) – 21 (37.5%)
Rev. Paul Williams (East) – 71 (88.8%)
Rev. Jeffery Dul (West) – 18 (18.8%)
Rev. Kenneth Eifert (West) – 40 (41.7%)
Rev. Brian Falkenholt (West) – 38 (38.6%)

Elections for the Board of Regents, Concordia Lutheran Seminary

– Commission on Nominations and Elections, Reg Tiegs, Chairman

Note: The results from these elections will be forwarded to Concordia Lutheran Seminary, and will be taken under advisement when they select members for their Board of Directors. As they are a separate corporation, LCC cannot elect members to their board.

Rev. Jonathan Kraemer announced that nominee Sandra Timm now resides in the West Region.

Nominations from the floor

None

Reg Tiegs presented the slate
Rev. Schnarr led us in prayer.

Election Results – Lay

Sandra Timm – 95 (45.2%)
Peter Dobias – 57 (27.1%)
James Muir – 29 (13.8%)
Barry Walker – 29 (13.8%)

Election Results – Clergy

Rev. Aaron Astley (East) – 67 (30.0%)
Rev. Kenneth Eifert (West) – 41 (18.4%)
Rev. Mark Hennig (West) – 37 (16.6%)
Rev. Chris McLean (Central) – 31 (13.9%)
Rev. Paul Williams (East) – 20 (9.0%)
Rev. Darren Siegle (West) – 14 (6.3%)
Rev. Clint Magnus (Central) – 13 (5.8%)

President Teuscher dismissed Committee #2 with thanks and gratitude for their work in dealing with all matters pertaining to Theology and Church Relations

Recognition of LCC Board of Directors

President Teuscher thanked the following Board members who have completed their term and will not be returning to the board:

Arnold Drung
Grace Henderson
Rev. Tom Kruesel
Kirstin Guggenmos
Rev. Michael Schutz

Greetings from the International Lutheran Council – Matthew Block

Announcements – Dr. Tasheney Francis, Director of Communications

Motion C26-48: That the 13th regular convention of Lutheran Church–Canada be adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

ACTION: Adopted

Responsive Prayer 1 – Rev. Cam Schnarr led the convention in worship

ELECTIONS

Summary

President

Rev. David Haberstok

Vice-President

Rev. Ted Giese

Regional Pastor

Central – Rev. Arron Gust

East – Rev. Marvin Bublitz

West – Rev. Michael Schutz

Board of Directors

James Frey

Lois Griffin

Darryll Holland

Doug Petersen

Shaun Visser

Rev. Aaron Astley

Rev. Mark Hennig

Rev. Alex Klages

Dcn. Amanda Hastings

Commission on Nominations and Elections

Wendy Chant

Rod Johnson

Elizabeth Schieman

Rev. Kurt Lantz

Rev. Kurt Reinhardt

Rev. Philip Washeim

Rev. Glenn Worcester

Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure

**As there were an equal number of nominees to nomination positions, the nominated rostered workers for the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure were declared elected.*

Ron Faulkner

Timothy Lach

Valerie Edward

*Rev. Jeffery Dul

*Rev. Brian Falkenholt

*Rev. Andrew McDonald

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

Mathew Block

Daniel Smilek

Rev. Mike Keith

Rev. Joel Kuhl

Commission on Adjudication

Rev. Kevin Fast

Rev. Don Hennig

Rev. Murray Keith

Rev. Adrian Kramer

Rev. John Rapp

Rev. Darren Siegle

Circuit Counsellor and RMMC Lay Member

**Circuits where only one RMMC lay member was nominated were declared elected. Only those circuits in which there were multiple nominees required a further election.*

CENTRAL REGION– Circuit Counsellor and RMMC Lay Member

	Assiniboine Circuit	Northland Circuit	Ontario Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Barry Wood	Rev. Jakob Valsson	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
Lay Member	*Gloria Rathgeber	Laurent Durrand	*Howard Fiskar
	Qu'Appelle Circuit	Red River Circuit	Saskatoon Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach	Rev. Richard Beinert	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Gelane Bahiru	*Denise Timm
	Southland Circuit	Wascana Circuit	
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Travis Heide	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Barb Schentag	

EAST REGION– Circuit Counsellor and RMMC Lay Member

	Hamilton Circuit	Hanover Circuit	Kitchener Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. David Zakel	Rev. Ken Maher	Rev. James Keller
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Kim Kuhl	*Anna Fierling
	London Circuit	Niagara Circuit	Ottawa Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Paul Schallhorn	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	Rev. Matthew Habermas
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Scott Allan	*Peter Dobias
	Stratford Circuit	Toronto Circuit	Windsor Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	Rev. Vishal Paul	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
Lay Member	*Mark Rohfrietsch	*David Chant	*Matthew Zvric

WEST REGION – Circuit Counsellor and RMMC Lay Member

	Calgary Circuit	Cariboo Circuit	Edmonton Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. David Dressler	Rev. Noel Smith	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Charles Von Hahn	Josh Bentley
	Elk Island Circuit	Greater Vancouver Circuit	Lethbridge Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	Rev. Lucas Albrecht	Rev. Lee Loveridge
Lay Member	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	*Braydan Pastucha	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
	Okanagan Circuit	Peace River Circuit	Stony Plain Circuit
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Jeffrey Koenig	Rev. Terrance Goerz	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor
Lay Member	*Hope Mendes	*Rick Slater	*Tiffany Playter
	Vancouver Island	Wetaskiwin Circuit	
Circuit Counsellor	Rev. Stephen Chambers	Rev. Brian Amison	
Lay Member	*Sonja Bland	To be appointed by the Regional Pastor	

ELECTIONS

Results

PRESIDENT

Ballot 1 President	Votes Received	Result
Rev. David Haberstock	125	
Rev. Ted Giese	80	
Rev. Joel Kuhl	70	

Ballot 2 President	Votes Received	Result
Rev. David Haberstock	154	Elected
Rev. Ted Giese	125	

VICE-PRESIDENT

Ballot 1 Vice-President	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Ted Giese	140	
Rev. Joel Kuhl	97	
Rev. Kurt Lantz	22	
Rev. David Zakel	22	

Ballot 2 Vice-President	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Ted Giese	151	Elected
Rev. Joel Kuhl	129	

REGIONAL PASTORS

Ballot 1 Regional Pastor, Central	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Arron Gust	64	Elected

Ballot 1 Regional Pastor, East	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Marvin Bublitz	65	Elected
Rev. Vishal Paul	28	

Ballot 1 Regional Pastor, West	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Jan Pastucha	57	
Rev. Michael Schutz	60	Elected

CIRCUIT COUNSELLORS

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, Central, Assiniboine	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Barry Wood	5	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, Central, Northland	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Jakob Valsson	7	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, Central, Qu'Appelle	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Brad Julien	1	
Rev. Joshua Kurtenbach	4	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, Central, Red River	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Dr. Richard Beinert	19	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, Central, Southland	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Travis Heide	7	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, Hamilton	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Andrew Cottrill	3	
Rev. David Zakel	7	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, Hanover	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Kenneth Maher	6	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, Kitchener	Votes Received	Result
Rev. James Keller	17	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, London	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Dan Abraham	3	
Rev. Paul Schallhorn	4	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, Ottawa	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Aaron Astley	9	
Rev. Matthew Habermas	9	
Rev. Milton Lam	0	

Ballot 2 Circuit Counsellor, East, Ottawa	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Aaron Astley	7	
Rev. Matthew Habermas	8	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, East, Toronto	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Vishal Paul	13	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Calgary	Votes Received	Result
Rev. David Dressler	14	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Cariboo	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Noel Smith	5	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Greater Vancouver	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Lucas Albrecht	12	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Lethbridge	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Lee Loveridge	6	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Okanagan	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Jeffrey Koenig	12	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Peace River	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Terrance Goerz	6	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Vancouver Island	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Stephen Chambers	14	Elected

Ballot 1 Circuit Counsellor, West, Wetaskiwin	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Brian Amison	11	Elected

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
James Frey	142	Elected
d'Arcy Gamble	92	
Lois Griffin	124	
Darryll Holland	122	
David Patrick	100	
Doug Petersen	134	Elected
Reg Tiegs	116	
Shaun Visser	122	
Delton Zehr	74	

Ballot 2 Board of Directors, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
d'Arcy Gamble	98	
Lois Griffin	132	Elected
Darryll Holland	121	
David Patrick	123	
Reg Tiegs	94	
Shaun Visser	123	

Ballot 3 Board of Directors, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
d'Arcy Gamble	94	
Darryll Holland	130	Elected
David Patrick	105	
Shaun Visser	117	

Ballot 4 Board of Directors, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
David Patrick	107	
Shaun Visser	128	Elected

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Clergy Members	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Aaron Astley	184	Elected
Rev. Mark Hennig	137	Elected
Rev. Alex Klages	200	Elected
Rev. Tom Kruesel	120	
Rev. Kurt Lantz	124	

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Deacon Member	Votes Received	Result
Dcn. Amanda Hastings	131	Elected
Dcn. Lenora Simpson	123	

COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Ballot 1 Commission on Nominations and Elections, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Rhonda Abando	85	
Josh Bentley	94	
Wendy Chant	153	Elected
Karen Hildebrandt	86	
Rod Johnson	176	Elected
Elizabeth Schieman	106	

Ballot 2 Commission on Nominations and Elections, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Josh Bentley	74	
Karen Hildebrandt	78	
Elizabeth Schieman	102	

Ballot 3 Commission on Nominations and Elections, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Karen Hildebrandt	99	
Elizabeth Schieman	148	Elected

Ballot 1 Commission on Nominations and Elections, Rostered Workers	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Scott Brayall	170	
Rev. Kurt Lantz	193	Elected
Rev. Kurt Reinhardt	192	Elected
Rev. Phillip Washeim	208	Elected
Rev. Glenn Worcester	184	Elected

COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

Ballot 1 Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Mathew Block	226	Elected
Shane Kelly	46	
Archie Richardson	98	
Daniel Smilek	127	

Ballot 2 Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Archie Richardson	107	
Daniel Smilek	140	Elected

Ballot 1 Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Rostered Workers	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Jack Hetzel	65	
Rev. Michael Keith	176	Elected
Rev. Joel Kuhl	188	Elected
Rev. Paul Williams	56	

COMMISSION ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS AND STRUCTURE

As there were an equal number of nominees to nomination positions, the nominated rostered workers for the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure were declared elected.

Ballot 1 Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Barbara Darrah	75	
Valerie Edward	205	Elected
Ronald Faulkner	107	
Timothy Lach	208	Elected
Cam Pelzer	74	
Delton Zehr	82	

Ballot 2 Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Barbara Darrah	75	
Ronald Faulkner	112	
Delton Zehr	73	

Ballot 3 Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Barbara Darrah	103	
Ronald Faulkner	148	Elected

COMMISSION ON ADJUDICATION

Ballot 1 Commission on Adjudication, Rostered Workers, Central	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Murray Keith	52	Elected
Rev. Adrian Kramer	45	Elected

Ballot 1 Commission on Adjudication, Rostered Workers, East	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Dr. Kevin Fast	54	Elected
Rev. John Rapp	62	Elected
Rev. Paul Roggow	41	

Ballot 1 Commission on Adjudication, Rostered Workers, West	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Don Hennig	65	Elected
Rev. Vince Moore	59	
Rev. Darren Siegle	67	Elected

REGIONAL MISSION AND MINISTRY COUNCILS

Circuits where only one RMMC lay member was nominated were declared elected. Only those circuits in which there were multiple nominees required a further election.

Ballot 1 Regional Mission and Ministry Council, Central, Northland	Votes Received	Result
Larry Durrand	5	Elected
Kirsten Guggenmos	2	

Ballot 1 Regional Mission and Ministry Council, West, Edmonton	Votes Received	Result
Josh Bentley	8	Elected
Darla Hennig	7	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CONCORDIA LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The results from these elections will be forwarded to Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, and will be taken under advisement when they select members for their Board of Directors. As they are a separate corporation, LCC cannot elect members to their board.

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, Central	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Kai Buck	35	
Jamie Muir	46	
Rev. Timothy Schneider	21	

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, East	Votes Received	Result
Philip Prozenko	24	
Daniel Smilek	34	
Reg Tiegs	19	
Rev. Paul Williams	71	

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, West	Votes Received	Result
Ivan Boles	68	
Rev. Jeffery Dul	18	
Rev. Kenneth Eifert	40	
Rev. Brian Falkenholt	38	

BOARD OF REGENTS, CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SEMINARY

The results from these elections will be forwarded to Concordia Lutheran Seminary, and will be taken under advisement when they select members for their Board of Regents. As they are a separate corporation, LCC cannot elect members to their board.

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Lay Members	Votes Received	Result
Peter Dobias	57	
James Muir	29	
Sandra Timm	95	
Barry Walker	29	

Ballot 1 Board of Directors, Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Rostered Workers	Votes Received	Result
Rev. Aaron Astley	67	
Rev. Kenneth Eifert	41	
Rev. Mark Hennig	37	
Rev. Clint Magnus	13	
Rev. Chris McLean	31	
Rev. Darren Siegle	14	
Rev. Paul Williams	20	

RESOLUTIONS**Summary**

- RESOLUTION 26.1.01a To decline Overture 1.01
Motion C26.29: To adopt Resolution 26.1.01a
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.02a To approve the following changes to the statutory bylaws of Lutheran Church–Canada
Motion C26.22: To adopt Resolution 26.1.02a
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.03 To amend Synodical Bylaw 3.009.a.1
Motion C26.26: To adopt Resolution 26.1.03
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.04 To amend Synodical Bylaw 5.039 Reinstatement
Motion C26.27: To adopt Resolution 26.1.04
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.05 To amend synodical bylaws regarding the role of the president in restricted and suspended status
Motion C26.28: To adopt Resolution 26.1.05
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.06 To amend Synodical Bylaw 3.005
Motion C26.30: To adopt Resolution 26.1.06
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.07 To amend Synodical Bylaw 5.033
Motion C26.31: To adopt Resolution 26.1.07
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.08 To request that a National Youth Gathering Committee be added to the list of standing committees
Motion C26.32: To adopt Resolution 26.1.08
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.09 To request that an Archives Committee be added to the list of standing committees
Motion C26.33: To adopt Resolution 26.1.09
Action: Adopted
- RESOLUTION 26.1.10 To amend Synodical Bylaw 3.019 to allow sub-regional Pastors and Deacons Conferences to submit overtures to convention
Motion C26.25: To adopt Resolution 26.1.10
Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.11	To approve the following changes to the Synodical Bylaws Motion C26.23: To adopt Resolution 26.1.11 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.01.12	To approve the following changes to Synodical Bylaw 2.007f. Motion C26.24: To adopt Resolution 26.1.12 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.01a	To study the term “Bishop” and the time limit of calls Motion C26.39: To adopt Resolution 26.2.01a as amended Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.03	To recognize that Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) is no longer in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) Motion C26.16: To adopt Resolution 26.2.03 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.04	To recognize fellowship with the Lutheran Mission – Australia Motion C26.17: To adopt Resolution 26.2.04 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.05	To recognize fellowship with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) Motion C26.18: To adopt Resolution 26.2.05 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.06	To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession Motion C26.20: To adopt Resolution 26.2.06 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.07	For continued discussion and follow through with <i>A Lutheran Response to Contemporary Issues</i> Motion C26.47: To adopt Resolution 26.2.07 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.08	To avoid scheduling synodical convention on Sundays Motion C26.46: To adopt Resolution 26.2.08 Action: Defeated
RESOLUTION 26.2.09	To recognize limitations on PAT graduate fields of service Motion C26.42: To adopt resolution 26.2.09, as amended Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.10	To amend ordination timing for PAT students in exceptional circumstances Motion C26.45: To adopt Resolution 26.2.10 Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.11	On medical assistance in dying (MAID) Motion C26.19: To adopt Resolution 26.2.11 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.2.12	To study terminology regarding the diaconate of Lutheran Church–Canada Motion C26.40: To adopt Resolution 26.2.12 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.01	To acknowledge and affirm flexibility in collecting congregational assessments Motion C26.10: To adopt Resolution 26.3.01 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.02a	To encourage the use of LCC’s “Guidelines for Caring for Called Workers” Motion C26.11: To adopt Resolution 26.3.02a Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.03	To give thanks to God for the leadership of Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher Motion C26.07: To adopt Resolution 26.3.03 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.04	On the role and jurisdiction of legal counsel within Synod Motion C26.35: To adopt Resolution 26.3.04 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.05	To clarify terms for domestic and international missions in the Handbook Motion C26.14: To adopt Resolution 26.3.05 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.06	To respectfully decline Overtures 3.08 and 3.09 Motion C26.37: To adopt Resolution 26.3.06 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.07	To give thanks for Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, at her 50th anniversary Motion C26.12: To adopt Resolution 26.3.07 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.08	To encourage continuing formation for pastors and deacons Motion C26.36: To adopt Resolution 26.3.08 Action: Adopted
RESOLUTION 26.3.09	To review Synodical Bylaw VII. Reconciliation, Restoration, and Adjudication Motion C26.15: To adopt Resolution 26.3.09 Action: Adopted

RESOLUTIONS
Results**RESOLUTION 26.1.01a TO DECLINE OVERTURE 1.01**

(Reference Overture 1.01)

WHEREAS Statutory Bylaw 15.11 states that the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors “shall develop policies to be administered by the chief administrative officer governing the employment and remuneration of all executive staff and employees of LCC”; and

WHEREAS the proposed change to the title of the Associate Director – Family Ministries would require a corresponding change to the position’s remuneration; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that Overture 1.01 be respectfully declined; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the title change proposed in Overture 1.01 be referred to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors for consideration.

Motion C26.29: To adopt Resolution 26.1.01a**Action:** Adopted**RESOLUTION 26.1.02a TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE STATUTORY BYLAWS OF LUTHERAN CHURCH – CANADA**

(Reference Overture 1.02, 1.08, and 1.09)

WHEREAS the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (CCMS) of LCC has as one of its mandates to “Conduct a continuing review of the structure of LCC...” (Cf. Synodical Bylaw 2.063a.1); and

WHEREAS this review has been completed; and

WHEREAS it would take too much Convention time to approve each update one at a time; and

WHEREAS sufficient time on the Convention floor to discuss and approve additional changes to the proposed LCC 2026 Handbook will be allotted at this Convention; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that LCC in Convention approve the following changes to the Statutory Bylaws as a whole:

Statutory Bylaws

- 8.19 Each region shall send one advisory delegate for every 30 advisory pastors (or fraction thereof) and one advisory delegate for every 30 deacons (or fraction thereof) on the roster of the Synod assigned to the region. Any rostered pastor is advisory if he is not a voting delegate. Each region shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category. Additionally, one deacon at large shall be elected so that a minimum of four deacons (at

least one from each region by numerical representation and one deacon at large) shall act as advisory delegates at convention. Whether the election occurs in person or remotely, nominations should be sought from the region's advisory pastors (in relation to the pastoral advisory delegate) and the region's deacons (in relation to the diaconal delegate) prior to voting. The election of the deacon at large shall be made by a paper or electronic ballot arranged by the ~~Regional Pastor~~ *secretary*, with nominations from the deacons of LCC preceding the election and with each deacon on the roster eligible to participate. The elections of the regional diaconal delegates and the election of the deacon at large shall not run concurrently so as to allow unelected nominees from one election to be nominated for the other. Such elections must be completed at least 90 days prior to the opening day of the Convention. ~~The Regional Pastor will inform the Secretary of the Synod of the results.~~

- 11.21 The Board may fill any vacancy on the Board, or in the office of the vice-president, *or regional pastor*, by appointment of a qualified individual to hold such office for the balance of the unexpired term.
- 11.23 The Board shall appoint the chief administrative officer who shall be an employee of LCC. The chief administrative officer shall discharge the non-ecclesiastical responsibilities assigned to the chief administrative officer by the Board. The chief administrative officer shall be responsible for preparing annual budgets to be presented to the Board as well as preparing a four-year forecast to be presented to each quadrennial Convention. The chief administrative officer shall encourage offerings for the work of LCC on regional, national and international levels; keep an exact record of all moneys received and expended by LCC; administer LCC's financial affairs; and at any time submit to an examination of the chief administrative officer's books and accounts by an auditing committee when so ordered by the Board or a Convention.

and be it finally

RESOLVED that these changes be incorporated into the 2026 Handbook of LCC.

Motion C26.22: To adopt Resolution 26.1.02a

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.03 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.009.a.1

(Reference Overture 1.03)

WHEREAS the current structure of the Regional Mission and Ministry Councils (RMMCs) does not include rostered deacons; and

WHEREAS deacons are valuable members of Synod who serve in designated deacon roles on other boards and commissions, and in advisory roles at Convention; and

WHEREAS the current wording of the Bylaw 3.009.a.1 excludes deacons from having an official role on the RMMCs; and

WHEREAS excluding deacons from serving their regions with their unique and specific perspective and gifts is a loss to the Synod; therefore be it

RESOLVED that if possible, each RMMC should include one deacon currently serving in the applicable region; and be it finally

RESOLVED that Bylaw 3.009.a.1 be amended to include the following as the final sentence: “If there is a deacon in a region who is willing and able to serve on the RMMC, he or she shall be appointed to the RMMC by the Regional Pastor.”

Motion C26.26: To adopt Resolution 26.1.03

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.04 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 5.039 REINSTATEMENT

(Reference Overture 1.04)

WHEREAS the Synodical Bylaws provide provision for reinstatement of a Pastor or Deacon to the roster of LCC (Synodical Bylaw 5.039); and

WHEREAS the current procedure allows for only a yes or no by the President’s Ministry Council; and

WHEREAS there may be situations where it is more appropriate for the President’s Ministry Council to conditionally reinstate a Pastor or Deacon; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the text of Synodical Bylaw 5.039 be amended to read:

All applications for reinstatement to the clergy or diaconal roster shall be addressed to the regional pastor of the region in which the applicant resided at the time his/her membership was suspended. The regional pastor shall review the matter and report it to the President’s Ministry Council, with or without recommendation. ~~The President’s Ministry Council shall decide the issue by means of a written ballot.~~

The President’s Ministry Council may decide yes, no, or a conditional reinstatement. A conditional reinstatement may include provisions of necessary supervision, internship, training, and the like. The applicant shall be made aware of the conditions and expectations required to remove the conditions.

If the applicant is reinstated, the Regional Pastor shall announce this fact in the official periodicals of LCC;

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.27: To adopt Resolution 26.1.04

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.05 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAWS REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT IN RESTRICTED AND SUSPENDED STATUS

(Reference Overture 1.05)

WHEREAS prior to restructuring, the individual Districts were separately incorporated entities; and

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- WHEREAS as such the District President was the chief ecclesiastical officer of the District and therefore it was appropriate that the District President was responsible for restricting or suspending members; and
- WHEREAS since restructuring there is only one corporation with the Synod President as chief ecclesiastical officer (Statutory Bylaw Article XI 11.11); therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Synodical Bylaws be amended to provide that the Synod President as chief ecclesiastical officer be responsible for restricting or suspending members; and be it further
- RESOLVED that the following amendments be made to the Synodical Bylaws to reflect this, namely:

1.013.a be amended to read:

If information with respect to a pastor or deacon who is a Member of Lutheran Church-Canada is made known to or becomes known by the Regional Pastor and the Regional Pastor, after a reasonable investigation, believes that there may be a basis, given the nature of the circumstances, for suspending the membership of the person, the regional pastor *shall make report to the President. The President in consultation with the PMC* may suspend that person's membership until the matter is satisfactorily resolved or the applicable reconciliation and adjudication procedures, as set forth in Chapter VII of these Bylaws, can be completed.

And 5.035.a be amended to read:

a. A pastor or deacon may have his/her status restricted to the extent deemed necessary and appropriate by the ~~regional pastor who has ecclesiastical supervision of the Member.~~ *President as chief ecclesiastical officer. The President in consultation with the PMC* ~~The regional pastor~~ may take this action if information with respect to such Member provides a substantial basis to conclude that such a Member...

And 5.035.d be amended to read:

d. Restricted status shall normally be limited to one year. To extend the restricted status beyond this period, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall ~~secure the approval of~~ *consult with* the President's Ministry Council. ~~Such approval must be secured~~ *This extension shall* be reviewed annually until such time as the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* removes this status. In such cases, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall thereafter notify the pastor or deacon on restricted status in writing as to the reasons for such continuance of restricted status...

And 5.035.e be amended to read:

e. The records maintained by the ~~respective regional pastor~~ *President* shall reflect the restricted status. In addition, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall notify in writing the ~~president and all Regional Pastors~~ and other LCMS district presidents of such restricted status. The ~~regional pastor~~ *President* shall also notify the congregation or other agency being served by the Member of the restricted status to take appropriate action so that the rights of both the Member and congregation or other agency are preserved.

And 5.037.c be amended to read:

c. When a Member is placed on suspended status, the ~~regional pastor~~ *President* as chief ecclesiastical officer shall

2. notify, in writing, ~~the president~~ all other regional pastors of the affected Member's suspended status;

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.28: To adopt Resolution 26.1.05

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.06 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.005

(Reference Overture 1.06)

WHEREAS prior to restructuring the District Presidents were "entitled to attend and to participate in meetings of the Board as non-voting advisors." (Statutory Bylaw 11.04, 2014 LCC Handbook); and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are the equivalent successor role to that of the District Presidents; and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are the closest source of information for the Board of what is happening amongst the pastors, deacons, and congregations of Lutheran Church-Canada; and

WHEREAS the Regional Pastors are not merely staff of LCC but rather are called Pastors exercising ecclesiastical oversight in their respective regions and through the PMC; and

WHEREAS the right to provide input at the Board of Director meetings was removed from the 2017 Handbook; therefore be it

RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 3.005 be amended as follows:

d. Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors, exercising voice but no vote.

~~d.e.~~ Attend all meetings of the Regional Mission and Ministry Council,

~~e.f.~~ Attend all meetings of the President's Ministry Council.

~~f.g.~~ Work collaboratively with the president, the Regional Mission and Ministry Council, circuit counsellors and the Members in that region,

~~g.h.~~ Negotiate other expectations in the annual review process.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.30: To adopt Resolution 26.1.06

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.07 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 5.033

(Reference Overture 1.07)

WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw 5.033 provides for pastors and deacons to be on Candidate Status in such a way that requires their ability to perform the full duties of 5.029 (Active Status); and

WHEREAS there are situations where a pastor or deacon may be able to serve in a limited capacity; therefore be it

RESOLVED that bylaw 5.033 be amended as follows:

CURRENT:

5.033 Candidate Status

a. A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices of ministry specified in bylaw 5.029 but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for such status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the candidate status beyond two consecutive years, a bi-annual application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for candidate status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.

b. Among criteria for determining whether candidate status should be granted or extended are: the health of the applicant; family considerations; the extent of his/her current involvement on a part-time and assisting basis in the ministry of Word and Sacrament; a demonstrated history and current ability of being able to perform the duties of an active pastor or deacon serving a Member Congregation or other position recognized by LCC; a demonstrated willingness to consider a call or appointment to a position recognized by LCC.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

5.033 Candidate Status

a. A pastor or deacon may apply for either Full Candidate Status or Limited Candidate Status.

b. **Full Candidate Status:** A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices specified in bylaw 5.029 but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for Full Candidate Status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the candidate status beyond two consecutive years, a biennial application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for Full Candidate Status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.

c. While on Full Candidate Status, the pastor or deacon is eligible for a call.

d. **Limited Candidate Status:** A pastor or deacon who is eligible to perform the duties of the offices of ministry specified in bylaw 5.029 in a limited capacity but who is not currently performing those duties and who is not retired may be retained on the roster upon application for Limited Candidate Status to the regional pastor for a period of two consecutive years. For the extension of the Limited Candidate Status beyond two consecutive years, a biennial application from the candidate as well as an evaluation by the regional pastor of the region of which the candidate is a Member shall be required. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not requests for Limited Candidate Status shall be granted, extended, or discontinued.

e. While on Limited Candidate Status, the pastor or deacon is not eligible for a call.

f. Among the criteria for determining whether a candidate shall be granted or extended either Full or Limited Candidate Status are: the health of the applicant; family considerations; the extent of his/her current involvement on a part-time and assisting basis in ministry; a demonstrated history and current ability of being able to perform the duties of an active pastor or deacon serving a Member Congregation or other position recognized by LCC; a demonstrated willingness to consider a call or appointment to a position recognized by LCC.

g. A candidate or his/her Regional Pastor may request a change from Limited Candidate Status to Full Candidate Status if circumstances change. The President's Ministry Council shall determine whether or not such a request shall be granted.

Motion C26.31: To adopt Resolution 26.1.07

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.08 TO REQUEST THAT A NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING COMMITTEE BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(Reference Overture 1.10)

WHEREAS LCC's National Youth Gathering (NYG) has been a valuable triennial event for youth and adults across LCC; and

WHEREAS the NYG was operated under the auspices of the LCC Board for Parish Services (BPS) which oversaw all Synodical Youth programming from 1989 to 2002

WHEREAS the NYG has operated independently since the BPS was dissolved in 2002 and desires to be within the formal structure of LCC for the purposes of support, encouragement, resource sharing, and the like; and

WHEREAS the Board of Directors and the NYG Committee have been working together over the past quadrennium to formalize the relationship between the NYG and LCC; and

WHEREAS the Board of Directors approved a motion in October of 2025 making the National Youth Gathering Committee an Ad Hoc Committee of LCC with the goal of seeking approval at the 2026 LCC Convention for making the National Youth Gathering Committee a Standing Committee of LCC; therefore be it

RESOLVED That Article XV Section 15.03 of the Statutory Bylaws be amended by adding to the list of standing committees the following "National Youth Gathering Committee"; and be it finally

RESOLVED That a new section be added to Article XV as follows "The National Youth Gathering Committee shall plan, organize, and carry out the National Youth Gathering every three years or at some other time frame as may be established."

Motion C26.32: To adopt Resolution 26.1.08

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.09 TO REQUEST THAT AN ARCHIVES COMMITTEE BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(Reference Overture 1.11)

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- WHEREAS In October of 2023 the Board of Directors of LCC approved the appointment of an ad hoc Archives Committee to formulate, review, and recommend policies relating to the orderly acquiring, preserving, processing, and making available the records and cultural properties of Lutheran Church-Canada, its Boards, Committees, Regions, Agencies, Institutions, Auxiliaries, and Listed Service Organizations; and
- WHEREAS In November of 2024 the Board of Directors of LCC approved a motion stating that the Lutheran Church-Canada Board of Directors adopts as a long-term goal to have a centralized archive for Synod; and
- WHEREAS LCC has recently taken over ownership of the Malinsky Archives, formerly owned by Lutheran East District; and
- WHEREAS In October of 2025 the Board of directors of LCC approved a motion to sponsor an overture to the 2026 Convention to amend the Handbook to create an Archives Standing Committee; therefore be it
- RESOLVED That Article XV Section 15.03 of the Statutory Bylaws be amended by adding to the list of standing committees the following “Archives Committee”; and be it finally
- RESOLVED That a new section be added to Article XV as follows “The Archives committee shall formulate, review, and recommend policies relating to the orderly acquiring, preserving, and making available the records and cultural properties of Lutheran Church-Canada, its Boards, Committees, and Regions and, upon request, assist where possible, its Agencies, Institutions, Auxiliaries, and Listed Service Organizations with the same.

Motion C26.33: To adopt Resolution 26.1.09

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.10 TO AMEND SYNODICAL BYLAW 3.019 TO ALLOW SUB-REGIONAL PASTORS AND DEACONS CONFERENCES TO SUBMIT OVERTURES TO CONVENTION

(Reference Overture 1.12)

- WHEREAS the West and Central Regions of LCC are geographically vast; and
- WHEREAS these distances make travel costs to a Pastors and Deacons conference of the full Region exorbitant, so that in both Regions full Regional conferences only happen once a quadrennium, and sub-Regional conferences for the Pastors and Deacons are the norm, and those sub-Regions have been for many years defined as follows (Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba/northwest Ontario); and
- WHEREAS East Region’s travel and room and board costs are such that they are able to have official conferences of the full region twice a year; and
- WHEREAS this circumstance disadvantages West and Central Regions from discussing, considering, and submitting overtures for the benefit of Lutheran Church-Canada; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Conferences of sub-Regions (as defined by the PMC) be authorized to submit overtures to Convention; and be it finally

RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 3.019.c be amended as follows:
 c. The plenary and the sectional meetings of official conferences and of official conferences of sub-Regions (as defined by the PMC) may adopt and submit overtures to the Convention.

Motion C26.25: To adopt Resolution 26.1.10

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.1.11 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE SYNODICAL BYLAWS

(Reference Overture 1.02)

WHEREAS the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (CCMS) of LCC has as one of its mandates to “Conduct a continuing review of the structure of LCC...” (Cf. Synodical Bylaw 2.063a.1); and

WHEREAS this review has been completed; and

WHEREAS it would take too much Convention time to approve each update one at a time; and

WHEREAS sufficient time on the Convention floor to discuss and approve additional changes to the proposed LCC 2026 Handbook will be allotted at this Convention; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that LCC in Convention approve the following changes to the Synodical Bylaws as a whole:

Synodical Bylaws

- 1.009 Every pastor and every deacon shall, in accordance with ~~his~~ *their* vocation, ~~his~~ *their* ability, and the means at ~~his~~ *their* command, diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word, deed, and adequate financial support.
- 1.011d A pastor or a deacon who is an Individual Member serving an educational institution which is a part of the Synodical Family shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the ~~president~~ *regional pastor*.
- 1.013b During the period that the suspension is in effect, the Member shall have "Suspended Status" as provided by bylaw 5.037 and shall be ineligible for service in Lutheran Church-Canada ~~or a congregation~~. All records of Lutheran Church-Canada shall reflect this fact.
- 1.019b The elected officers of Lutheran Church-Canada serve ~~LCC~~ in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them by the Statutory Bylaws, Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws or by a Convention.
 - c. The Board of Directors serves ~~LCC~~ in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to it by the Statutory Bylaws, Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws or by a Convention.
 - d. Each commission ~~also~~ serves ~~LCC~~ in a specific area of program or ministry in accordance with the Synodical Constitution and these Bylaws.
- 2.003 Congregations shall not require their delegates to vote in accordance with specific instructions, but every delegate shall be permitted to vote according to his/her own conviction. Delegates are nevertheless responsible to their congregation, whom they represent, and shall attempt to discover the sentiment of the communicant members thereof. They shall be expected to be faithful in attendance at all sessions of the

- Convention. After each Convention they shall report the actions of the Convention to their congregation. *The delegate will serve until the next Convention.*
- 2.031 Individuals shall be elected with one appointment by the president ~~at Convention~~ to the following commissions:
- d. A Commission ~~for on~~ Nominations and Elections (CNE)
- 2.069c The president, ~~in consultation with the vice president,~~ shall appoint one additional member.
- 2.087b The president, ~~in consultation with the vice president,~~ shall appoint one additional member.
- 2.093 The president, vice-president and the regional pastors shall form the President's Ministry Council. The Council shall meet at least bi-annually and in addition at the call of the president or at the request of ~~one-third~~ *two* of the members of the President's Ministry Council:
- 2.093d ~~To give guidance regarding inter-church relations: (re-letter the subsequent bullet points)~~
- 2.099a The CNE shall nominate candidates for all individual and group positions except the president, ~~or vice-president,~~ *regional pastors, and circuit counsellors.*
- 2.099g.6 The CNE shall notify each candidate and shall secure his approval in writing for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot. Each candidate shall reply within ten (10) days as to his willingness to serve if elected.
- 2.099h.6 The CNE shall notify each candidate and shall secure his approval in writing for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot. Each candidate shall reply within ten (10) days as to his willingness to serve if elected.
- 2.101j Candidates shall be vetted by the ~~president in consultation with the Regional Pastors.~~ *Regional pastors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process delegates in the nominating and election processes.*
- 2.101k *Regional Mission and Ministry Councils*
Candidates shall be vetted by the delegates in the nominating and election processes.
- 2.101kl Candidates shall be vetted by the ~~regional pastor in consultation with the other pastors and deacons in the same circuit. Circuit counsellors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process delegates in the nominating and election processes.~~
- 2.101lm The CNE shall confirm the previous vetting of anyone nominated from the floor for any elected position *except for the offices of president, vice-president, regional pastor, and circuit counsellor.* Nominations from the floor shall be accepted if the conditions for candidacy including vetting are fulfilled.
- 2.103e An elected officer can hold an appointed position in addition to their elected office but not another elected office. (Cf. Synodical Bylaw ~~2.75~~ *2.051*)
- 2.103f.3 Regional Pastors *to be elected only by voting delegates of that region.*
- 2.103f.4 Circuit Counsellors *to be elected only by voting delegates of that circuit.*
- 2.103f.10 Regional Mission and Ministry Councils *to be elected only by voting delegates of that region.*
- 3.005 The expectations of a regional pastor include:
- a. Visit each Member located in his region ~~annually~~ *at least once every four years* in addition to specific invitations he may receive from Member Congregations and Individual Members in that region,
- 4.001 *At least two years before each Convention, Regional Pastors and Regional Mission and Ministry Councils shall review the composition of Circuits in their region and recommend re-drawing Each circuit boundaries* such that each shall consist of not less than ~~three~~ *six* or more than twelve congregations ~~involving~~ *comprising* an aggregate communicant membership of a maximum of ~~8,000~~ *10,000. Exceptions to these*

requirements and limitations can be made only by the president upon request of a Regional Mission and Ministry Council.

~~4.005 Every Member congregation in each circuit shall nominate as candidates for the office of circuit counsellor two men from among the pastors of congregations of the circuit or from among the emeriti who hold membership in one of the member congregations of that circuit. The nominations shall be made at least three months prior to the elections and shall be submitted to the secretary. Candidates shall be vetted by the Regional Pastor in consultation with the other pastors and deacons in the same circuit. Circuit Counsellors being considered for re-election shall recuse themselves from the vetting process. The qualifications for this position include:~~

- ~~a. Membership in good standing on the roster;~~
- ~~b. Demonstrated spiritual and pastoral leadership;~~

~~The names of the vetted candidates shall be submitted to the Commission on Nominations and Elections. The Commission on Nominations and Elections shall provide an open ballot at the Convention providing the Commission on Nominations and Elections has confirmed the vetting of anyone nominated from the floor and that such candidates meet the conditions for candidacy. The election of circuit counsellor shall be made by the delegates of the respective circuit providing the Commission on Nominations and Elections has confirmed the vetting of anyone nominated from the floor and that such candidates meet the conditions for candidacy. The regional pastor, in consultation with the president, shall fill any vacancies for circuit counsellor that may occur between Conventions.~~

(Renumber B. Officers 1. Circuit Counsellor)

4.009c The regional pastor, in consultation with the president, shall fill any vacancies for circuit counsellor that may occur between Conventions.

4.013 *A Non-member congregation is one that has not had a congregational constitution submitted to Synod for review and approval.* The jurisdiction of circuit counsellors shall include non-member congregations whose pastors are Members of LCC, but for the purpose of official visits in such a congregation the consent of the congregation shall first be secured.

4.023e Allow for *confidential* sharing of cases of ~~casuistry~~ *ministry anomalies and challenges in confidence* within the circuit pastors group.

5.001a.2 Member Congregations which violate this requirement and persist in such violation shall after due admonition *from the Regional Pastor* forfeit their membership in Lutheran Church-Canada.

5.001b.1 The term "deacon" shall include both male and female Members of the diaconate who have accepted a call having been:

- (i) Prepared and certified in our church's professional church worker program ~~(e.g. teacher, director of parish services, parish nurse);~~
- (ii) Prepared and certified through a certified program of the LCMS ~~(e.g. teacher, Director of Christian Education, Director of Evangelism, deaconess, parish worker, lay minister).~~

5.003 Member Congregations shall seek the advice of the respective regional pastors *and Circuit Counsellor* when calling pastors or deacons.

5.005a a. Lutheran congregations not members of LCC making application to LCC for pastors or deacons to serve them shall also have the benefit of such official advice from the appropriate regional pastor *and Circuit Counsellor*.

5.009 A pastor if requested by a ~~non-Lutheran~~ congregation *outside of our Synodical fellowship* without a minister to fill its pulpit, may do so for a longer or shorter period of time, in order that such a congregation may hear the Word of God expounded in its truth and purity. Under such circumstances a pastor will not ~~publicly~~ celebrate the Lord's Supper

- with any person* in that congregation. If such a congregation desires to extend a regular call to a pastor, the conditions as provided in bylaw 5.007c must be observed.
- 5.013a.1 He shall have completed the prescribed courses of study and have received a diploma from a seminary which has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding or have fulfilled the requisites for colloquy according to the Handbook, Bylaws 5.047 to ~~5.061~~ *5.063*, or have completed all requisites for the PAT program according to 5.089.
- 5.035e The records maintained by the respective regional pastor shall reflect the restricted status. In addition, the regional pastor shall notify in writing the president and all other ~~district presidents~~ *regional pastors* of such restricted status. The regional pastor shall also notify the congregation or other agency being served by the Member of the restricted status to take appropriate action so that the rights of both the Member and congregation or other agency are preserved.
- 5.043 The order for the ordination and commissioning, or commissioning of a missionary called into a foreign field shall be issued ~~upon the request of by~~ the Board *upon the request of the International Missions Committee by the regional pastor of that region in which the missionary resides*. The order for the commissioning of missionaries for service within a region of the Synod shall be issued *by the Board upon the request of the* regional pastor of that region.
- 5.073 After the regional pastor has furnished the Committee with the required documents the committee shall publish the request of the applicant in the official periodical(s) of LCC. ~~Within a reasonable amount of time the~~ *The* Committee shall either accept or deny the application based on the information it receives in the application process *and render its decision within six months*. Its decision shall not be subject to any appeal.
- 5.083 The PAT Committee is composed of four members who serve ~~two~~ *four*-year terms: the PAT Coordinator *appointed by the PAT Committee*, one member appointed by each seminary and one member of the President's Ministry Council, who shall serve as chairman of the PAT Committee.
- 5.089b The program includes onsite training under the tutelage of a local mentoring pastor. Regular interviews will be conducted with the PAT student by regional pastors, seminary representatives, and the ~~supervisor~~ *coordinator* of the program.
- 5.089d In consultation with the PAT Committee, the ~~supervisor~~ *coordinator* shall administer the appropriate qualifying program and, when all requirements have been met, the PAT Committee will recommend the student to the President's Ministry Council for certification.
- VI. HIGHER EDUCATION ~~Section 1.~~ Seminaries
- 12.001a Requirements. An organization desiring auxiliary status may apply to the Convention, through the Board, if it satisfies the following requirements:
5. It is classified by Canada ~~Customs and~~ Revenue Agency as a charitable organization;
- 12.001b Responsibilities. An approved auxiliary shall:
4. ~~K~~*keep* LCC advised of any new program under consideration;

and be it finally

RESOLVED that these changes be incorporated into the 2026 Handbook of LCC.

Motion C26.23: To adopt Resolution 26.1.11

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.01.12 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO SYNODICAL BYLAW 2.007F.

- WHEREAS Resolution 17.03.05 was passed by the 2017 Synodical Convention; and
- WHEREAS the wording of Resolution 17.03.05 was inadvertently omitted from the 2017 Handbook. Therefore, be it
- RESOLVED that the wording of Resolution 17.03.05 be included in the 2026 Handbook; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that Synodical Bylaw 2.007f read as follows

All reports and overtures accepted by the president in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs shall be referred by him to convention committees appointed by him in the name of the Convention from among the voting delegates and advisors. Pastors, deacons (to the extent possible), and laymen shall be represented on all committees. The president shall notify committee members of their appointment and of the time and place of their first meeting no later than twelve (12) weeks before the start of the Convention. The committee rosters shall be published in the official periodicals of LCC, at least one of which must appear no less than 10 weeks before the Convention.

In order to expedite the transaction of business, the President shall refer all overtures submitted, with the exception of those listed in Synodical Bylaw 2.007c to the convention to Resolutions Committees. The purpose of the Resolutions Committees is to organize the overtures received and present them as resolutions to the convention. It is not the purpose of the Resolutions Committees to change the intent of the overtures submitted. They can, however, combine overtures on a similar topic into one resolution. They can also recommend to decline an overture.

The Resolutions Committees shall not create or present resolutions that do not originate from properly submitted reports and overtures. If the president deems it advisable, he may convene any committees prior to the opening of the Convention. The first issue of Today's Business shall be issued containing tentative resolutions. This issue of Today's Business shall be sent to all registered delegates of the Convention and to each Member Congregation.

Motion C26.24: To adopt Resolution 26.1.12

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.01a TO STUDY THE TERM “BISHOP” AND THE TIME LIMIT OF CALLS

(Reference Overtures 2.01 and 2.02)

- WHEREAS Resolution 2.01 proposed calling Regional Pastors and Synod Presidents without time limit, removing the necessity to be re-elected at subsequent conventions until they retire, accept another call, are incapacitated, or removed for appropriate Scriptural reasons from their call; and

- WHEREAS Resolution 2.02 proposed Regional Pastors be called “Regional Bishops,” Synod President be called “Synodical Bishop,” and Synodical Vice President be called “Assistant to the Synodical Bishop,” and the Synod Handbook be adjusted accordingly; and
- WHEREAS there are significant issues involved that cannot be fully explored in the context of a convention; and
- WHEREAS all theological matters ought to be decided on the basis of thorough study of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be charged with producing study materials on the time limit for calls to LCC’s ecclesiastical supervisors and the terminology of “bishop” as it is used in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; with special attention to earlier studies of both matters within LCC and the LCMS and be it finally
- RESOLVED that such materials be distributed to the synod no later than two years prior to the next convention, which then should be used for study at circuit forums, Winkels, pastoral conferences, and congregational studies.

Motion C26.38 To insert “with special attention to earlier studies of both matters within LCC and the LCMS” in the first RESOLVED

Action: Adopted

Motion C26.39: To adopt Resolution 26.2.01a as amended

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.03 TO RECOGNIZE THAT LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA (LCC) IS NO LONGER IN ALTAR AND PULPIT FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (LCANZ)

(Reference Overture 2.03)

- WHEREAS Holy Scripture clearly teaches that only qualified men should be called and ordained into the office of the holy ministry (see 1 Timothy 2-3, 1 Corinthians 14, LCC’s CTCR Report, ‘Theses on the Role of Women in the Church’, that was adopted for guidance and reference at our 1996 Convention and reaffirmed at our 2022 Convention); and
- WHEREAS the LCANZ officially approved the ordination of women into the pastoral office at its October 2024 Convention, and is now ordaining women into the pastoral office; and
- WHEREAS on March 21, 2025 the Board of Directors of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), of which Lutheran Church—Canada is a full member, removed the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) from membership in the ILC over its decision to depart from the clear teaching of Scripture and the doctrinal standards of the ILC by approving the ordination of women; and

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- WHEREAS differences in doctrine and practice exist between the LCC and the LCANZ, not only on this issue of the ordination of women to the pastoral office, but also on other matters such as the authority of the scriptures, the scriptural understanding of church fellowship, and the doctrine and practice of close[d] communion; and
- WHEREAS LCC understands altar and pulpit fellowship to be a gift of God that exists by His grace on the basis of agreement in doctrine and practice; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that with deep sorrow and regret Lutheran Church—Canada declare its recognition that it is no longer in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that LCC commit itself to pursuing further doctrinal discussions with the LCANZ in the hope that by God’s grace our church bodies might once again attain agreement in doctrine and practice and so enjoy the gift of God-given and God-pleasing altar and pulpit fellowship.

Motion C26.16: To adopt Resolution 26.2.03

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.2.04 TO RECOGNIZE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LUTHERAN MISSION
– AUSTRALIA**

(Reference Overture 2.04)

- WHEREAS as a result of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) approval and sanctioning of the ordination of women into the office of the holy ministry at its 2024 Convention, which is clearly contrary to the Scriptures; some pastors, lay members, and congregations have left that church body and established Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A); and
- WHEREAS Lutheran Church—Canada in a previous adopted resolution sadly recognized that this action on the part of the LCANZ has severed the bond of fellowship between our two churches; and
- WHEREAS discussions have taken place between representatives of Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) and Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A); and
- WHEREAS these discussions have revealed a clear unity in the doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles and in the right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and
- WHEREAS LCC’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has reviewed the report of these discussions and has concurred with this mutual agreement between LCC and LM-A; and
- WHEREAS the CTCR views the benefits of fellowship to be a future blessing from the Lord of the Church for both church bodies; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC recognize that a state of altar and pulpit fellowship exists between Lutheran Church—Canada and Lutheran Mission – Australia.

Motion C26.17: To adopt Resolution 26.2.04

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.05 TO RECOGNIZE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES (LCP)

(Reference Overture 2.05)

- WHEREAS the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) dates to 1946 when missionaries from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) arrived in Manila; and
- WHEREAS in 1971 the Lutheran Church in the Philippines was received as a partner church with the LCMS; and
- WHEREAS the Lutheran Church in the Philippines is a full member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), along with Lutheran Church—Canada, both churches subscribing to the doctrinal provision of the ILC; and
- WHEREAS discussions have taken place between representatives of Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) and the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), revealing a clear unity in the doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles and in the right administration of the Sacraments (AC VII); and
- WHEREAS the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of LCC has reviewed the report of these discussions and has concurred with this mutual agreement between LCC and the LCP; and
- WHEREAS the CTCR views the benefits of fellowship to be a future blessing from the Lord of the Church for both church bodies – e.g. LCC assisting the LCP in theological education at their seminary, and LCP assisting LCC mission outreach to Filipino immigrants in Canada; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC recognize that a state of altar and pulpit fellowship exists between Lutheran Church—Canada and the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

Motion C26.18: To adopt Resolution 26.2.05

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.06 TO CELEBRATE THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

(Reference Overture 2.06)

- WHEREAS the Augsburg Confession is the foremost confession of faith of our Evangelical Lutheran Church; and
- WHEREAS the Preface to the Book of Concord states: “Our disposition and intention has always been directed toward the goal that no other doctrine be treated and taught in our lands, territories, schools, and churches than that alone which is based on the Holy Scriptures of God and is embodied in the Augsburg Confession . . . so that the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be preserved and perpetuated among our posterity through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious advent of our Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ” (p. 12); and

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- WHEREAS Article II of our Synodical Constitution states that “every Member of Lutheran Church–Canada accepts without reservation . . . the Unaltered Augsburg Confession . . . as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God” (p. 9); and
- WHEREAS every constitution of an LCC congregation contains a provision along these lines from the ‘Sample Constitution and Bylaws for LCC Congregations’: “Only such hymns, prayers, and liturgies shall be used in the public worship of this congregation and in all ministerial acts as to conform to the confessional standard of Article III. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine, only such books shall be used as conform to this standard” (p. 3); and
- WHEREAS every pastor and deacon of LCC, at the time of their ordination/consecration/installation into office, confesses the Unaltered Augsburg Confession “to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church;” and promises to “perform the duties of [their] office in accordance with these Confessions“ (*Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, p. 179, 220); and
- WHEREAS in his essay at the 1863 Convention of the LCMS, C. F. W. Walther said: “When we discover how little most of our congregations know about the Symbols (confessional writings), it must humble us deeply, and on the other hand become for us a mighty incentive to familiarize the people with them and urge them to read [and study] them diligently” (C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, Vol. I, p. 78); and
- WHEREAS the year 2030 will be the 500th Anniversary of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Synod President, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, strike an anniversary committee to prepare and gather study guides, provide worship materials, articles for The Canadian Lutheran periodical, and the like on the Augsburg Confession; and be it further
- RESOLVED that pastors, deacons and congregations be encouraged to make use of such materials; and be it further
- RESOLVED that circuit forums and convocations, regional gatherings, church workers conferences, youth and young adult gatherings, LWMLC zone rallies, and the like be focused on this anniversary; and be it further
- RESOLVED that such materials be made available for dissemination to the pastors, deacons, and congregations of LCC at least two years prior to our 2030 Convention; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that the theme of the 2030 Synod Convention be based upon the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession.

Motion C26.20: To adopt Resolution 26.2.06

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.07 FOR CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH A LUTHERAN RESPONSE TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

(Reference Overtures 2.08 and 2.10)

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- Whereas Lutheran Church – Canada at her 2022 Edmonton Convention, through Resolution 22.02.07, adopted the CTCR document, *A Lutheran Response to Contemporary Issues*, in order to address, as indicated in the resolution's 'whereas', “sharp disagreements in congregations and amongst clergy and congregations” about “how we as Christians should respond when laws are proposed and presented, deliberated, and then eventually passed by the secular government which impact the Church’s teaching and freedom of religion,” and
- Whereas in this resolution, the Synod also commended this CTCR document to the pastors, deacons, and congregations of Synod for further and continued “*study and response*,” and
- Whereas the intention of such resolution is that the Synod's unity and concord is best fostered and cultivated when continued open and mutual discussion upon these matters on the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions is encouraged as widely as possible throughout Synod; therefore be it
- Resolved that any significant response to the document *A Lutheran Response to Contemporary Issues* be brought to the attention of the Synod at large in order to promote and encourage the widest, most free and open discussion as possible on these issues upon the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as called for by Resolution 22.02.07 for the continued cultivation of godly harmony and unity of doctrine and practice within our Synod.

Motion C26.47: To adopt Resolution 26.2.07

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.08 TO AVOID SCHEDULING SYNODICAL CONVENTION ON SUNDAYS

(Reference Overture 2.09)

- WHEREAS both the 2022 and 2026 LCC national conventions have been scheduled to occur during Sundays, and
- WHEREAS almost all pastors of Synod will be attending the convention, representing all the congregations of Synod, which will result in almost all the members of LCC being without a pastor to lead them during the Divine Service occurring during convention, and
- WHEREAS it can be difficult for many congregations without retired or non-delegate pastors nearby to find lay members to lead services, and impossible for them to offer the Lord's Supper; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that future LCC synodical conventions be scheduled to avoid Sunday so that all pastors may be free to be with their congregations to lead Divine Services as they were called to do.

Motion C26.46: To adopt Resolution 26.2.08

Action: Defeated

RESOLUTION 26.2.09 TO RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS ON PAT GRADUATE FIELDS OF SERVICE

(Reference Overture 2.11)

- WHEREAS the Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) programme was introduced to provide pastoral care in exceptional circumstances; and
- WHEREAS through call and ordination PAT graduates are authorised to carry out the Word and Sacrament duties of the pastoral office in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and
- WHEREAS PAT graduates receive a limited theological education that does not meet the standards of a full, residential seminary pastoral formation programme; and
- WHEREAS the church recognises that pastors differ in gifts, abilities, and training, and therefore seeks to order the ministerium accordingly; and
- WHEREAS PAT placements are “site-specific” (Synodical Bylaw 5.093); and
- WHEREAS similar site-specific programmes in sister church bodies include limitations on the field of service for their graduates; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.095 Restrictions on Synodical Service

A PAT graduate may not:

- a. be elected to an office of ecclesiastical supervision, including Synodical President, Vice-President, Regional Pastor, or Circuit Counsellor;
- b. serve as a member of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; or
- c. supervise a vicar.

And be it further

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.097 Place of Service

A PAT graduate is not eligible for call to another congregation without the express consent of the President’s Ministry Council.

RESOLVED that the LCC Bylaws be amended to include:

5.099 Removal of Restrictions

A PAT Graduate may have such restrictions (5.095, 5.097) removed by completing a full program of seminary training.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure make any appropriate modifications to the LCC Synodical Bylaws in other places to carry through these provisions.

Motion C26.42: To adopt Resolution 26.2.09

Motion C26.43: To amend Motion C26.42 by striking from Resolution 26.2.09: in 5.095 (a) the words “Circuit Counsellor”; and altering 5.097 by adding “, or for service as a Circuit Counsellor”, changing “without” to “with”, and changing “is not” to “may be”, so that 5.097 will read “A PAT graduate may be eligible for call to another congregation, or for service as a Circuit Counsellor, with the express consent of the President's Ministry Council.”

Action: Adopted

Motion C26.44: To table amended Resolution 26.2.09

Action: Declined

The vote was then taken on amended motion C26.42 (to adopt resolution 26.2.09, as amended.)

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.10 TO AMEND ORDINATION TIMING FOR PAT STUDENTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

(Reference Overture 2.12)

WHEREAS the Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) programme was introduced to provide pastoral care in exceptional circumstances; and

WHEREAS through call and ordination PAT graduates are authorised to carry out the Word and Sacrament duties of the pastoral office in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS the current LCC Synodical bylaws (5.013) do not permit ordination to take place until a PAT student has completed the full requirements of the programme; and

WHEREAS full, regular Word and Sacrament ministry at a PAT site may be delayed for many years while the candidate completes the programme; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the LCC Synodical Bylaws be amended to include section c:

5.013: Prerequisites for Ordination

- c. In exceptional circumstances, where the congregation has insufficient access to pastoral care, a PAT congregation may petition the PMC for call and ordination of its PAT student before the full programme is completed.
 - i. Such permission shall only be granted by the PMC (in consultation with the PAT committee) after it is satisfied that the student has completed sufficient training.
 - ii. The student is obligated to complete the remaining programme requirements post-ordination. If he fails to remain active in the programme (i.e. by taking at least one course per year), his status on the LCC roster shall be suspended.

And be it finally

RESOLVED that the President's Ministry Council formulate guidelines to ensure local supervision of such ordained PAT students by an experienced, ordained seminary graduate.

Motion C26.45: To adopt Resolution 26.2.10

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.11 ON MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID)

(Reference Overtures 2.07, 2.13, and 2.14)

- WHEREAS God has created all human beings in His image, and bestows upon all human life intrinsic sacredness, worth and value regardless of the quality or worth--or lack of it--perceived by the world or by one's self, and,
- WHEREAS such sacredness of human life is constantly desecrated and belittled by sin, death and the devil, yet God restores fullness of life to fallen man in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Church, and,
- WHEREAS the Christian's life of faith consists not only of placing one's whole day-to-day life into God's hands and direction, but also one's death, allowing such to happen at the time and place of God's choosing, and,
- WHEREAS it is the sacred role of government, instituted by God as His instrument, to uphold and protect all human life, from conception to natural death, especially that of the frail and vulnerable, and,
- WHEREAS through the present policies concerning MAID, the government of Canada has been grossly derelict of its solemn responsibility to protect life and has advocated and put into practice a worldview and philosophical perspective that desecrates life and strips it of intrinsic sanctity and value, and,
- WHEREAS since the initial legalization of MAID for restricted purposes intended only for the terminally ill and suffering, there has been a relentless dangerous trend of wider expansion of its eligibility also to those who are mentally ill, depressed, lonely, or merely unhappy with life, and,
- WHEREAS the faithful of the church are suffering from increasing temptation to consider MAID as an option for end of life and increasing pressure not to oppose or speak against its practice; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC reaffirm before the church, the governing authorities and the public at large her unwavering commitment to the sacredness of all human life from conception to natural death, and therefore also her firm opposition to the practice of MAID, with its belittling and desecration of the sacredness of life, along with the philosophical perspectives underlying it, and also to encourage all to a blessed end by faith in Jesus Christ, commending their last hour to the time and place of God's choosing, and, be it further
- RESOLVED that the Convention would request the CTCR to formulate Pastoral Guidelines for pastors and laity struggling with MAID and its consequences, further
- RESOLVED that LCC encourage governing authorities to repeal the legislation of MAID and return to its God-given duty to reverence life, and be it finally
- RESOLVED that LCC and her auxiliary agencies, such as Lutherans for Life-Canada, and her pastors encourage a vibrant confession and ministry to respond to the threats of the temptation of MAID by providing relevant Bible studies, literature, and guidance for ministry to the

faithful of LCC concerning this topic, and encourage programs and agencies within the church and/or in our communities at large which provides for the lonely, the depressed and the vulnerable, beneficial care and loving alternatives to MAID.

Motion C26.19: To adopt Resolution 26.2.11

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.2.12 TO STUDY TERMINOLOGY REGARDING THE DIACONATE OF LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA

(Reference Overtures 2.15 and 3.01)

- WHEREAS Genesis 1: 31 says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” And this created order is a great blessing to be taught and celebrated; and
- WHEREAS movements in our society have sought to confuse those sexual distinctions, and call evil what God has called good; and
- WHEREAS “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace” and “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40); and
- WHEREAS it is always desirable to align our terminology with Scriptural language to the highest degree we can; and
- WHEREAS 1 Timothy 3:8-13 refers to an office of “deacon” (diakonos) limited to men; and
- WHEREAS women such as Phoebe (in Romans 16:1) were referred to with a gendered form of “deacon” translatable as “servant” or “deaconess”; and
- WHEREAS our current practice in LCC is to refer to all synodically trained professional church workers who do not hold the Office of Holy Ministry as the “diaconate” collectively, and as “deacon” individually regardless of gender, and
- WHEREAS clarity of terminology and understanding is desirable for peace and concord within the church; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that LCC in convention assign the President to conduct a review of the foundational documents on the establishment of the diaconate, the uniqueness and blessing of male deacons and female deacons (or deaconesses), terminology, nomenclature and any differences of service; and be it further
- RESOLVED that this review be done in consultation with the PMC, CTCR, laity, diaconate and pastors; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that he bring forward recommendations through the PMC for presentation at the 2030 Convention.

Motion C26.40: To adopt Resolution 26.2.12

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.01 TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND AFFIRM FLEXIBILITY IN
COLLECTING CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENTS**

(Reference Overture 3.02)

- WHEREAS Section 2.023 of the Synodical Bylaws of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) provides that convention assessments, and registration fees are to be determined on the basis of the approved convention budget, without prescribing a specific method of calculation; and
- WHEREAS earlier editions of the Handbook (2011 and 2014) explicitly referenced a per communicant member levy as the basis for such assessments, while the 2017 and 2022 Handbooks no longer include such explicit direction; and
- WHEREAS it has been the longstanding practice of LCC to collect assessments on a per communicant member basis in order to fund conventions, and pastor and deacon conferences; and
- WHEREAS overture 3.02 has emphasized the importance of fairness, equity, and predictability in the sharing of such costs among member congregations; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in Convention acknowledge the historical practice of per communicant member assessments while recognizing that the current Synodical Bylaws do not prescribe a single required method for the collection of such assessments; and be it further
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in Convention affirm that, within the provisions of the existing Bylaws, assessments will be analyzed by the Board of Directors in a timely manner and may be structured using a combination of approaches, including per communicant member assessments and fixed or base amounts applied to member congregations, as may be deemed equitable; and be it further
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada encourage its delegates and member congregations to remain informed regarding the purpose of such assessments, their historical basis, and considerations that may guide future methodologies; and be it finally
- RESOLVED That this resolution be understood as declaratory in nature, affirming existing practice and flexibility under current Bylaws, and not requiring any amendment to the Synodical Bylaws.

Motion C26.10: To adopt Resolution 26.3.01

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.02a TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF LCC’S “GUIDELINES FOR CARING
FOR CALLED WORKERS”**

(Reference Overture 3.03)

- WHEREAS Called church workers are a precious resource, a gift the Lord has given to lead, teach, and nourish the church; and
- WHEREAS the gifts of God that they share and administer, as well as their personal talents, training, and sacrifices are of immense value; and

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- WHEREAS the church on earth suffers temptation, sin, and spiritual attack, which may lead to church workers not always being generously nurtured and supported in their vocations, which often leads to burnout and to workers leaving their calls; and
- WHEREAS Lutheran Church–Canada has responded to the need to support church workers by providing its congregations with “Guidelines for Caring for Called Workers” (September 9, 2025) and
- WHEREAS the Regional Ministry and Mission Councils (RMMCs) are to serve as “an important conduit for the sharing of information from LCC and other regions with the congregations, pastors and deacons”, and the use of other LCC resources, which may include the Worker Benefit Services Wellness resources, and be it therefore
- RESOLVED that the RMMCs be encouraged to promote the adoption of the “Guidelines for Caring for Called Workers” among the congregations, and be it further
- RESOLVED that the RMMCs engage in further study of the LCMS Kansas District “Church Worker Care Team Manual to evaluate its local applicability, and be it finally
- RESOLVED that the RMMCs and the Regional Pastors will encourage church workers to seek private confession and absolution on a regular basis.

Motion C26.11: To adopt Resolution 26.3.02a

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.03 TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF REV. DR. TIMOTHY TEUSCHER

(Reference Overture 3.04)

- WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Teuscher is joyfully received as a gift bestowed by the exalted Lord on His church for her good (Eph. 4:8, 11); and
- WHEREAS our Lord worked in and through Rev. Dr. Teuscher to give exceptional leadership to Lutheran Church–Canada as she has grown in her role in Canadian and worldwide Lutheranism; and
- WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Teuscher has given unselfishly of his time and energy in fulfilling his duties; and
- WHEREAS in the summer of 2026, Rev. Dr. Teuscher will be retiring from full time service as a pastor, after serving two terms as President of Lutheran Church–Canada; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED the Lutheran Church–Canada give thanks to God for the rich blessings poured out upon this church body through the leadership of Rev. Dr. Teuscher as pastor, First Vice President of the East District and President of Lutheran Church – Canada, and commend Rev. Dr. Teuscher to the Lord’s continued blessing and direction; and be it
- RESOLVED that Rev. Dr. Teuscher be granted the title Past President; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that at such time as Rev. Dr. Teuscher retires, he receive the official designation President Emeritus.

Motion C26.07: To adopt Resolution 26.3.03

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.04 ON THE ROLE AND JURISDICTION OF LEGAL COUNSEL
WITHIN SYNOD**

(Reference Overture 3.05, 3.06, 3.13)

- WHEREAS Lutheran Church–Canada recognizes in her Handbook that Holy Scripture is the only rule and norm of all doctrine and practice within our Synod, as is also expressed and defined in the witness of the Lutheran Confessions to which all pastors and congregations freely give their loyalty and assent, and
- WHEREAS the Synodical Bylaws of LCC gives provision for legal counsel in the Synod's work and ministry to ensure that all things are done decently and in order with all due honour, respect, and harmony with the government and its laws, and
- WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw 2.007c states that "overtures, which, upon the advice of legal counsel, may subject LCC or the corporate officers of LCC to civil liability, shall not be accepted for Convention consideration," and
- WHEREAS LCC's unconditional subscription to Biblical and Confessional authority governs its entire Handbook, including Synodical Bylaw 2.007c;
- WHEREAS the Synod's confession and public proclamation of its doctrine is not limited to only to what is permitted by civil law as defined by legal counsel, and
- WHEREAS Scripture teaches that "we must obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29); therefore be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention affirm that legal counsel is needed, encouraged and welcomed to serve LCC with guidance and expertise with respect to matters pertaining to her life and work within the laws of the state; and be it further
- RESOLVED that LCC affirms that the proper roles and limits of legal counsel in the life, policies, and theological confession of the Synod are subject to Holy Scripture as the sole rule and norm of all doctrine and practice; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that the Synod President and CCMS be tasked with reviewing the Handbook over the next quadrennium, ensuring clarity with respect to the proper role and limits of the work of legal counsel.

Motion C26.35: To adopt Resolution 26.3.04

Action: Adopted

**RESOLUTION 26.3.05 TO CLARIFY TERMS FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS IN THE HANDBOOK**

(Reference Overture 3.07)

- WHEREAS the Handbook of LCC uses the expressions "Canadian Missions" but LCC in her actions and communications regularly uses the expression "Domestic Missions", and

WHEREAS the Handbook of LCC uses both the expressions “World Missions” and “International Missions” (as well as the expression “Foreign field”) but LCC in her actions and communications regularly uses the expression “International Missions”, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that, in order to avoid confusion and promote unity in our speaking and work together, the Handbook of LCC be updated to use the term “Domestic Missions” rather than “Canadian Missions,” “International Missions” rather than “World Missions.”

Motion C26.14: To adopt Resolution 26.3.05

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.06 TO RESPECTFULLY DECLINE OVERTURES 3.08 AND 3.09

(Reference Overture 3.08 and 3.09)

WHEREAS the oversight of Domestic Missions has changed under Lutheran Church–Canada’s new structure; and

WHEREAS its organization is developing through the work of the Director of Domestic Missions, whose responsibilities are defined in an LCC job description, in partnership with Regional Pastors, RMMC’s and congregations; and

WHEREAS there are some “mission tools” like “Recognized Mission Congregations” and “Strategic Mission Areas” that have been successfully used; and

WHEREAS such knowledge can be shared with the Director of Domestic Missions and RMMC’s with a view to preserving them and their utility without enshrining the practices in the synodical bylaws; be it therefore

RESOLVED that Overtures 3.08 and 3.09 be respectfully declined.

Motion C26.37: To adopt Resolution 26.3.06

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.07 TO GIVE THANKS FOR CONCORDIA LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ST. CATHARINES, AT HER 50TH ANNIVERSARY

(Reference Overture 3.10)

WHEREAS the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod at her 1975 convention authorized Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, to establish an extension site in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Ontario District in her 1976 convention selected St. Catharines to be the site of the new seminary; and

WHEREAS the first classes were held in September 1976 in the basement of Resurrection Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS the seminary was incorporated by provincial charter in November 1976, established an Affiliation Agreement with Brock University in 1982, built a fine new building on its

campus in 1983, and received the right from the provincial government to give degrees in her own name in 2024; and

WHEREAS over her fifty years of service CLTS has delivered some 240 graduates, both ordained and lay, into the church's service; and

WHEREAS CLTS continues to serve Lutheran Church–Canada and her sister churches around the world through pastoral formation, education of lay leaders, teaching the faithful, supporting mission work, and publishing confessional Lutheran theological writings; therefore be it

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention express thanks to God for fifty years of service to the church provided by Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, and commend her to the prayers and support of God's people.

Motion C26.12: To adopt Resolution 26.3.07

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.08 TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUING FORMATION FOR PASTORS AND DEACONS

(Reference Overture 3.11)

WHEREAS LCC convention resolution 17.02.07 requested guidance from the PMC regarding continuing education expectations for all church workers; and

WHEREAS growth in maturity in faith and life never ends in a Christian's earthly life; and

WHEREAS no pastor or deacon is "fully formed" at the completion of formal church work programs and each one benefits from ongoing growth as he or she serves in their work; and

WHEREAS the Biblical qualifications of church workers are grounded not only in professional competency but primarily in Christian's character and therefore it is appropriate to use a broad heading of "formation" which includes both; and

WHEREAS LCC's core objectives explicitly include the effort to "recruit and train pastors, deacons, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth" (Constitution, Article III); and

WHEREAS every pastor makes the commitment to diligence in the study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions and every deacon makes the commitment to growth in love and excellence in skill; and

WHEREAS pastors and deacons face ever-changing challenges during the course of their work in the church; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Member Congregations of LCC and Synodical leadership strongly encourage LCC workers to be involved in continuing education and formation for their own benefit and the benefit of the whole church; and be it further

- RESOLVED that each pastor and deacon strive to develop and carry out a plan for his or her own continuing education and formation over the next quadrennium; and be it further
- RESOLVED that congregations, as recommended by LCC's Compensation Guidelines, strive to contribute to existing funding structures and opportunities for their pastors and deacons; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that LCC in convention direct the PMC to develop further guidance and expectations for continuing formation within the next quadrennium.

Motion C26.36: To adopt Resolution 26.3.08

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.09 TO REVIEW SYNODICAL BYLAW VII. RECONCILIATION, RESTORATION, AND ADJUDICATION

(Reference Overture 3.12)

- WHEREAS Synodical Bylaw VII has proved to be unwieldy in implementation; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada in convention assign the President to oversee a review of Synodical Bylaw VII in consultation with the PMC, CTCR, and CCMS; and be it finally
- RESOLVED that he bring forward recommendations regarding Synodical Bylaw VII to the 2030 Convention for discussion and implementation.

Motion C26.15: To adopt Resolution 26.3.09

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.10 TO RATIFY AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS

(Reference Overture 3.14)

- WHEREAS upon review of changes to various congregation constitutions and subsequent recommendation of the President, the Board of Directors has approved the revisions and amendments to these constitutions; and
- WHEREAS such actions by the Board are to be “submitted to the next Convention for ratification” (Synodical Bylaw 1.007.b); therefore be it
- RESOLVED that the Convention ratify the actions of the Board pertaining to its approval of amendments and revisions to the constitutions of the following congregations:

Central Region

Faith, Atikokan, ON
 Trinity, Churchbridge, SK
 Our Saviour/St. Mark, Dryden/Vermilion Bay, ON
 Zion Evangelical, Morden, MB
 New Beginnings, Regina, SK
 Mt. Calvary, Swift Current, SK

	Calvary, Thunder Bay, ON
	Trinity, Winkler, MB
	Peace, Winnipeg, MB
	Immanuel, Winnipeg, MB
	Saint James, Winnipeg, MB
East Region	
	St. Matthew's, Cornwall, ON
	Faith, Kitchener, ON
	St. Paul's, Kitchener, ON
	Good Shepherd, London, ON
	Grace, Oshawa, ON
	Southampton, Southampton, ON
	St. Luke, Ottawa, ON
	Trinity, Kurtzville, ON
West Region	
	Shepherd of Peace, Calgary, AB
	Grace, Drumheller, AB
	Christ, Fort Saskatchewan, AB
	St. Matthew's Lutheran, Calgary, AB
	Bethlehem, Edmonton, AB
	Faith, Grande Prairie, AB
	Redeemer, High Prairie, AB
	First (The Sanctuary), Kelowna, BC
	Our Saviour, Parksville, BC
	Trinity, Quesnel, BC
	St. Matthew, Stony Plain, AB
	St. John's, Vernon, BC

Motion C26.13: To adopt Resolution 26.3.10

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.11 TO RECEIVE ST. MATTHEW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, CORNWALL, ONTARIO INTO MEMBERSHIP OF LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

(Reference Overture 3.15)

WHEREAS the congregation of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cornwall, Ontario has applied for membership in Lutheran Church—Canada; and

WHEREAS the constitution and bylaws of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church have been submitted and reviewed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors of LCC in accordance with Synodical Bylaw 1.007 a; therefore be it

RESOLVED that St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cornwall, Ontario be joyfully received as a member of Lutheran Church—Canada.

C26-03 Motion: To adopt Resolution 26.3.11

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.12 TO APPOINT AUDITORS FOR LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

(Reference Overture 3.16)

WHEREAS the statutory Bylaws (Article V – provision 5.01) state the delegates present at Convention appoint an auditor for auditing the financial statements of LCC; therefore be it

RESOLVED that KPMG be appointed auditors of LCC and be retained until the next Convention

Motion C26.06: To adopt Resolution 26.3.12

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.13 TO RECEIVE THE LCC QUADRENNIAL WORK PROGRAM (2027–2030)

(Reference Overture 3.17)

WHEREAS the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Directors of Lutheran Church–Canada have prepared a Quadrennial Work Program (QWP) for the years 2027–2030; and

WHEREAS LCC leadership and key stakeholders were given opportunity to provide input into the QWP through participation in an October 2025 Planning Conference and a joint RMMC meeting in January 2026; and

WHEREAS with respect to Domestic Missions, congregations and mission outreach initiatives, including language ministry, were invited to submit applications for financial assistance for consideration within the QWP; and

WHEREAS the QWP advances both ongoing and emerging domestic mission priorities, including provision for a Missionary–at–Large (MAL) to engage with an Indigenous community, alongside the strategic exploration and development of a new urban ministry initiative in a major metropolitan setting; and

WHEREAS the QWP can only be implemented by the cooperation and action of congregations, regions, and by the receipt of necessary funds; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church–Canada, assembled in Convention, receive the QWP (2027–2030) for information, study, and action by the Board of Directors.

Motion C26.08: To adopt Resolution 26.3.13

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.14 TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITORS REPORT THEREON FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 2026

(Reference Overture 3.18)

WHEREAS the comparative financial statements for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2026 were prepared by management and audited by KPMG in April 2026; and

WHEREAS the audited financial statements and the accompanying auditor’s report thereon were reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on May 26, 2026; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the members of Lutheran Church—Canada, assembled in convention, hereby acknowledge receipt of the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2026.

Motion C26.05: To adopt Resolution 26.3.14

Action: Adopted

RESOLUTION 26.3.15 TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF REV. ROBERT MOHNS

(Reference Overture 3.19)

WHEREAS Rev. Robert Mohns is joyfully received as a gift bestowed by the Lord on His church for her good (Eph. 4:8, 11); and

WHEREAS Rev. Mohns served faithfully congregations in the West Region of Lutheran Church—Canada for 28 years; and

WHEREAS Rev. Mohns has given unselfishly of his time and energy in fulfilling his duties as Regional Pastor of the West Region of Lutheran Church—Canada over these past seven years; and

WHEREAS Rev. Mohns will be retiring from fulltime service in the church at the end of this quadrennium; therefore be it

RESOLVED that Lutheran Church—Canada give thanks to God for the rich blessings poured out upon our church body through the leadership and service of Rev. Robert Mohns, and commend him to the Lord's continued blessing and direction.

Motion C26.09: To adopt Resolution 26.3.15

Action: Adopted

Opening Service Friday, June 12, 2026 – Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher
“Together One: It’s Not Up To Us”
 John 17:20-26

“He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.” So we will confess shortly in the Nicene Creed. But what exactly does that mean? Well, on the one hand, St. Paul answers that when he writes in Romans these words: **“Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and who indeed is interceding for us.”**

Think about that! The risen and ascended Lord Jesus is Himself praying for us, of all people. The eternal Son of God – by whom this entire universe was made . . . who became flesh in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary . . . who was crucified for the sins of the world and rose from the dead . . . who ascended into heaven . . . who is now ruling the entire universe . . . and who will come again on the Last Day as Judge of all – is at this very moment speaking to God the Father for you.

And what is Jesus praying for on your behalf? Well, that is what we are given a glimpse of here in the last part of what is called His ‘High-Priestly Prayer’ – the prayer that He prayed in the presence of His disciples there in the Upper Room just prior to His death and resurrection . . . the prayer for His Church, for all who believe in Him.

“Father,” Jesus thus prays, **“I ask that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us; that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me; that they may become perfectly one.”**

Now, there is one, unmistakable theme running through Jesus’ prayer here . . . and that is unity, a oneness of heart and mind and will among all who believe in Him. And which is why, when the Bible speaks of Christ’s Church, it uses a lot of ‘together’ words – members of the household of God . . . sons and daughters of one Father

who art in heaven . . . children of our holy Mother – the Church . . . sheep of His flock . . . fellow citizens of God’s heavenly kingdom . . . part of a royal priesthood . . . branches of the one Vine – Jesus Christ . . . members of the body of Christ.

At the same time, however, there is one, unmistakable reality running through this world in which we are living; and that is the fact that the Church is not unified, that we are not one. Not even close. There are divisions, separations . . . so much so that you have to admit that it’s a miracle that there even is a Christian Church around anymore! Because if it were up to us . . .

But that’s precisely the point. The Christian Church . . . Lutheran Church—Canada . . . your congregation is not something up to us. It’s a miracle, a work of God in this world. So Jesus says in another place: **“I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

And it doesn’t take long to figure that out, once you see what we have done to and in this world . . . and, yes, even to and in Christ’s Church! The disunity we have worked, and continue to work. From the very beginning, when our first parents sinned and separated themselves from their Creator, and then turned against each other, even though God had said to them, **“The two shall become one flesh.”** Then you had Cain against Abel, Ishmael against Isaac, Esau against Jacob, the list goes on and on.

In the New Testament it doesn’t get any better. Dissensions arise among Jesus’ disciples over which of them was the greatest in the kingdom of God. There is controversy in the church in Jerusalem between the Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking members over the daily distribution of food to their widows. As soon as

the apostle Paul planted churches in Galatia, factions develop because, as he says, **“there are some who trouble you and want to distort the Gospel of Christ.”** The situation in the church at Corinth became so bad that he was impelled to write to them these words: **“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”**

And since then? Well, false teachings concerning the person and work of Jesus would divide the early church for hundreds of years – and although formally addressed by the Nicene Creed, which we commemorate today, those same false teachings are still around. There was the great schism between the eastern and western church at the turn of the first millennium that is still around. Then came the divisions at the time of the Reformation that are still with us. And today the situation seems more divided than ever – and this despite all the efforts on the part of some over the past number of years to establish some great outward union of churches by simply agreeing to disagree . . . but which can hardly be called ‘Together One.’

If it were up to us . . . but that’s the problem, not the solution. For mere outward unity achieved by our own efforts never lasts. Simply agreeing to disagree is a mere sham. Saying that there are just different versions of the truth is an affront to Him who earlier said to the disciples there in the Upper Room: **“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** And again: “Your Word is truth.”

If it were up to us . . . well, that’s precisely what we have done – caused disunity, dissensions, discord. It’s happened and is happening in some of our congregations. It’s happened and is happening in certain quarters of our Synod. And not just in the Church, but in every segment of society: husband against wife, brother against sister, children against parents,

neighbor against neighbor, ethnic group against ethnic group. Sin has taken that perfect unity and harmony of Eden, and caused the disunity and discord that we see today. And you and I are not guiltless, innocent by-standers in this . . . far from it! We admitted as such earlier when we confessed those words: “We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.”

Do you remember some of those ‘one another’ expressions that St. Paul uses in his epistles about what it means to be united together as one in Christ? **“Honor one another, accept one another, greet one another, serve one another, bear with one another, submit to one another, encourage one another, forgive one another, love one another.”** And if all that were up to us . . . well, not possible! But it’s not up to us.

And there is only one way to true unity – the crucified, risen and ascended Lord Jesus Himself. Remember what He said about the purpose of His approaching death on the cross? **“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself.”** Or, as St. Paul puts it: **“You who once were far off, separated from God, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”** And further: **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”** Did you catch it? It is only as we are united in Christ and with Christ and to Christ that we can truly be united with one another, that we can be ‘Together One.’

And that is why Jesus continues to pray for us in these words: **“I ask that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in Me and I in you, that they also may be in us; that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in Me; that they may become perfectly one.”**

Now, how does God the Father answer this prayer request of His own Son? How is this unity with Jesus and with one another restored, established, and maintained in us and among us

– even in spite of ourselves? How can we in Lutheran Church—Canada . . . congregations, pastors, and deacons . . . really be ‘Together One’? Well, that is indicated when Jesus says: **“I ask for those who will believe in Me through their Word”**; that is, through the word of the apostles. Yes, the word of the apostles and to whom Jesus said just prior to His ascension: **“The Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations. And you are witnesses of these things.”**

And while God uses people like the apostles, like pastors, to do this; it is really His work, not our work. **“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved,”** is how the book of Acts sums up the labors of the apostles in witnessing to others of Jesus. And today, as well. For one of the results or effects of being united, to use the words of St. Paul in Ephesians, **“in one body and one Spirit and one hope; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”** is, as Jesus prays here, **“that the world may believe that you, Father, have sent Me, and love them even as you loved Me.”**

And that is why this prayer of Jesus is really a prayer that we might remain faithful to that apostolic Word of God by which alone such true unity, such oneness, is restored and preserved in us and among us. In fact, that is precisely what Jesus prays for earlier here in His high-priestly prayer: **“Father, sanctify them in the truth; your Word is truth.”** And do you know what? That is also what He tells us to be praying for, as well, in the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer – that, as the catechism puts it, “His name would be kept holy among us by the teaching of the Word of God in its truth and purity and by our leading holy lives according to it” . . . that “He would give us His Holy Spirit so that we might believe His holy Word and become and remain members of His kingdom” . . . that “His will would be done by strengthening

and keeping us firm in the one saving faith until we die.”

“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see my glory that you have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world,” Jesus then adds in His prayer for us.

Now, here on earth, in this life and in this world, we will never see that glory, that unity, that perfect harmony and togetherness and oneness – whether it be in families or communities or, yes, even in the church. In fact, as Jesus Himself has said: **“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. For whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”** Likewise, St. Paul writes these words to the church in Corinth: **“There must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.”**

And that is why, in a sense, we do not say in the Nicene Creed, *“I see the one holy Christian and apostolic Church”*; but, rather: *“I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.”* For just as faith in Jesus, which alone makes people members of His Church, is a matter of the heart and hidden from our eyes; so, too, *“the one holy Christian Church,”* the unity of all true believers in Jesus, is hidden from our eyes in this world.

But one day, however, that which is perceived only here and now by faith will indeed become a glorious, visible reality – the Last Day when we will actually see Jesus’ glory and be with Him . . . when that picture of the Church given to us in the book of Revelation will be brought to fulfillment and the division and separation that began in the Garden will finally and eternally be

reversed – the Creator united with His creation . . . people from every nation and tribe and language joined together as one; and, with robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, enter the holy city Jerusalem . . . and gathered as one before the throne of God and of the Lamb, join with the angels and archangels, and the whole company of heaven, in ascribing to Him and to His holy name all worship and glory and honor and praise.

And since all that is certainly not up to us to achieve by our own reason or strength . . . or even by convention resolutions; the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Himself continues to do His work by His Spirit in His Church down here on earth – inviting us, calling us, joining us to His death and resurrection, uniting us to Himself and, thereby, to one another. And it is to a

separated, divided people . . . to families that these days seem far more disunited and torn apart than one . . . to people in the church where dissensions and discord often rear their ugly heads; that, in light of our coming together before the Lord's altar in a few minutes, we hear these gracious, inviting words recorded in the book of Revelation: **"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."** Amen.

"Now to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Service of Prayer and Preaching Saturday, June 13, 2026 – Rev. Marvin Bublitz
“Walking Together in Christ’s Truth on Christ’s Path”
2 John

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Well, here we are again. Pastors and Deacons and congregational members from across this country gather for our synod’s convention. Synod- our handbook defines it as a voluntary ecclesiastical bond shared by member congregations and individual members [that is a Pastors and Deacons] walking together to carry out the ministry and mission given by Christ to His Church.

Whenever I think of walking together, my mind goes back to the three-legged races of my childhood.

You remember them, two people standing next to each other. Someone ties one leg of each together. Now they are to work as one body with three legs.

I don’t know how those races went for you, but I’ll tell you what they were like for me.

For some reason the teacher always seemed to pair me with the guy whose leg was twice as long as mine. I think it was just so the teachers had something to laugh about in their lunchroom.

Anyhow.

On your mark, get set, go. And whoever I was with went. I mean he really went.

Every one of his steps was equal to about 2 and ½ of mine. So, it was not as much a three-legged race as it was a two legged and drag the short guy race. He was oblivious to my problem, my needs, my situation. He wanted to get to the finish line. And he only cared about what he wanted. He was only concerned with himself. I was dead weight good for nothing but to drag him down.

Now you might be picturing what it must have looked like and laughing at my pain. Hopefully not too loudly.

But consider this. Imagine hundreds of pastors, deacons, and congregations all tied together trying to simply walk. It doesn’t work if each one sets out in his own direction or her own path.

Picture each one walking their own way with no consideration how their actions affect the needs and situation of the others.

How many times in a circuit has a congregation or pastor done their own thing rather than walk and work together with the others in the Body of Christ? How often has a congregation or pastor acted like they are in competition with the other congregations rather than fellow brothers and sisters walking together in Christ?

How can you tell if someone is not walking together?

If someone says - my way or the highway to the rest, then they have set themselves up as king and lord. They are the ones to determine what everyone else should do. How everyone should walk. These are the ones who stand and loudly proclaim – follow me if you want to do things right. Follow my path if you want to grow your church. Follow me if you want to be successful.

By doing this they have set themselves up as king and lord but there is One King and One Lord of the Church. These set themselves in opposition to Christ.

John tells us -- Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.

Who goes on ahead? He who wants to walk his own way and have others follow him. He who walks away from the teaching of Christ and seeks to travel his own path.

How can you tell if someone is not walking together?

Look at how they consider the needs of the others in synod.

Do they see the rest as simply dead weight holding them back from what they want to do? Or in Christlike humility and love do they look to the interests of others.

God directs us through St Paul [Philippians 2] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

But sinful man has a way of ignoring the rest when it suits the Old Adam.

He disregards the rest of the congregations and Pastors in the circuit and region and synod and walks his own way.

He disregards the last 2000 years of the Church. Just do what you want; How you want; When you want.

But the Lord through St John reminds us of the way He intends His Church to be: The Holy Spirit inspired St John to write to the elect Lady

⁴ I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. ⁵ And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. ⁹ Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹ for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

Walk in truth.

Then, like Pilate, it is asked, ‘what is truth’ - whose truth is it that matters?. Your truth? My truth? Synod’s truth?

Are we gathered here to vote on what our collective truth is???.....surely not.

It was a normal fall night. As usual, we gathered in the dorm for evening devotions. One of my classmates read the passage from the Old Testament. Another classmate said, ‘That’s from the Old Testament. We are New Testament Christians; the Old Testament is not relevant for us.’

I was stunned, shaken to my core. What church had she been going to? I had faithful pastor after faithful pastor instill in me a deep

respect and appreciation for God's Word. My faithful mother and father; grandparents and Sunday School teachers all reinforced that message. The Holy Spirit convinced me that all Scripture is God-breathed.

All Scripture is one revelation from the one true God.

How could anyone say a part of it was not relevant. The Old Testament is not relevant? How could she ignore passages like:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

I was shaken to my core. The Old Testament is not relevant for us?? How could someone be so brazen? How could anyone pick and choose which part of God's revelation they would follow and ignore the rest?

Fast forward some 40 plus years and that is exactly what we see many doing.

They disregard or explain away any portion that does not agree with their chosen ideas and lifestyles and path they are walking.

Whole synods are built on the idea that God's Word should be interpreted in a way to validate 2026 ideas or circumstances. They bend God's Word to fit their thinking rather than letting the Spirit through the Word transform them to God's ways.

But we would never do that, right? I mean we are a synod of pastors, deacons, and congregations walking together-- Firmly founded on the Word of God.

But God warns us in Holy Scripture through St Paul:

[1 Corinthians 10] *For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

We are not that different than the Children of Israel as they walked the way from Egypt to the promised land.

How many of them grumbled and complained against God and His chosen servant

Moses? How many turned from the promises of God when the going got tough. When the dust cloud of Pharaoh's army was seen, how many wanted to go back to Egypt. When food was scarce, how many turned away from trust in God longing for the days of Egypt.

Oh, fickle people.

When God provided manna with the command to collect only for the day, how many doubted the Lord's promise to provide daily bread and instead gathered and stored up extra for the next day. But we know what happened – it rotted and the stench of their sin filled the camp.

We are not that different than the Children of Israel. How many times have I heard someone say - well God said that back then, but we are living in different times now. As if the all-knowing Creator of heaven and earth was clueless as to what His Church would be suffering in 2026.

As the dust clouds of empty pews and closing congregations rise, we risk turning from the promises of God in His Holy Word to our own ways - Walking our own path, defining our own truth.

We drift from trust that He will build His Church where and when He wills through His Holy Word and Sacraments.

As He said through His prophet, *All we all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - everyone- to his own way.*

Yes, there are those who turn from God and His Word and follow all kinds of myths and false teachings. They water down what God said so that it is more palatable to modern ears.

But the faithful every pray:
Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword

Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

As John tells us:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

Many deceivers... Each proclaiming their own truth. Each proclaiming forget that Word and Sacrament stuff. Forget Jesus and just be good so God lets you into heaven.

But amidst the many deceivers there is one truth ...one truth

God blessed His people with the elect Lady... His Holy Church, His chosen bride....that in His Holy Church we have His Word of truth. It is not for anyone to decide for themselves. Right and wrong. Rather, the God of all truth has spoken in His revelation to us - His one truth. And it does not change. The commandments He gave on Mount Sinai still stand.

...not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

The command of God is the same. It transcends time. The Word remains forever. The Lord God directs our walk. His direction for the walk of His people has been the same since the beginning. His teaching has not changed since the beginning. And it will never change.

As His children we are to walk in the way of Christ. There is one path. Vere neither to the right nor the left from the path of Christ -

it is His path. He sets the commands for us who walk it.

We run into great shame and vice when we disregard His command. We fall into the snare of the evil one when we choose our own path - our own commands - our own truth - our own idea of love. Such is the trick of the evil one. The one who has been deceiving the children of God from the garden.

Did God really say??? Look at how good it could be if you just did what you want. Why should you follow His path? Make your own after all you know what things are really like these days.

Look how full your pews could be if you would simply choose not to highlight certain parts of God's Word - go soft on a few commandments. Rather than preach law and gospel ... give the people a solid motivational speech with lots of self-improvement ideas. Or jump on the bandwagon of the current thing society likes to criticize. Tell the people their problem stems from a corrupt government. Or that the problems they are experiencing are because the world is unfair to them.

These are the ways of the evil one. The father of lies. And he tries to get you to walk his way follow his path. To listen to his 'truth' which is no truth at all.

And he convinces many. He leads them astray to his path. His path leads to destruction. All we all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - everyone- to his own way.

Like our forefathers we fall for the lies of satan and end up on his path headed to destruction in the pit of hell.

But Jesus lifts us from the pit and places us on His path to heaven.

Yet we read in Isaiah

And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

And the Psalmist writes - *Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!*

And another Psalm declares - *Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

And satan says see, see, you are not fit to be there.

But the path of Christ for the believer is a way of confession and repentance. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The path of Christ is a path of confession and repentance for believer. It is a path paved with the blood for Jesus for our forgiveness.

In His blood we are washed pure for heaven.

Here we are -Synod in convention -- while we are here the most important thing we have to do is not to elect those who will lead and serve us.-- Not to debate and decide on one overture after another, -- rather it is to walk together to the foot of the cross kneel down in repentance and cry – God be merciful to me a sinner.

Then in His love our Saviour stretches out His nailed pierced hand and raises us up and places us on the path to heaven to walk together as His blood bought, blood washed, forgiven holy people. Amen

The peace of God which is beyond human understanding keep you in true faith unto life everlasting. Amen

Matins Sunday, June 14, 2026 – Rev. Robert Mohns
“Blessed is Everyone Who Will Eat Bread in the Kingdom of God!
‘Come, for Everything is Now Ready.’”
Luke 14:12–24

I have a confession to make this morning. Nothing that you didn't know or couldn't tell about me. I love food. I come by my love of food through the matriarchs of my family, especially my grandmother whom I had the great joy of my life to live under her roof for a year after high school. I was one of those suitcase graduates. You know. The ones who got a suitcase as a graduation gift. My grandmother taught me the basics of how to live. Most basic among the wisdom she imparted to me was how to cook. Even in her old age she loved to cook. She loved to take whatever she could find, scraps of this and that and prepare a meal fit for a king or in my case, a “clueless whipper snapper” as she would sometimes call me when I was impetuous. She had a twinkle in her eye and a smile on her face and joy and satisfaction in her heart to be able to sustain her family and those who visited her table. As she set the food on the table she would announce to all in the house, “Come and get it. Dinner is ready!” What a blessed year I was given to revel in the company of my now sainted grandparents and to eat and to live and learn to live in their presence. I love food. My mother and grandmother taught me that. And they also taught me through the joy of their vocation and in the great compassion they had for me, the love of God in Christ Jesus.

One Hundred and fifty-six years ago, the great banquet was set on the table of the Lord here in Winnipeg and German immigrants from the time of the great migration heard the invitation, “Come. For everything is now ready.” The occasion was the dedication of two Lutheran congregations. By Word and with prayer the congregations were established. And the Word of the Lord continued its expansion into all of Canada and the great banquet was celebrated across Canada as congregation after

congregation was established. Thirty-Eight years ago, in a convention such as this the call went forth. Come. Everything is ready. And the people of God, responded. They came together at the great banquet, and with Word and through prayer they pledged themselves to walk together as One, under the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ. And by the grace and mercy of her Lord, Lutheran Church Canada was formed. And you are all witnesses of it to this very day.

Since the time of the establishment of Lutheran congregations, beginning in what is now known as Fisherville and surrounding areas, our Lutheran Churches have supported the mission and ministry of her lord – in the words of our Gospel text, “to extend the invitation of God to the highways and byways” so that all people might receive the good news, “Come, for everything is now ready. Come. You who are blessed, eat bread in the kingdom of God.” So even now at this convention the great banquet has been prepared and the invitation sent. And the Master of the Banquet, is here. And so too the bread life, our Lord Jesus Christ is present. And you and I are here.

And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

St. Luke, the evangelist, records this utterance as coming from the mouth of Jesus' opponent. In a similar manner St John records in the eleventh chapter of his Gospel that Caiphas prophesied about Jesus, “that it is expedient that one man should die for the people.” (John 11:20).

And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

The word uttered by Jesus' opponent condemns his unbelief. Jesus, speaking in parable like form, informs the man of God's anger against his unbelief. And our text ends with a word of rebuke against the man, *"I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet."*

These words were intended not only for the man who uttered them. They stand until the end of this age for all who are caught up in unbelief. And they are intended for our ears to receive today.

Jesus' earthly ministry was conducted in first century Palestine. The Gospels record that he made three mission journeys, traveling throughout Galilee meeting specifically with his own people, Israel, visiting with them in their synagogues, the local places of prayer where God's people gathered to hear and receive His Word, His torah.

The people of Israel were the ones who had first been invited to the great banquet. They were favoured before all nations so that David could say to the Lord, *"Who is like your people Israel-the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself and to make for himself a name, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out the nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt".* (2 Samuel 7:23).

But the people did not live up to their calling. They continually rebelled against God and provoked him to anger in the wilderness on the way to the Promised land. They broke covenant with God. They worshipped other gods and idols. Still God did not forsake his chosen people. He punished them for their sins and disciplined them. He delivered them over to the hands of other nations who held them in cruel captivity and treated them harshly. At times it seemed as if Israel would be utterly destroyed, but God, faithful to His covenant promise, preserved a remnant.

At last God's long suffering and patience with Israel was exhausted. He sent His own son into their midst. He performed all sorts of miracles and proclaimed to them the kingdom of God. The evangelist, Luke, records eight times that Jesus spoke to his people, concerning the Messianic Banquet. The great banquet. In Word and by deed, Jesus issued in the Kingdom of God among his people. But despite all this, they disbelieved and rejected their own Messiah, their Saviour and Lord. They stained their hands with his blood and cried out, *"His blood be upon us and upon our children."*

To His beloved people Jesus declares God's judgement, *"I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my supper."*

The word is not only for Israel. It is also spoken into us this day. Are we not those who have despised our Saviour? Jesus sets forth examples for us to consider. The Evangelist records, "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' These are representatives of the stuff of life. The things Jesus teaches us to pray for in his own prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." These are things that we all confess together concerning God's creating in the First Article of the Apostles Creed. I believe that God has given me...house, wife, oxen, fields, and the like which we are to be good stewards of. These excuses had all been codified by the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law. They were all kosher excuses.

In our day we have developed our own kosher excuses, haven't we? And the list continues to grow. With this word, Jesus lays open before us our unbelief. It is not about the stuff; it is about the heart of God's people. It is about Sin that daily rises within us. It is about us trying set

God's good gifts against Him. This indeed, evokes God to anger. Of this we should have no doubt.

And how does God respond? He continues with His great banquet. He continues to set a table laden with food. He instructs His servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' And when the servant reports back that he has done that and there is still room at the table, the house father commands him again *"Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled."*

Here is the good news. God is determined to redeem the fallen world. He sends out His servant, the Servant. He sends His only begotten son into the world. His incarnate Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, Mary, true man, and true God was anointed to serve. He is the faithful servant who came under the Law to fulfill all righteousness. Though he knew no sin, he became sin for us. He the great servant of His people. He bore the punishment, our punishment in our place, and the death that we deserved, so that we would not perish eternally but live forever. God made of His son, not only to be His servant, but the servant is also the bread of life for us all, so that whoever partakes of Him would be incorporated into Him and have eternal life. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy uttered by his enemy, *"And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God."* Just so, Jesus proclaimed, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I give for the life of the world."*

For thousands of years God made preparations for the great supper. Already in paradise God made his preparations for the great Supper and gave the promise to our first parents, Adam and Eve that He would provide His deliverer, His servant. The time of the Old Testament is the time of the announcement of the coming Great Supper when God's servant, the world's

Redeemer would appear and the victory over sin and death and evil won. Finally, the right time had come. The great supper is served. Luther, I believe is right in understand that the great supper of our text, is the Gospel. The Gospel enfleshed in the human flesh and blood of Jesus. The great supper is Jesus.

One of the things that makes a supper great is the preparation. Solomon is recorded as making a great feast for all Israel on the occasion of the dedication of the temple. The number of sheep and oxen beyond counting.

I have experienced feasts something like that on many occasions in the church. Lutherans are known for pulling out the stops to make a great feast. Lately I have had the privilege to be invited to installations of pastors, and anniversaries of congregations, ordinations of our pastors and even the dedication of a new congregation. The halls have been filled with food of all kinds and from many parts of the world. In abundance. And even here at convention. I think of the great preparations that have been undertaken to put on this convention, and I think of all the preparations that have been undertaken to feed us all. But what are the good feasts of men in comparison to the great supper that our God has prepared for us? God's banquet is great because of the lavish preparations. God did not even spare His own son but gave him up for us all. That is what makes the great banquet great.

"Come, everything is ready." Friend there is nothing in heaven or on earth or under the earth, nothing that can change this reality. Everything is ready.

What makes a supper great is its preparation. What also makes a supper great is the invitation. I have seen too many weddings canceled because the families cannot agree on who is to be invited. I have seen too many families torn apart, sometimes for a generation or more because of who was or who was not invited to

the family dinner. So, some families don't have family dinners because its just less hassle. And some couples don't have weddings because it's just better that way. The pandemic has created a social phobia among us. The less I am directly in contact with people, the better, the safer my life will be. So why would want to invite anyone to anything, in person at least, and why would I want to go. What a deplorable state we are in.

What makes the great banquet great is not only preparations but the invitation.

“Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.” And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’”

While all the world, and Satan and his legions reject and seek to destroy and so proudly plan to put an end to the Kingdom of God and put to not the great banquet, the housemaster sends his invitation to the least wherever they may be found. People, like Zacchaeus, who for example gladly accepted the Lord's invitation. How sweet the words must have been in the ear of the criminal who hung beside Jesus and to whom Jesus said, *“Today, this day, you shall be with me in paradise.”*

The invitation is extended to all those who know the burden of sin and evil, guilt and shame in their life. It is extended to those who live in the grasp of that devastating reality every day of their life. It is an impossibility to even think that they could participate in a good meal, let alone a great banquet. Perhaps you find yourself among them. Perhaps you find yourself as one among helpless, the hopeless, the crushed down, those lost, confused, perplexed. The faceless, the lonely. God sends his invitation to you. Come. Everything is now ready, for you. Perhaps you are sick, physically, or mentally, in body, mind

or spirit. Perhaps you are dying. Come quickly then, everything is ready for you.

What encouragement to hear the report of the servant. The invitation is sent and there are those who have come to the great banquet. And friend, I invite you to find your own face among them. You are the ones to whom the servant of God has proclaimed his invitation. I have heard from the pew, from the kitchen table, from the bed at your nursing home, or hospital side, or on the palliative care ward. You who sing, “Chief of sinners though I be Jesus shed his blood for me. You who confess, I believe that I cannot by own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel. I have heard you as you have prayed, the Lord's Prayer, “lead us not into the temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

To you dear redeemed saints of the Lord, the invitation has come and even this day the great feast is being given to you as you receive the proclamation of the Gospel, as you receive the Lord's own body and blood, as you receive the Holy Absolution and as you engage one another in this convention in those holy conversations. *“Sir, what you commanded has been done.”* And it has been among you dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

But the news gets even better, there is still room. *“Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.”* We in Lutheran Church Canada have been made very aware by the Lord of the Church, the faithful servant, that there is still more room at the great banquet. Now the work of the servant moves out into the world, to all who have never heard the Gospel. Every person is to be compelled to come. Not by force or coercion but by the Word of God. Luther, in his sermon on this text preaches that this compelling happens where the Word of God is correctly preached into the hearts people and through the working of the Spirit they repent and believe the Gospel. For this reason, the Lord of the Church sends

forth His servants of the Word, His pastors and authorizes them to go out and preach His Word and administer His sacraments according to His command.

Dear brothers and sisters God proclaims into our ears that we must no longer engage in the things of the flesh, for these will only lead us back to a life lived under condemnation and death. He preaches into our ears God's gracious word of promise. Come. Everything is ready. Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! This word sets us free to confess our sins and receive God's gift of forgiveness and life. This Word compels us to share God's gracious invitation with the words of His Gospel. This word fills us with His compassion in the various vocations and stations in life He has placed us in. Our neighbors need us to share the Gospel and embrace them with the Lord's compassion.

Perhaps we are getting tired, even exhausted of inviting our family and friends and community to the great banquet and seeing that invitation rejected repeatedly. As we see the overwhelming challenges on so many fronts the Lord speaks into our ears the reality, Church, the great banquet is prepared. Nothing will change that. So, my people do not grow weary in doing good: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have opportunity then, let us do good to all people and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! *'Come, for everything is now ready.'*

O Lord in your tender mercy grant us ears to hear and faith to receive Your Divine Word and rejoice in the banquet you have prepared before the face of all people.. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Service of Prayer and Preaching Monday, June 15, 2026 – Rev. David Haberstock
"Together One: Unity & Hospitality in Mission"
3 John

In the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

3rd John is the shortest of all the books of Bible. It is 15 verses and is the most personal letter in the Bible. It is written by the aged Saint John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, likely after his exile on Patmos and his sending of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the suffering churches of Asia Minor. They had suffered not only persecution and the ravaging wolves of heretics coming in amongst them, but in particular they had suffered their father in the faith's absence during his exile on Patmos. So his heart is tender for his beloved children. He'd spent decades teaching and giving eyewitness testimony of Jesus the truth as the Elder Elder, the head pastor or bishop, of Ephesus and the churches of Asia Minor. And now as he has been absent, the wolves, the false prophets, the antichrists have come in just as Paul had told the Ephesian pastors in his final address to them (Acts 20:29-30). And so John who has spent his time visiting and teaching by mouth, giving oral witness, now needs to write it down and set things aright after his absence. He as the elder pastor of those churches sends his general letter, 1st John, possibly with 2 John as a cover letter, and now also this personal letter to a dear friend whom he loves, likely before he writes his Gospel in his waning days to bless his children and the church of all time with His eyewitness to the love of Jesus.

We don't know whom this friend Gaius is. Gaius is common name that means happy or rejoice. It's almost like John is saying, "From the Elder, the bishop, to my beloved Gaius, my joy, whom I love and esteem in Jesus the Truth," so that John wraps all his favourite themes into this greeting.

And we know these are John's favourite themes because in this 15 verse letter John uses "*Truth*" 7 times, specifically "IN or BY the truth" 6 times. He uses "*witness/testimony/testifying*" 5 times and "*beloved*" 4 times. For to be John's *beloved ones* is to be united *IN THE Truth* and be the ones who give *witness TO that truth*.

And that use of *beloved* breaks down the letter into 3 sections once you get past the John's greeting.

In the first section he says, **Beloved**, my joy is in you and my blessing upon you for you walk in the *truth*, you welcome the brothers, and this *witness* I hear about you increases my joy.

Next he says, **Beloved**, continue in your faithfulness which unites us in *witness* of the Word & your hospitality blesses the bodies of other *beloved ones* in *truth* who give *witness* throughout the world. So continue in your generous, hospitable ways. Don't be like Diotrephes whose striving to be first leaves no room for hospitality to me or my beloved ones.

So if I come (to enjoy your hospitality) I will bring up his wicked nonsense against us, and how he even drives out (as though they were demons) brothers in the *Truth*. So that there is no unity in *truth* with Diotrephes. But that is quite the opposite of yourself who welcomes and accepts me and my brothers in *Truth*, even My brothers you don't know. Because you love me and this *truth* which unites us.

And finally, he says, **Beloved**, do not imitate evil but good. For the one doing good is from God even if he doesn't know it himself. Whereas the one doing evil has not seen God (even if he claims to have seen God) and therefore he cannot in *truth* give *eyewitness* of God. So I give *testimony* of Demetrius that he is one of us, just as others and the *Truth* itself testify this.

In this letter John is writing to a dear friend whose confession of Jesus, the Truth, binds them together as brothers. And John is seeking to tie Gaius through Jesus to other brothers whom John will send to him—for the sake of unity in the truth, as well as the mission of giving witness to Jesus the Truth.

So how does this 2000 yr old personal letter apply to us?

First:

Strive to do good to household of God; to those who are of Jesus the Truth. For in Jesus, in witness and confession of Him is our unity. When we love one another love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8) and makes our life together so much easier. For when we confess the same things, when we talk together and receive the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints, one from another, how can we not be spurred on to love each other more. For that is one of the blessings which Christ's Word works in our hearts: love for one another; a forgiving attitude towards each other; gracious favour by which we let go the little things in each other. Just as you overlook the little imperfections in your own children, or your beloved, and even find their quirks endearing, though the same quirks in others people's children sets your teeth on edge. So spend time with one another. Get off your screens. Talk to each other. Talk about Jesus to each other.

Second:

You are united one to another in your testimony of Jesus. For through this Word of truth about Jesus, through testifying to it with each other in Divine Service, and in conversation with each other, there is blessed unity and brotherhood. For when you hear someone speak of Jesus it warms your heart and causes a kinship between you. And simply by being together and confessing our faith together there is unity. For by speaking the same words about Him who is the Word of God made flesh these words, that voice of the Shepherd, marks us out to each other as ones belonging to the

Truth, being of Him, being in Him, brothers and sisters in Christ. These words which shape our hearts and souls and drip from our lips unite us, even across time and space, even across the vastness of Canada. Even when have just met each other we are united by our confession, by our pattern of sound words. Because we speak the same language. We get each other. The Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions give us words in Truth, a clear pattern of words, which mark us as one with each other. So that Jesus' Word is the foundation and basis of our unity.

Third:

Unity flows forth into hospitality, into welcoming one another into each other's homes. For we are one body in Christ the Truth. One with another. And so we are not standoffish but welcome each other. And I encourage you don't just know each other at church making small talk about the weather. But break bread with each other. Not only our Lord's body at the altar, but out in restaurant if need be at first, and then in each others homes. So that those who are of your same congregation are not foreigners, but brothers. Welcome them just as joyous Gaius welcomed John's beloved confessors of the Name in which is life. And that welcoming, that fellowship increased their own joy in each other. But even John, who wasn't there, was overjoyed to have heard the witness of their unity with each other.

Fourth:

Striving—competition, putting oneself first—kills unity. As Christians we submit one to another even as we submit to Jesus (Ephesians 5:21). We are all men under authority (Matthew 8:5-13). In Jesus Christ the Church has a natural hierarchy of authority. If we won't recognize this, if we won't find ourselves under the authority of Jesus and of those whom He places us under, then we will not have unity. Repent of such striving.

For Diotrephes' striving caused him to treat John's brothers as demons to be cast out of the church. And our Lord says to the unbelieving

goats on His lefthand who act this way, “Depart from me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

Instead, **welcome others as Gaius welcomed Demetrios**. Welcome even those who are foreign to you in whom is the witness of Christ. And get to know them by name and greet them warmly when you see each other, whether at church, out and about in the world, or at each others homes. And this unity and joy which is ours orders all things so that the Word of Truth has free course to flow from the Church into the world to the salvation of many!

For beloved it is our great joy and benefit to be Together, One in Jesus.

In +Jesus’ name, Amen.

Κοινωνία in the New Testament

Alexandre Vieira

Introduction

I am not the first person to receive this exact assignment. At some point in my research I ran into an essay by someone outside our circles who started, more or less, the same way I am starting now. He had been asked to talk about *koinonia*¹ in the New Testament at a conference. It was a small comfort to know I was not the only one. But it also left me with a question. So much has already been written. What is there to say to us, here, gathered in Convention? I decided early on that I would not spend our hour going through how the Greek words connect to one another, the genitives and the datives. Instead, I will quickly go over how this word group was used before the New Testament, then look at the New Testament passages themselves and draw some conclusions, and use the last part to ask what all of this means for our life together.

Koinonia seems like a word we already know. Ask around, and most of us would say it means “fellowship” and leave it at that. That is not wrong. But I want to show that it is not quite enough, and that the distance between the meaning we assume and the meaning the New Testament shows is important for us.

There are plenty of debates about what *koinonia* meant in its various New Testament contexts, and I will not try to settle them here. What I offer is one coherent way of understanding this concept, based on earlier studies of how it was ordinarily used, and then paying attention to how and where the New Testament does something of its own with it. I

should also say that *koinonia* is not the only word the New Testament has for our unity and life together, let alone the last word on the topic. *Koinonia* is our topic in this essay, but the Scriptures speak of unity, fellowship, and church in more ways than one.

Before we begin our exploration, there are two basic approaches among scholars worth mentioning. A lot of studies focus on the grammatical and syntactical questions and say very little about what *koinonia* means for the church now. I was going that way myself at first. Others jump to a supposed “doctrine of *koinonia*,” boxing the New Testament material together into one view and moving straight to its implications for the church. Both are good, and both are valid. But the two do not always speak to each other. What follows is my attempt to do a bit of both: to explain how *koinonia* is used, without getting too technical (most of the technical aspects I have kept to the notes), and then to ask what it means for the church today. So we will go in three steps, from where the word came from, to how the New Testament uses it, to how we see it among us today.

1 What did κοινωνία mean before the New Testament?

To understand how the New Testament uses the word *koinonia* and whether its usage carries any theological significance, it is helpful to begin with a brief survey of how the word was used before the New Testament. By comparing the Holy Spirit’s inspired authors with other Greek writers, we can see if *koinonia*

¹ In this essay, *koinonia* will be used throughout in the place of the Greek κοινωνία or the transliteration koinōnia. Headings will retain the

Greek, and quotations will follow the usage of the cited author.

in the New Testament represents a continuity with ordinary Greek usage or a distinct development.

This first section therefore examines the use of the *koin-* word group in two contexts: non-biblical Greek authors and the Greek Old Testament. These examples provide a semantic backdrop for our study. After briefly surveying the broader word group, the focus will narrow specifically to *koinonia*.²

1.1 Non-biblical Greek sources

About one hundred years ago, scholars began to take interest in studying the wider context for the meaning of the word *koinonia*. One such example, who wrote an influential paper, is J. Y. Campbell. Considering the *koin-* word group, which includes *koinonia*, *koinonos* and the verb *koinoneo*, he noticed how “little attention [had] been given to the use of the words in non-biblical writers.”³ Studying almost six hundred occurrences in more than twenty non-biblical writers, spanning from a few centuries before the NT to the second century AD, he demonstrated that the *koin-* word group’s basic idea of having something in common with someone is prevalent. He explains that the main lexical meaning of *koinonos* and its cognates “is not that of association with another person or persons, but that of participation in something in

which others also participate.”⁴ This idea of participation is primary, whereas association is derivative, and this is shown in how often there is no explicit mention of other associates when *koinonos* occurs.⁵ Because of that, Campbell explains, “*κοινωνός* means little, if anything, more than ‘a participant in’.”⁶

The same goes for the verb *koinoneo*, which means “to have *something* in common with *someone else*.”⁷ While the author does observe that the verb occurs from the beginning with the idea of *association* without mention of the *common* or *shared* thing, this use remains “remarkably rare.”⁸ Relevant for our purposes is Campbell’s insight that “the idea of association with that other person is derivative and secondary,”⁹ and that “usually the word retains the meaning which it has by derivation, ‘to participate in something along with someone’.”¹⁰

This pattern continues with *koinonia*, which usually retained the same emphasis as its cognate words. While one might say that “the ideas of participation and of association are both present, and the main emphasis may fall upon either of them,”¹¹ ordinarily this noun meant “participation in” something rather than “association with” someone or something.¹²

² First-century Greek writers such as Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus also use the *koin-* word group and can be a valuable resource for understanding its semantic range in the world of the New Testament. However, their material lies beyond the scope of this essay, which focuses on the New Testament uses of *koinonia* and their implications for the church. For Philo, see Philo, *Philo: Greek Text*, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929–1962).

³ J. Y. Campbell, “*Κοινωνία* and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932): 352.

⁴ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 353.

⁵ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 354.

⁶ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 354.

⁷ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 355.

⁸ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 356.

⁹ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 355.

¹⁰ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 356.

¹¹ Campbell, “*Κοινωνία*,” 357.

¹² Grammatically speaking, *koinonia* may be used with three kinds of genitives: genitive of the thing shared, indicating the shared reality in which participants take part (e.g., “*koinonia of women*,” meaning that someone is part of a group of women); subjective genitive, in which the genitive functions as the subject of the implied action “participate” (e.g. “*koinonia of the apostle*,”

If *koinonia* means participating in something more than associating with someone, what do people participate in, exactly? In ancient Greek sources, the *koin-* word group is used for “all types of common enterprise, legal, social, civic, sexual, and religious.”¹³ Examples include partners in business, agreements, contracts, and other kinds of commercial situations. Marriage may be the most intimate *koinonia*, or participation, that one has, as both share in the relationship.

More recently, Ogereau surveyed the terms *koinonia*, *koinoneo*, and *koinonos* in inscriptions and papyri (i.e. non-literary sources) and concluded that even in those, Campbell’s definition may still be the best that describes the lexical meaning of *koinonia*.¹⁴ Ogereau also offered a corrective to popular theological explanations of *koinonia*, by showing that “seldom, if ever, the senses ‘religious community/association’ and ‘spiritual communion/fellowship’, which are held by many to be the primary significance of κοιωνία in the NT, are encountered in documentary sources, which is a sure sign of its rareness in the *lingua franca* of the time.”¹⁵ He correctly assesses that some theologians in the twentieth century have superimposed on the NT the claim that the NT has a fundamentally different meaning of *koinonia* than normal usage of the time. However, we should add the caveat that

meaning “the apostle participates in”); and genitive of the person with whom one shares (e.g. “*koinonia* of citizens,” meaning “sharing with the citizens”). Campbell notes that “more than five out of six genitives used with *koinonia*” are of the kind that describe *the thing shared*, and this is a “clear proof that ordinarily *koinonia*, when it is an abstract noun, retains the sense of ‘participation in’ something.” Campbell, “Κοινωνία,” 357.

¹³ John Michael McDermott, “The Biblical Doctrine of Κοινωνία,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1975): 67.

while the lexical meaning of *koinonia* in the NT is in continuity with other Greek usage (emphasis on participation and not association), the *contextual* meaning is distinct, as the word is used consistently for religious purposes and for the Christian community. Ogereau risks downplaying the consistent and distinctive application of the terminology that New Testament authors make to express our reality as part of the Christian community, as we will see later when we examine the biblical passages.

So, as we can see, *koinonia* means primarily *participation* in something in which other people also participate. At least in common Greek usage, *fellowship* and other ideas of *association* are not the most basic meaning. With this background in mind, we now turn to the Old Testament.

1.2 Greek Old Testament

In the Greek Old Testament, the noun *koinonia* appears only three times, and each occurrence follows the same semantic pattern observed in classical Greek.

The first occurrence is in Lev 6:2¹⁶ (5:21 LXX): “If a soul sins and willfully overlooks the commandments of the Lord and lies in matters concerning his neighbor in deposit or concerning *koinonia*...” The Hebrew term here refers to a “pledge” or “security,”¹⁷

¹⁴ Julien M. Ogereau, “A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources,” *Novum Testamentum* 57 (2015): 286.

¹⁵ Ogereau, “Survey,” 293.

¹⁶ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton: Crossway, 2025). Where the underlying Greek reads κοινωνία, I have replaced the ESV’s rendering with *koinonia* to make its recurrence visible.

¹⁷ תְּשׁוּבָה, in HALOT: “deposited (entrusted) property.” Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1799.

and the LXX renders this with the word *koinonia*. In this context, *koinonia* does not refer to the relationship between the two people involved but to the thing shared. It represents participation in a shared property agreement that has been violated.¹⁸

The two other passages are similar in their use of *koinonia*. In 3 Maccabees 4:6 we see a reference to a “marital participation in life” (*biou koinōnian gamikon*). This is a standard Greek usage of the word, in which marriage is described as a shared life or participation in a common relationship. The emphasis is on *participation in a shared state*. In Wisdom of Solomon 8:18, the author personifies Wisdom, whom he loved from youth and desired to take as a bride, and says that there is good repute “in the *koinonia* of her words” (*en koinōnia logōn autēs*). The phrase *en koinōnia logōn autēs* refers to participation in Wisdom’s discourse. The shared thing is “her words” or “speech,” not Wisdom herself. Some translations render “*koinonia* of her words” as “conversation with her”¹⁹ or “in talking with her”²⁰, which captures the idea of participating in her words without altering the underlying meaning.²¹ Here too, the meaning of the word follows the ordinary Greek pattern in which *koinonia* expresses participation

in a shared thing, not a distinct lexical sense of “fellowship with” someone else.

The main takeaway from the Greek version of the Old Testament is that *koinonia* is never used to describe a covenantal association between Israelites, nor to denote association or participation with or in the Lord.²² In all three occurrences, the term retains its ordinary meaning of participation in a shared thing (agreement, marriage, or Wisdom’s words) rather than a religious or covenantal association.

2 What does κοινωνία mean in the New Testament?

The noun *koinonia* appears nineteen times in the New Testament, and the great majority of those uses are Paul’s. The rest are scattered across Acts, Hebrews, and 1 John. It would be impossible to consider every context here, but the Spirit-inspired authors use the word in ways that group together naturally.²³

2.1 Survey of the texts

2.1.1 Κοινωνία and God, Gospel, and faith

Paul is the most frequent user of the word *koinonia* in the New Testament, and it is in

¹⁸ As Campbell puts it, *koinonia* in this context “refers to the agreement or partnership of which the pledge is the token rather than to the latter itself.” Campbell, “Κοινωνία,” 360.

¹⁹ Rick Brannan et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

²⁰ Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: English Translation* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1870).

²¹ Since *koinonia* denotes sharing in something *with someone else*, we may say that those who participate in her words are, in effect, “talking with her.” This makes Wisdom the implied *koinonos*, while her words remain the shared thing.

²² According to John Michael McDermott, the reason is theological, due to the “unbridgable (*sic*) distance between Yahweh, the supremely other, and His people.” And that a “distance is always experienced in all of Israel’s dealings with Yahweh.” McDermott, “Biblical Doctrine,” 66–67. While God’s transcendence is emphasized in the Old Testament, I disagree that the reason the word *koinonia* did not mean “fellowship with God” is theological, given the meaning of the word in common Greek usage.

²³ The largest cluster is Paul’s, and because Luke and the author of Hebrews use the word much as Paul does, I will treat them alongside him. John stands somewhat apart, using *koinonia* in his own way, so we will look at him separately.

his writings that the ordinary meaning (participation in something in which others also participate) shows most clearly. What is striking is that he places God Himself as the shared thing (person) in contexts where he uses the word *koinonia*. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 1:9, he writes: “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the *koinonia* of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Some translators obscure this by rendering it “fellowship with His Son,” implying mere association between the believer and the Lord Jesus. But when we take into consideration that *koinonia* ordinarily means participating in something in which others also participate, and

that the “shared thing” is expressed grammatically in the genitive²⁴ (i.e. *koinonia* of shared thing), we realize that Paul is not picturing believers as enjoying Jesus’ company the way one enjoys a friend’s. The Son Himself is the shared reality. Believers are linked together because they all participate in the reality of Jesus’ benefits and life.²⁵

This is the language of our incorporation into Christ, where Christians (both the Corinthians and us) share in the same Lord. In this passage we see that our participation in Christ is initiated not by our own effort, but by

²⁴ Translators often take “*τοῦ υἱοῦ*” as a genitive of the person with whom one associates, and, as we have seen, such a genitive, if it is ever found at all, is certainly exceedingly rare.” So, this should be taken as a genitive of the thing shared, and the meaning then is “participation in his son.” Campbell, “*κοινωνία*,” 380.

²⁵ Contrast this with the common view (cf. Lenski), which translates the phrase as “into the fellowship his Son,” where the main emphasis is understood almost exclusively as “communion with Jesus,” minimizing the other co-participants: “The phrase ‘into the fellowship,’ etc., embraces the entire communion with Christ, including the consummation at the last day. In this life our communion with Christ is mediated on his part by Word and sacrament, in and through which he comes to us, in and by which he makes his abode with us and dwells in us. There is no fellowship of Christ with us apart from his Word and sacrament. On our part this communion with Christ is mediated by faith. Love, devotion, worship, and all works by which we serve him are never independent but spring forth as the fruits of faith. Take away faith, and the communion ceases forthwith. It is as pure and intense as our faith is pure and intense. Everything else indicates only the character and the degree of our faith.” R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 35–36.

Modern commentators often pay lip service to the lexical meaning of *koinonia* without necessarily exegeting the passage in accordance with it. Schreiner, for example, notes that it

“denotes partnership and participation,” yet concludes the thought by reverting to association: “God called the Corinthian believers into partnership with Jesus Christ.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel, vol. 7 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2018), 57.

It is common to see commentators note the semantic range of *koinonia* but waver between the overtones of *association with Christ* and *participation in Christ*. For instance, in the Concordia Commentary on 1 Corinthians, the author notes the term’s “broad semantic range” (33) but suggests it is “packed with theological significance,” preferring the rendering “communion [which] may be freer of secular association and it better preserves the link with the Holy Communion text in 10:16.” (34) This suggests the term has become heavily theologized for Paul. Consequently, when explaining the verse, *koinonia* leans toward an association with Christ rather than believers associating with each other on the basis of Christ: “This fellowship (*κοινωνία*, ‘communion’) involved far more than some kind of vague relationship with Christ [...] This deep communion was constantly nourished by the Gospel and Christ’s true body and blood in the Sacrament of Holy Communion (9:23; 10:16).” (37) Thankfully, the author does acknowledge the horizontal aspect of this communion, noting that communion with Christ is “the basis for communion among Christians.” (38) Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians, Concordia Commentary* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

God's action of calling us. Since participating in something is a dynamic reality, it inherently implies action on the side of the participants. By using this language of active participation, Paul is highlighting what the Corinthians *do*, rather than just their static state of being the church. That dynamic action can be seen in the very next verse: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10). Even here, the idea of *participation* in something along with others is at the forefront.²⁶

This language of *koinonia* in relation to God is also used in 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the *koinonia of the Holy Spirit* be with you all" and Philippians 2:1: "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any *koinonia in the Spirit*." In both instances, Christians are said to participate together in the reality of the Holy Spirit. In the 2 Corinthians benediction, Paul blesses them so that they may together enjoy the gifts of the Spirit, as opposed

to a vague spiritual "fellowship."²⁷ Philippians 2 operates similarly. Paul argues that if they are in fact participating together in the same guidance of the Holy Spirit, that shared reality must dictate what they do next: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (Phil 2:3). Another passage that emphasizes God is Philippians 3:10: "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings (*the koinonia of his sufferings*), becoming like him in his death..." Here, the sufferings are the shared thing, and the other participant is Christ Himself.

There is a final set of passages that, while having a slightly different focus, belong in this category. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul asks: "For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what *koinonia* has light with darkness?" He implies that *koinonia* is not desirable because the two parties do not possess a common reality (Christ). In Philippians 1:5, Paul remembers the church in his prayers "because of your *koinonia in the gospel* from the

²⁶ Campbell, "Κοινωνία," 380.

²⁷ Commentators are not entirely consistent on their treatment of the grammatical function of the genitive in 2 Corinthians 13:14 ("*koinonia of the Holy Spirit*"), stretching the grammar to make theological points. For instance, Kruse and Garland both argue that the phrase can be read as a subjective genitive, meaning the fellowship "created by the Spirit." See Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 216–217; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 556. However, this reveals a grammatical misunderstanding of the verbal noun *koinonia*. If this were a subjective genitive, it would mean the Holy Spirit is the one *doing* the action of the verb *koinoneo*, which means "to participate/share" and not "to create participation/fellowship." Garland

further attempts to justify the subjective reading by claiming the previous two genitives in the verse ("grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "love of God") are also subjective. This is grammatically inaccurate, as "grace" is not a verbal noun, rendering the category of subjective genitive inapplicable. Both of these points were dismantled by Campbell, "Κοινωνία," 379 as early as 1932.

Even traditional confessional commentators tend to bypass the lexical meaning in favor of a spiritual meaning that focuses on association. Lenski, for example, explains: "the heavenly word κοινωνία, 'union with,' 'communion' or fellowship [...] This communion is mediate, its means are Word and sacrament. In these the Spirit becomes one with us, and we with him. Apart from the means we are far from the Spirit." Lenski, *Interpretation of... Corinthians*, 1341. While theologically true, it misses the lexical precision of the text.

first day until now.”²⁸ The overtone is still one of participation: together with Paul, the Philippians participated in the work of the Gospel, and this may have involved financial support for the apostle. Finally, in Philemon 6, Paul writes: “and I pray that the *koinonia* of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.” In popular speech, “sharing your faith” usually means evangelism, or imparting your faith to someone who does not have it. But the language of *koinonia* does not mean transferring something from A to B; it means A and B participating in the same thing.²⁹ Paul is praying that the faith Philemon already holds in common with the other saints will become active and effective in doing good.

Ultimately, it is striking that Paul talks about God and the Gospel this way. He takes the known, everyday language of contracts and marital relationship and applies it to the church. For Christians, the point is that we are all linked together not by a contract or an agreement, but because we participate in God, His holy Son, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel, and the faith. We see this mutual partnership formalized beautifully in Galatians 2:9, when the apostles give Paul and Barnabas “the right hand of *koinonia*,” physically acknowledging their shared participation in the same Gospel mission.

²⁸ This is slightly different grammatically because he writes “eis to euangelion” (“in the Gospel”) to explain the *koinonia*, rather than the more common genitive of the shared thing (“of the Gospel”).

²⁹ Lenski puts it this way: “Philemon’s faith puts him into fellowship with all the saints.” R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 957.

³⁰ It is common among Lutherans to use 1 Corinthians 10:16 primarily as a proof text for the sacramental union: “It seems best to understand *koinonia* as a reference to an association of the

2.1.2 Κοινωνία and the Lord’s Supper

This next passage could easily be grouped with the texts above, as the “shared reality” is once again the Lord Himself. However, its implications for the life of the church are so striking that it deserves its own space. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul writes: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not *koinonia* in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not *koinonia* in the body of Christ?” Here, Paul affirms the real presence of the Lord in the Supper. The shared reality is not just bread and wine, but the actual body and blood of Jesus. However, if we pay close attention to Paul’s language, his primary focus in this specific verse is not just highlighting our individual union with Christ. His focus by using the word *koinonia* is on the corporate nature: by participating together in the exact same body and blood, a tangible unity is forged among the believers.³⁰

This is where *koinonia* becomes visible among us. It is a corporate event that requires a gathered body. As Kloha notes regarding this verse, this manifestation of *koinonia* entails the entire process: “when ‘we bless’ and ‘we break’ it is a participating together in Christ’s blood and body in which all together receive the benefits of his work of death and resurrection. There is no

bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, an association which we call the sacramental union.” (e.g. David Kuske, “Exegetical Brief: *Koinonia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16—Participation or Partnership?” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Fall 2004, 286). While the sacramental union is undeniably true and foundational to this text, restricting *koinonia* to the elements misses Paul’s ecclesiological point. Other commentators often offer a similar interpretation, focusing heavily on the individual’s reception of Christ who is really present while bypassing the corporate nature of the word *koinonia* (see Lenski, *Interpretation of... Corinthians*, 409).

individual blessing and breaking, there is no individual eating and drinking, there is no individual receiving. It is, through and through, a very real manifestation of the body of Christ in action, a God-pleasing *κοινωνία*, because it is in Christ's own blood and body."³¹

The Lord's Supper, therefore, bridges the vertical and the horizontal. It is the most tangible, physical expression of *koinonia* we have. Because we mutually participate in the divine reality at the altar, we are bound to one another in the pews.

2.1.3 Κοινωνία and material sharing

Another significant category of passages in which Paul uses *koinonia* refers to the Christian's act of sharing material things:

- Romans 15:26: "For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some *koinonia* for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem."
- 2 Corinthians 8:4: "begging us earnestly for the favor of *koinonia* in the relief of the saints."
- 2 Corinthians 9:13: "...the generosity of your *koinonia* for them and for all others."
- Hebrews 13:16: "Do not neglect to do good and *koinonia*, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

In all these passages, one party shares either in the need or in the giving reality of another. *Koinonia*, then, is the tangible action of participating in one's life by providing for it. Translations use "contribution" or "sharing what

you have" to capture the meaning. It should be noted, however, that *koinonia* is not the money itself, but the act of participating in the need of others. The shared thing is not the money given from A to B, but the shared life in the body of Christ that leads someone to give money. As Kloha clarifies, *koinonia* in these contexts is "not the offering itself, nor the act of giving itself. It is the entire event, everything from the 'thing in common' (the cold, hard cash), the 'participating together' (the action of making the cash contributions) and the people of the church who participate together in the giving, collecting, and delivering of the gift to the saints in Jerusalem; all this is the *κοινωνία* event."³²

Perhaps the most striking use in this category is Acts 2:42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and *koinonia*, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Because of the traditional translation "the fellowship," it is common to read a highly spiritualized meaning into this verse. We often assume it refers to the invisible unity of all Christians, the worship service on Sunday morning, or a warm sense of Christian community.

However, if we pay close attention to the context, this is highly unlikely. As Suggs points out, the closest parallels to this passage "are Pauline texts related to the collection."³³ The word appears alongside "three other phrases which denote particular ways in which this fellowship manifested itself. It is reasonable to expect that *ἡ κοινωνία* also denotes such a manifestation of fellowship rather than the fellowship itself."³⁴ For Campbell, the fourth element of the early Christian community,

³¹ Jeffrey Kloha, "Koinonia and Life Together in the New Testament," *Concordia Journal* 38 (2012): 28.

³² Kloha, "Koinonia," 26–27.

³³ M. Jack Suggs, "Koinonia in the New Testament," *Mid-Stream* 23 (1984): 362.

³⁴ Campbell, "Κοινωνία," 374.

represented here by *koinonia*, was the “contribution of money or some equivalent to the common cause.”³⁵ Likewise, Kloha notes that *koinonia* here highlights that the newly baptized participated together in a “thing in common,” specifically the shared funds mentioned just two verses later in Acts 2:44. As he puts it, “along with the teaching, breaking bread, and prayers among the early baptized, physical support for one another is in evidence.”³⁶

Taken together, these passages show us just how grounded the biblical concept of *koinonia* is. It is not a warm sentiment or a vague spiritual association. It is the tangible action of Christians actively participating in the physical needs of others. Having seen this language of participation applied to both our relationship with God and our material care for one another, we are now ready to examine the use of the term in 1 John 1.

2.1.4 Κοινωνία and 1 John

In John, the word *koinonia* appears four times and is concentrated on one chapter:

- 1 John 1:3: “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too *may have koinonia with us*; and indeed our *koinonia is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*.”
- 1 John 1:6: “If we say we *have koinonia with him* while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

- 1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we *have koinonia with one another*, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

As becomes clear when we read the text, John uses the word slightly differently from Paul. As we saw earlier, Paul consistently uses *koinonia* to denote active participation in a shared reality (such as the Lord’s Supper or a financial contribution). However, John uses a unique construction, doing two things differently. John speaks of “having” *koinonia* using the verb “to have.” In his use, the idea is that *having koinonia with us* “is equivalent to ‘being one of us’.”³⁷ Another difference in John is that rather than using the genitive case to highlight the shared thing (e.g., “*of his Son*”), John repeatedly pairs *koinonia* with the preposition *meta* (“with”). He speaks of having *koinonia with* the apostles, *with* the Father and *with* the Son, and *with* one another. At this point, even Campbell concedes that in John’s use the word really carries the overtone of “fellowship” or mutual relationship.³⁸

The most striking part is not how John uses the term *koinonia* only, but why it shows up in his letter. After establishing that he and the apostles were eyewitnesses of the Word incarnate, he says that they proclaim those things “so that” the church may *have koinonia with them*.³⁹ The first purpose clause in the epistle is that John and the apostles proclaimed because they wanted the church to have fellowship with them.⁴⁰ First, we need to be connected to the apostolic word, to their

³⁵ Campbell, “Κοινωνία,” 374.

³⁶ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 27.

³⁷ Suggs, “Koinonia,” 361.

³⁸ Campbell, “Κοινωνία,” 372.

³⁹ Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 56.

⁴⁰ Bruce G. Schuchard, *1–3 John*, ed. Dean O. Wenthe, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 91–92.

teaching, because they were witnesses of those things. There is a community created through their preaching.⁴¹ And second, he establishes right away that this community formed by their proclamation is not just a human partnership based on affinities. The whole point is that the apostles themselves have fellowship with God. “Therefore, to fellowship with the eyewitnesses is to fellowship with those whose exclusive fellowship is ‘with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.’”⁴²

The church’s proclamation today as well should be so that people may have fellowship with us, because then they will also be in fellowship with God. A social gathering that is pleasant, and helpful, and close-knit, but that does not connect people to the Father and his Son, is fellowship, but it’s not the *koinonia* the apostle is talking about here. As Stott put it: “We cannot be content with an evangelism which does not lead to the drawing of converts into the church, nor with a church life whose principle of cohesion is a superficial social camaraderie instead of a spiritual fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”⁴³

In 1 John 1:6 we learn that we *have koinonia* with God if we do not walk in darkness. Drawing on John’s broader theology in this letter, we can say that *koinonia* with God is only possible for those who have received the light, the Word of truth, and have the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in 1 John 1:7, we learn that we *have koinonia* with one another as the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. Clearly, John’s

description of the right kind of *koinonia* is a community in which all people have been saved through the apostolic proclamation and are therefore intimately connected to each other and to God. There can be no authentic church community that is connected to God but isolated from one another, just as there can be no true church community that is intimately connected to one another but severed from the truth of the Father and the Son.

What we see in 1 John 1, then, is a picture of *koinonia* that is simultaneously vertical and horizontal. John gives no margin for understanding community as a social bond disconnected from the apostolic witness, nor as a doctrinal proposition detached from lived relationships. The community formed through the proclamation of the incarnate Word is one in which people, by being joined to the Father and the Son through that proclamation, are thereby joined to the eyewitnesses. Strip out either the doctrinal content or the relational reality, and what remains is not *koinonia* in John’s sense.

As we can see, “Paul’s use of *κοινωνία* was broader than John’s.”⁴⁴ Both authors describe the same reality from different perspectives. Paul uses *koinonia* to show us what we share, and John uses the word to show us what it looks like when that sharing is genuine. Even where John says “*koinonia* with,” he presupposes participation in a shared centre: the apostles proclaim so that others may have *koinonia* with them precisely because the apostles’ own *koinonia* is “with the Father and

⁴¹ As Akin puts it: “it is through the proclamation of the incarnate Word of life that John envisions the accomplishment of his purpose of bringing his readers to fellowship with him and other eyewitnesses.” (Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 56–57.)

⁴² Schuchard, *1–3 John*, 92.

⁴³ John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19 of Tyndale

New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 68.

⁴⁴ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 64.

with his Son” (1 John 1:3). The horizontal “with” rests on the vertical “with,” so the participatory structure is still there, only described from the side of the participants. Together, Paul and John give us a richer understanding of *koinonia* than the simple word “fellowship” can capture. Therefore, the New Testament’s complete picture of *koinonia* requires both dimensions to be held together. It is an active participation in God’s gifts, which at the same time constitutes and sustains an intimate, interdependent relation among all who participate.

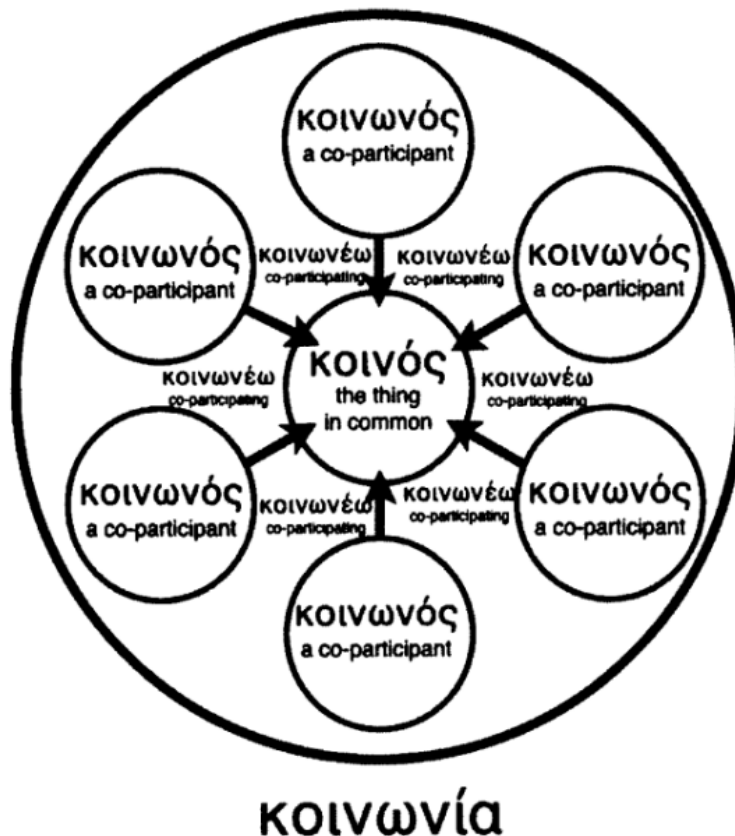
2.2 Theological reflections

Having focused on the contexts where *koinonia* appears in the New Testament, I can now share some general theological reflections on the significance of the word for how we understand the church.

2.2.1 Κοινωνία as a triadic structure

The first thing to notice is that *koinonia* has a triadic focus, as Kloha’s helpful diagram⁴⁵ shows:

As we can see, at the centre stands “the thing that is shared together in common.”⁴⁶ Around it are those who participate in it. The arrows are the action of “participating together.”⁴⁷ The co-participants, however, have no arrows running among them to one another.



⁴⁵ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 26.

⁴⁶ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 25.

⁴⁷ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 25.

Each person participates in the same shared thing, but their relationship to one another is only through, and to the extent that, they each relate to that centre.

This is in line with what we have already observed in Paul's uses of *koinonia*. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:9, the believers are not said to *have koinonia with each other*; they are called into the *koinonia* of God's Son. The Son Himself sits at the centre, and the Corinthians are linked to one another because they are each linked to Him. The same is true at the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, the body and blood of Christ are the shared reality, and the tangible unity forged among the believers is the by-product of their common participation in Him. Even when *koinonia* takes its most horizontal-looking form, the collection for the saints in Jerusalem, the pattern still holds. The Macedonians and the Jerusalem believers are bound not by a direct emotional bond but by their common share in the life of Christ's body. The diagram helps us see why Paul keeps reaching for this word in particular: it requires a third thing at the centre of our shared life in Christ.

Koinonia is the sum of all these parts. It happens when the circle is complete. More than one *participant* is linked to the *common thing* at the same time. This is why "fellowship," though not outright wrong, can be a misleading translation. Being called into the *koinonia* of God's Son means that we are, through him, related to all those who have also been called.

This triadic focus should be understood as it relates to Christian *koinonia*. While the term *koinonia* in itself can be applied to all sorts of triadic relationships with a common centre (sports, a book club, etc.), the *koinonia* the New

Testament describes has Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or the Gospel, or faith at the centre. When we speak of *koinonia* in the church, this is what we mean.

Because *koinonia* only exists when the circle is closed from all sides, the bond it names cannot be produced unilaterally. Contrast this with love and forgiveness, for example, which can go in one direction. You can love someone who does not love you back, and you can forgive an enemy who does not want your forgiveness. *Koinonia* cannot work that way. As a Christian, you cannot be in *koinonia* with someone who does not share the same Christ, or Spirit, or Gospel, or faith. The horizontal bond among believers is not something one party can produce on their own. It exists only when both are jointly held by the same vertical connection with God and his gifts. In short, *koinonia* is not something you can have alone. Not by yourself, not alone with another, not alone with God.

2.2.2 Κοινωνία as an event

Building on Kloha, a second observation is that *koinonia* is an event word, not a word for an entity. Even though it is a noun, it implies action between specific actors around a specific shared thing.⁴⁸ In hockey terms, *koinonia* works like a faceoff:⁴⁹ two players and the puck dropped between them, which is a single moment of joint engagement around a shared centre (like the diagram above). An image taken from soccer would be the "give and go" (or "one-two"), which pushes the picture one step further: both players are givers and receivers as each passes to the other in the same play. The move exists only because both players are doing both actions. Like a faceoff or a give and go, *koinonia* is something that happens in time, with more than one participant and around a shared

⁴⁸ Kloha, "Koinonia," 23.

⁴⁹ Kloha uses the metaphor of a football handoff to explain an event word (Kloha, "Koinonia," 23).

thing. You could photograph the action and you would have a word to describe the image.⁵⁰

This is where we are reminded that *koinonia* and church “must be kept distinct. ‘Church’ is a ‘thing,’ an entity.”⁵¹ *Koinonia* is what happens when that entity acts together around its shared centre. The church exists when you are alone in your house on a Tuesday night (you are still part of it). But *koinonia*, properly speaking, takes place when you and others are gathered around the Word, the Sacraments, prayer, and one another. If someone were to ask what *koinonia* means for us, we would not be able to answer by showing a membership roll, only by showing a photo album of things we have done together as God’s people.

On the surface, this sense of *koinonia* as an event may seem to fit Paul’s use of the word but not John’s, since John says people *have koinonia with*, as though using the word almost as a substitute for “church.” Yet, John’s letter resists a static reading. In 1 John, the relationship he describes with God is one of “abiding” and this in turn is expressed horizontally in the active love between people. For John, then, to “have” *koinonia* is not to hold a status as “being Christian” but to remain in the shared centre and actively walk in a certain way. Yes, his usage comes closer to the idea of “church” than Paul’s does, but John does not equate the concept of *koinonia* and *church* as it might seem at first glance. Even in John, *koinonia* remains an event word that is also relational, describing the same triadic reality in which people are associated with each other through their mutual connection to God as the centre, and they actively express that association through acts of love.

2.2.3 Κοινωνία and the body of Christ

These reflections find a familiar image in the New Testament metaphor of the church as the body of Christ. A body has many parts, and they cannot act together on their own. A hand cannot move in time with a foot without a head directing both. An eye cannot warn an arm of danger without something in the middle to pass the signal. The body works because the members are coordinated through a single centre, not because they negotiate with one another directly.

The body is also a thing that acts in time, which is the kind of picture that we can apply to *koinonia*. Two hands fold together in prayer, the eye sees a hole in the floor and the foot pulls back, the back lifts a fallen wall so the arm can reach the person trapped beneath it. In each case, the members are doing different things, but they are doing them together, and the coordination runs through the head. The body image also reflects what we observed in 1 John. To abide in the body is to remain joined to it through the head, and the love a member shows the others is the way the body acts together through its centre. The body metaphor, then, captures every aspect of *koinonia* we have been describing, its structure and its action.

3 What does κοινωνία mean for us now?

From our exploration of *koinonia* in the New Testament above, we may say that a governing principle emerges for the life of the church. *Koinonia* is defined by the shared centre, not by the people who happen to gather around it. We are bound to one another only insofar as we are each bound to the same Christ, the same Spirit, the same Gospel, the same faith. This frames every practical question that follows. It means that no institution, roster, or shared

⁵⁰ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 23.

⁵¹ Kloha, “Koinonia,” 30.

circumstance can by itself produce *koinonia*, and that wherever the right centre is truly shared, *koinonia* is possible. And the centre reaches far. The same Lord shared at the centre is large enough, and incarnational enough, to draw people to himself from every nation, culture, and age, and to bind them to one another. The New Testament shows this happening among believers in places and times as different as Jerusalem and Corinth, Philippi and the congregations of John. What follows are applications of this principle for our life together, as we consider what the Lord is doing among us, including here, in our own time and our own multicultural society and church body.

3.1 Κοινωνία in LCC and partner churches

Within Lutheran Church–Canada and the church bodies with which we have pulpit and altar fellowship, *koinonia* finds its fullest expression. Because we hold the centre not merely in common but in common *as we confess* it, sharing the same understanding of God and salvation, Gospel and Sacraments, we are free to act that sharing out across the widest range of joint life: a common altar and pulpit, pooled resources, and partnership in mission. This is what I mean by the fullest expression of *koinonia*. It is not that we love these brothers and sisters more than those from other confessions of faith. It is just that the shared centre between us is confessed completely enough that almost nothing of our life together needs to be held back. We receive Christ's body and blood side-by-side at the same altar. We recognize one another's pastoral formation: I was trained at the seminary of another church body, and I was called to serve in LCC without

having to begin my studies again. These are concrete and joint actions that express this deepest form of *koinonia*.⁵²

3.2 Κοινωνία with other Christians (non-Lutherans)

If *koinonia* is constituted by the shared centre, then it reaches every Christian who shares that centre. The bond runs through Christ, not from one believer to another directly, so that everyone joined to the same Christ, the same Gospel, the same Spirit, is by that very fact in *koinonia* with us. With our brothers and sisters in other confessions we may not be able to express *koinonia* as fully as we do with our partner churches, for that fuller expression waits on a fuller agreement. But the *koinonia* itself is real, given by God, and not ours to grant or withhold. We pray with and for other Christians. We open the same Scriptures and confess the same Christ as Lord before the world. We share in their sufferings and in their joys, and we work alongside them to feed and shelter those in need, and we together are “the light of the world.”

3.3 Κοινωνία with the world?

Can we have *koinonia* with the world? Well, *koinonia* as a word can be applied to anything, so yes, there is *koinonia* between us and the world in a sense. We share in our favourite club, in taxes, in going to the same theatre, etc. But in the strict sense the New Testament gives the word, we cannot share with the world. As John makes it clear, those who walk in darkness do not have *koinonia* with God, and so we are not connected to them through the shared centre.

But here is the good thing about knowing with whom we are not in *koinonia*:

may share the pulpit and altar only with those of the same confession is a conclusion we draw from the Bible's teaching in other places that lie beyond this study.

⁵² It is worth being precise here, so I do not imply that the word *koinonia* is doing more than it can. The New Testament texts we examined do not by themselves sort fellowship into levels. That we

John tells us that the apostles proclaimed Christ “so that you too may have *koinonia* with us” (1 John 1:3). The line drawn around *koinonia* is not a wall to keep the world out, but the reason we speak to the world at all. We proclaim Christ so that those who do not yet share the same God may come to share it. The boundary is missional, and it is more a note for us to go out than for the world to stay out. As we reflect on the line between those in and those out, we do not do it just so we know where to stand behind it. We do it so we know where to reach across, trusting God at the centre to keep drawing the world toward himself.

3.4 Κοινωνία and material sharing today

Among the many possible applications from what we have seen above, I want to mention one in particular, not because it exhausts the implications of *koinonia* for the church but because the New Testament itself repeatedly employs the term in this context. When Christians meet one another’s needs, some texts describe this concrete care with the same term used for our shared participation in Christ. So, when we think about what *koinonia* looks like among us, we should not be surprised that one of its concrete expressions is the way we share what we have with one another. It is the body working together because of the connection to the head to meet the needs of one of its members. And this applies to us both individually and collectively. When someone brings a meal to a grieving family, when the offering is collected, when funds are sent to help believers we will never meet on the other side of the world... these are not generic acts of charity

or something that happens alongside our true, spiritual *koinonia*. By the New Testament vocabulary, these are *koinonia* taking place.

Conclusion

We began by suspecting that “fellowship” was not quite enough to explain *koinonia*, and I hope by now the reasons are clear. *Koinonia* is not a bond we generate between ourselves. It is about God holding us close to him, and by extension to each other. This means that the main question for our life together is not “do we like one another enough to belong” or “are we similar enough to one another to belong,” but “are we connected to the same Lord by the means he uses to offer His gifts to us.”

And *koinonia* is something active. You cannot point to it on a membership roll, but you can catch it in the act the same way you would photograph any given action taking place. Because of that, I do not want to describe another example to you as I end this presentation. I would rather we *do* it. *Koinonia* is not a word confined to a New Testament study, but it is lived out and even confessed together on Sundays when we say the Apostles’ Creed and say “the *koinonia* of saints.”⁵³

So I invite you to stand and confess our faith together. We are the co-participants who share in the same God, and Lord, and Gospel, and faith. In this moment, the Triune God and the words are the centre. This will be our one faith, spoken in one united voice, in this one moment. If someone walked in and took our

⁵³ The Creed’s phrase has two recognized readings: “the communion of saints” (the holy people of the church) or “the communion of holy things” (a participation in the Sacrament). For a review of the question and the case for each, see

Samuel H. Nafzger et al., eds., *Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 838–39.

picture, they would be photographing a *koinonia*.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the koinonia of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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Peace in Christ: A Study of Ephesians 2:13-22
James A Kellerman

INTRODUCTION

Let us pray. Almighty God, we ask that You would open our ears this morning to be attentive to every last word that you have given us in the Scriptures. Open our eyes, as well, so that we can see Christ clearly proclaimed in today's Epistle. Open our hearts that the seed of your Word may be firmly planted in us and bear abundant fruit. And open my lips that my mouth may declare your praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us hear the Word of God for this morning:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Good morning! Bon jour! Guten Morgen! ¡Buenos días! 你们好! These are words of greeting that you will hear in some of the congregations of Lutheran Church-Canada. But

they are just the greetings in languages that I have studied: English, French, German, Spanish, and Mandarin. There are many more languages used in LCC that I do not know: Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Nuer, Oromo, and Portuguese, to name a few.

The multitude of languages prompts me to take a trip down memory lane, a trip that I would like to use as our onramp onto the highway of our text. When I moved to Chicago for my graduate studies, I settled in the neighbourhood of Rogers Park. At the time, it was the most ethnically diverse neighbourhood not only in Chicago but in the entire United States. The local elementary school had native speakers of well over a hundred languages.

Leaving my apartment building, I could say hello to the Serbian building super and walk one block east to the tiny corner pharmacy run by a Chinese couple. On the way, I would pass a synagogue that included Jews who had recently migrated from the Soviet Union. Two short blocks north of me was the hub of a vibrant Caribbean and West African community. If I went to the main street to the south, I would pass a Pakistani butcher shop selling halal meat, and a couple doors down from there a shop selling saris to Indian women. Not too far away was a community centre for the second-largest Assyrian community outside of Iraq. And the world cuisines that were available? Don't get me started because you'll all get hungry, and lunch is still three hours away.

What a wonderful place it was to live! You will find several places like that in the big metropolises of Canada. But here was the catch, a problem all too common in big cities: you could touch the whole world with your fingers, but it was incredibly difficult to get to know your neighbour. Language was a major barrier. Aside from us students at nearby Loyola University, most people spoke a very broken English. And so, it was easier and safer for every culture and ethnicity to keep themselves to themselves.

Paul was an urban mission planter. He also spoke several languages: Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and maybe Latin and an Anatolian language or two. But Paul did not want the church to be a sort of religious version of what I saw in Rogers Park. Paul did not want people separated into various cliques because they did not feel that there was much uniting them.

Just ask Peter if you don't believe me. Peter had visited Antioch where he saw a thriving community of Christians made up of both Jews and Gentiles. One day, when some visitors came up from Jerusalem, he had the bright idea of having all of his fellow Jews sit together, apart from the Gentile Christians. "You Gentiles sit over there and enjoy your food, while we Jews sit over here so that your bacon-breath doesn't ruin our kosher meal." Paul was livid. He chewed Peter up one side and down the other. The Christian church isn't about Jews doing their thing and Gentiles theirs. It is about being united in Christ. You can find the details of that incident in Galatians 2.

But doesn't language create a barrier sometimes? Yes, it does. But that is why God has given interpreters to His church. This is something that the church in Corinth had to learn the hard way. Corinth was one of the most vital ports in the ancient world. That meant that there were people coming from all around the Mediterranean Sea, each speaking his or her own language. As they gathered for worship, it would only be natural for people to use their own heart language. And so, if a prominent pastor from Lystra showed up, where they spoke Lycaonian, wouldn't you expect him to speak Lycaonian? Did not God bless His people with a diversity of languages, including Lycaonian?

Yes, of course, but there is more to say. The diversity of languages is God's blessing to the church and to the world, as the gospel finds expression in the idioms of various tongues. But God is a God of order. Moreover, He is one who communicates rationally through his Word. It does not help if there are a hundred people in the room, only one of whom speaks Lycaonian. That Lycaonian pastor might give the most brilliant

exposition of a biblical passage ever, and he himself would find it a deeply moving experience. But the other ninety-nine people would get nothing out of it. Therefore, God has given another gift to the church: translators. This enables people from a variety of languages to preach God's Word powerfully so that everybody can understand and be edified.

And you see here again how important unity is to the Apostle Paul. Unity is not about sitting in different corners in the same church. Nor is it speaking in a way that no one else can understand. Unity involves finding people who can translate so that everyone is brought together and edified.

We see that same vision of the Apostle Paul at work in today's Epistle. Paul isn't describing a mere ceasefire between two cultures—Jewish and Gentile. He has a deeper vision of what genuine peace looks like, a peace that our world cannot grasp. It is not a peace negotiated by diplomats or maintained by armed peacekeepers. It is a peace that knits us together as brothers and sisters in one family.

Today's Epistle unfolds what that peace looks like. It is helpful to divide it into three parts: creating the peace, proclaiming the peace, and living in the peace. If you get the first point, the other two will be relatively easy to grasp. Thus, you will notice that I will spend most of my time on the first point.

CREATING THE PEACE

Let's hear once again the first four verses of today's Epistle:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile

us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

1. Not by the Usual Means

How does Christ create the peace that we enjoy? It is not by the usual means because he wanted to establish a more enduring peace. Now, in Paul's day, the Roman Empire had finally achieved a modicum of worldly peace. The Romans had vanquished everything that touched the Mediterranean Sea, and they had finally stopped their constant civil wars. But that was not the war that weighed heavily on Paul's mind. He was thinking of how human beings have been divided ever since Adam and Eve had pointed fingers at others after eating the forbidden fruit. Unity is not a natural state for fallen humanity. Envy, anger, long-held grudges for slights real or imagined, and the like all come readily to fallen human beings. To be sure, we can help resolve this conflict between these two warring nations, or we can get this set of angry neighbours to figure out a way to live together. But the hostility and suspicion remain, ready to burst out on another occasion.

Christ came, not to bring about a series of temporary truces, but to bring a true and lasting peace. That meant that he had to deal with sin once and for all. When we try to settle conflicts, we deal with one sin here and another sin there, not the totality of sin. In one conflict, one side may be totally in the right or largely so. But no individual or nation has always been in the right. The person or country who was in the right today will be in the wrong tomorrow. For we both sin and are sinned against. And we do not have the strength to overcome that fact.

That is bad enough, but it gets even worse. At the dawn of Christianity, the vast majority of humanity had chosen to worship vain idols rather than the living God. Only a tiny sliver of the world's population, the Jews, knew the true and living God. To be sure, they did not live up entirely to his standards, but at least they knew the truth and were people called by his name. So, in addition to the normal hostility that exists among all fallen human beings, there was an

additional factor that plagued all Gentiles in the Old Testament era: we *"were far off"* from God. Paul wasn't talking about geography. After all, God who fills the entire heavens and the earth isn't bothered by the fact that somebody lives a few thousand kilometres further away from the temple than someone else. A faithful Jew of the Old Testament era who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and heard God's Word but lived two thousand kilometres away from the temple was closer to God than a pagan Moabite whose home was just fifty kilometres away from Jerusalem.

In verse 19, Paul will describe the situation of Gentiles before Christ as being *"strangers and aliens"* to God's people. By *"stranger"*, Paul meant someone who found himself in unfamiliar territory. The pagan Gentiles were so accustomed to worshipping a multitude of gods that they felt out of place when they talked with Jews who did not practice idolatry. The word *"alien"* added another dimension. The term was used to describe someone who had settled down into a particular city that was not their own, where they would have no legal rights. That is how many Gentiles would have felt. They may have come to admire Israel's God and recognise him to be the only God, but they would still have felt excluded since they were not Jews.

What made this particularly painful is that there was justice behind this exclusion. Of course, it is true that in any group of people you may find "insiders" and "outsiders". Usually, it is because of the preferences of a haughty group of insiders who determines who is in and who is out. But what made the exclusion of the Gentiles for centuries and millennia so painful is that there was real justice behind it, not mere favouritism. The Gentiles *were* truly far off from God. They practised idolatry that would have polluted Israel if it had been tolerated there.

2. By the Incarnation

Therefore, what great news it is to hear that Christ has brought peace to us Gentiles and integrated us

into the people of God. We have seen that the usual methods would not work. Now we will see three unusual means that he used. First of all, this peace comes from Christ being the incarnate Son of God. You could say that he is the *agent* of our peace, but Paul puts it in starker terms: **“He himself is our peace.”** That is to say, he does not merely bring peace, just as he does not merely bring resurrection and life. He is Peace, just as He is **“the Resurrection and the Life”**.

If we take this thought seriously, we understand better what the angels were singing about that first Christmas night. They proclaimed, **“peace on earth”**, not as an abstraction, not as an ideal to strive for but rather as the tiny baby who was God in human flesh. In his very body, Christ had brought God and Man together. And in his very body, he would go on to reconcile God and human beings forever.

Therefore, you must not overlook those small prepositional phrases: **“by the blood of Christ”** and **“in his flesh”**. Christ did not bring about a spiritual peace through mere words of encouragement. He brought about a genuine spiritual peace through his very physical flesh and his blood—his flesh nailed to the cross and his blood shed there—but flesh and blood that are truly divine, for they are the flesh and blood of the Son of God.

Now, let me point out one thing about the words **“in his flesh”**. The original Greek is a bit awkward here, more awkward than our translations would seem to indicate. The words **“in his flesh”** appear right in the middle of the two clauses, the one speaking of the **“[breaking] down [of] the dividing wall”** and the other speaking of the **“abolishing [of] the law”**. It is not entirely clear whether **“in his flesh”** modifies the end of verse 14 or the beginning of verse 15. The English translations are almost evenly split between those options. But here is the important point. Regardless of how you construe it, Christ’s act of bringing about peace and reconciliation took place not just in his mind or spirit but in his body. His peace is not an ethereal idea for us to contemplate. Rather, the peace Christ brings is as

tangible as his very human body and his very human blood.

3. By Christ’s Hard Work

But merely existing in the flesh was insufficient. That flesh had to be put into motion and to do the hard work. Consider the hard, physical work that Paul describes Christ doing. He tore down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. As his body was nailed and pierced on the cross, the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile was also being hacked away at. Second, Christ dealt with the law, but that required more than a mere wave of his hand. The only way that we could be freed from the burden of the law was by him taking upon himself in his body all the just punishment for our sins, as well as fulfilling with his body all the justice that God had demanded. So, our atonement in all its aspects took place only because Christ suffered and laboured in his flesh. Let us look more carefully at those two tasks that Christ undertook.

a. He tore down the dividing wall

The first task was to tear down **“the dividing wall of hostility.”** Many commentators look at that phrase as perhaps an image chosen randomly by Paul. After all, we talk about “walling off the world around us” or a couple of neighbours “putting up a fence” between themselves. But this is not a metaphor chosen by chance. Not long before writing this epistle, Paul had visited Jerusalem. He had brought with himself a Gentile from Ephesus named Trophimus, and the two had gone everywhere throughout the city. One day, Paul went up to the temple to accompany some fellow Jews who were offering a sacrifice. It meant that Paul would have to go past a barrier about four and a half feet high that separated the court where Gentiles were allowed from the court where only Jews could enter.

Some people in the crowd saw Paul cross the barrier, and they jumped to the conclusion that he must have brought Trophimus along with himself into the holier precincts of the temple grounds. The crowd seized Paul and started beating him up. The only thing that saved him was some Roman soldiers who came along and

arrested him for disturbing the peace. This would lead eventually to four years or more of imprisonment until his case could be finally settled.

So, Paul was very familiar with ***“the dividing wall of hostility”*** that separated Jews from Gentiles. He wrote his letter to the Ephesians in part because they were grieved by the fact that one of their very own, Trophimus, had innocently been the cause of Paul’s incarceration. But he pointed out that the real dividing line between Jew and Gentile had been abolished by Christ. Yes, the temple in Jerusalem still had a wall that kept Gentiles away from it. But that building in Jerusalem was no longer the focal point of godly Israel’s worship. Instead, it was and is Christ who is the true temple. There is no hedge or dividing wall that separates one nation or another from him.

The only way that this could take place is if his body—the dwelling place of God—was torn down by death and rebuilt in three days. No longer would the focus be upon the temple once destroyed by the Babylonians and then rebuilt seventy years later in the days of the Persians. Rather we worship Christ as God’s dwelling place among us, as the temple once destroyed but now raised up again, never to be destroyed again.

Around this temple, no dividing wall is necessary. You could say that such a wall had been necessary to keep the unclean from profaning the temple in Jerusalem. (It had not been required by God, and it had not been present in earlier versions of the temple, but it still made some sense.) A leper traipsing around on sacred ground would desecrate that hallowed space. But look at what our Lord did during his earthly ministry. He touched lepers and thereby cleansed them. If anybody else had touched a leper, he or she would have become unclean, at least for the day. But our Lord radiates so much holiness that he touches the unclean and makes them clean, while leaving himself unharmed by their uncleanness.

Now, it is true that people can build a wall by their unbelief to keep Christ away from

them. But he has torn down the wall that had kept us away from him.

b. He annulled the law through his death on the cross

While creating himself as a new temple, one without a dividing wall around it, he also ***“annulled the law of commandments expressed in ordinances.”*** I have substituted “annul” for “abolish”. The latter is a bit misleading. It would imply that God’s law has been completely done away with and should no longer be thought about. France has abolished the monarchy. It no longer exists. Nobody talks about it. No one has been crowned King of France in living memory. In fact, I have no idea who would be the proper claimant to the throne. And you probably don’t know, either.

But think of an annulment. When something is annulled, the general rule is not abolished, but rather the rule is said no longer to apply in this particular case. For example, when a marriage is annulled, it does not abolish the institution of marriage or say that the laws pertaining to marriage have all been changed. Rather, a court says that the law does not apply in this instance for one reason or another. For example, if the groom or bride is still married to someone else when the couple wedded, the new marriage is annulled because the married spouse was unable legally (and morally) to speak new wedding vows. The general rule that exchanging vows before the proper authorities can legalise a marriage is set aside as not applicable in this case.

So, Christ did not abolish the law but annulled it. The Ten Commandments have not become the Ten Suggestions or the Ten Irrelevancies. But it has been annulled in this sense: its curse no longer stands against us. That is because Christ already rendered in his body the perfect obedience for all people at all times and he has already borne the penalty in his body for all the sins ever done. A person who was convicted of a crime but has served the full sentence is now considered acceptable again in the eyes of the law. And so, we who were guilty have now been made right again in the eyes of the

law because Christ has settled the accounts in his body.

Paul describes the law as ***“the law of commandments expressed in ordinances”***. That is a mouthful. But it accurately describes the problem. The law is quite simple. It can be summarised in one word: love. If you need to flesh it out, you can say that it comes to two commandments: love God wholeheartedly; love your neighbour as yourself. But those commandments can be fleshed out further in the words of the Ten Commandments. But it doesn't stop there. Each and every one of the commandments can be further explained as a series of ordinances or rules. Thus, ***“do not murder”*** is further explained by such ordinances as “do not be angry with your brother or sister” and “do not call other people ‘fools’” and “help your neighbours in their needs.” It is physically exhausting to keep up with all those ordinances. There is only one man who could keep all of them, our Lord Jesus Christ. And he has done so for our sake.

4. By Union with Christ's Body

So far, we have seen that Christ created peace not by doing the usual things peacemakers do, but by taking on our flesh and then doing the hard work in his flesh to reconcile us to God.

But now we see that there is a further dimension to the peace that he establishes. He reconciles us not only to God but to one another. And that is because our reconciliation takes place not around a negotiating table but in his very body. No earthly peace treaty can do that. But Christ can. In Holy Baptism, he unites us with himself, with his death, burial, and resurrection. And then in the Lord's Supper, he gives us his body and blood. But this is not just a connection we enjoy with Christ individually. Rather, as we are connected with him, we are also joined together with others who also are connected with him. Paul describes this elsewhere as being members of one body, the body of Christ. Thus, we are intensely bound with others. So, it is not a matter of putting two former enemies next to each other, telling each to stay on their side of the dividing

line. We have actually become one body, the body of Christ.

Let us put together what we have learned so far. Christ created the peace. He did so not by offering an idea but by being Peace in the flesh himself and by undergoing the hard physical work on the cross. There he tore down the dividing wall, annulled the law by bearing its penalty, and incorporated us and all believers in Christ into his one body.

So, what does this mean? It means that peace and unity in the church are a gift from God rather than something we have created or have to create. It means that peace and unity come from being in Christ and remaining in him. If we abide in him, we will experience the peace and unity that he has wrought. If we separate ourselves from him, we cannot expect peace to prevail.

PROCLAIMING THE PEACE

We move to the next section of our text, which is relatively brief:

¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

It is not enough that Christ won the peace for us. That peace also has to be proclaimed so that we may know that it exists and can enjoy it. In the annals of history, many battles were fought after a peace treaty had been signed. That was to be expected in the days when empires were far flung and news travelled slowly. But to find out later that the war was already over would have been poor consolation to the soldiers who died needlessly in a battle that should never have been fought.

Paul mentions that Christ ***“preached peace,”*** not only to the Jews ***“who were near,”*** but also to the Gentiles ***“who were far off.”*** Paul doesn't get into the mechanics. Certainly, in his earthly ministry, our Lord encountered Gentiles as well as Jews, and he brought his good news of salvation to all he met. Nonetheless, Christ

himself had not gone to Ephesus during his earthly ministry. How, then, could Paul tell the Gentile Ephesians that Christ ***“preached peace to you who were far off”***?

The answer is that Christ sent Paul, even as he continues to send pastors and missionaries throughout the world. The message that they bring—if they are faithful—is not their own, but Christ’s. And because of that, they not only proclaim a message about peace, but they also bring peace himself, for he is found in their words. Through Christ we are brought into the peace that marks the divine life. As Paul puts it, ***“Through [Christ] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”*** Christ’s peace is not just peace with him but also peace with the Father. And it is not as if the Spirit is sitting idle while this is all happening. Where Christ is at work, there too is the Spirit, pointing people to Christ and drawing them to the Father. Thus, the peace of Christ is as fresh and as relevant today as it was two thousand years ago. Every time God’s Word is heard or proclaimed, Christ brings his peace into our midst.

And that gets us to think about what we are doing here today. We are representing the churches of Lutheran Church-Canada. Our pastors are not the only ones whom God has sent to proclaim his Word. We have brothers in ministry around the globe. And it is not only Lutheran Church-Canada individuals who can share the good news of our salvation with their neighbours in this land. We rejoice in all who bear Christ’s name by being baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity. They, too, are part of God’s team to bring the gospel to every corner of the earth. But there is something special about us and our sister church bodies. We have the clarity of the truth. We do not want to adulterate the message of Christ’s peace by turning it into one more message of a worldly peace. We do not want to diminish the good news in any way, for example, by putting less emphasis on God’s grace and more upon us and our efforts and labours. We do not want to substitute our wisdom for the wisdom of God’s Word.

That is the challenge to us today: to let Christ proclaim peace to those far and near, by

letting him be the one who directs all that we say and teach. We strive for unity in doctrine not because we want to see who does better at theological trivia, but because we want to deliver Christ’s message clearly and accurately, for his Word brings the peace everyone so desperately needs.

LIVING IN THE PEACE

So far we have seen that Christ created the peace and that he continues to preach the peace. Let us turn to the final section of our epistle, the one that explains how we are to live in the peace:

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

When you have only known war, how do you describe peace? That is a problem that confronted biblical writers repeatedly over the centuries. It is like describing sight to someone who has always been blind. Words fail. It is easy enough to describe the ugly world of sin in straightforward prose. To describe the grandeur of God’s new creation requires poetry—or at least a poetic kind of prose.

Thus, we should not be surprised to see Paul almost breaking out into poetry with vivid metaphors to describe how we live in peace because of Christ. He speaks of the church in terms of a city and a family. Earlier, I called your attention to the words ***“strangers and aliens”*** here in verse 19. These words describe people who feel out of place and actually are out of place because they do not belong. That is how the Gentiles felt in a Jewish synagogue: interlopers who were not really part of God’s people but just associated with them. Paul says that description

no longer fits us because Christ has come. Instead, we are ***“fellow citizens with the saints.”***

We in Canada are accustomed to people becoming citizens relatively easily. It is not automatic, and it has become more difficult in the last few years. That said, there is conceivably a route whereby a non-citizen can become a citizen. But in the ancient world, that often was not possible. If your ancestors did not found the city, it would be unlikely that you would ever become a citizen there. You could live there for generations, but your family would always be considered aliens.

The people in Ephesus would have been keenly aware of this fact. It was probably the third largest city in the Roman Empire, and it was crowded with people who came from all over. In addition to Paul and his entourage, we know of at least three who did: Aquilla, Priscilla, and Apollos. Such immigrants eked out a living, hoping that they would never get entangled with the local authorities because it would always go badly for them.

But even if many in the Ephesian congregation had no rights in Ephesus, there was a place where they were full citizens: in the church of God. As if that were not enough, Paul extends the metaphor: we do not just belong to a city, but to a family. We are God’s beloved children, and everyone who believes in Christ is our brother or sister. We who believe in Jesus Christ and are thus part of the church are closer to one another than biological brothers and sisters are to each other, at least if they are outside of Christ.

What would this look like if we took this truth more seriously in our midst? We would realise that we are all equally citizens of God’s kingdom. We rejoice wherever God’s kingdom is being extended. No citizen can fully participate in everything that a dominion is doing, but every citizen should be enthusiastic about the good work that is being done in his or her land. In the same way, each of us cannot be involved in every outreach effort of LCC congregations or of LCC-sponsored missions. But we should rejoice that

God’s kingdom is being extended. And we should strive to advance his kingdom in our own little corner of the world, however humble it may be. For it is not just a kingdom on the move, but it is a growing family of brothers and sisters.

Paul moves on to employ an even more astounding metaphor, the image of a living temple. Perhaps we have grown so accustomed to it that we do not find it jarring. In fact, Paul gingerly unfolds the metaphor because he knows it could overwhelm us. He doesn’t even mention that he is talking about a temple until he gets to the very end. Instead, he lets us see just the parts until he is ready to spring the fullness of the picture upon us.

He begins by talking about the foundation of our lives in God’s household: we are ***“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”*** That is easy enough for all to understand. If our faith is all about Jesus Christ, the one who has come to create peace, we will want to build our faith on that which brings us into contact with him. But how do we know about Christ? Did we see him walk throughout Galilee? Were we eyewitnesses of his resurrection? No. We know about him through the people he sent to record his life: the apostles who knew him well, and the prophets who foretold his coming. These people either had firsthand knowledge of Christ, or they had been given direct revelation about his coming. What more solid foundation could we have for our faith?

But even if you have a solid foundation, you need to build the entire structure in a coherent manner. So, the footings of a building might be rock solid, but if the walls are not perpendicular, everything in the building will be askew. There are many churches that point to the Bible and affirm that it is inerrant and the only infallible guide for doctrine, as all churches should. But, unfortunately, a number of these same churches seem never to get around to saying much about Jesus. They read the Old Testament diligently and see all sorts of heroes to imitate, but they never find any prophecies about Christ in those books. They read the New Testament, too, but they talk only about certain biblical principles they discern

there, and they say precious little about Christ as our Saviour.

If the church is to flourish, it must take shape as Christ gives the direction. Our cornerstones may be somewhat decorative, but they had an important purpose in antiquity: to square off the building, thus making sure that everything lined up. In the same way, everything that we say, think, and do in the Christian church must be shaped by Christ. Otherwise, we become a society that simply promotes some good rules rather than people who are given life by Christ.

Only after describing the foundation and the cornerstone does Paul explain what kind of building is being put together: ***“a holy temple in the Lord,”*** that is, a place where God dwells. That is our calling as the church: to be God’s dwelling place in this world.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

So, what have we learned from today’s reading from Ephesians? We in the Christian church have a different vision of peace and unity than the world does. The world is content as long as people are not at each other’s throats. That is about as far as its concept of peace goes. And so, to see (as I saw in Chicago) a hundred different languages and cultures living in a neighbourhood without being violent is about as far as the world

is able to go. But that is not the peace that Christ brings.

He has come to undo the curse of Eden, where we turned against God and against our fellow human beings. He has come to undo the curse of Babel, where our beautiful languages do not build up but separate us from one another.

He has not come to craft one more truce until our patience finally runs out and we take up weapons again. Instead, he has created a peace unlike any other. It is a peace founded not on an idea but on his being God in human flesh. It was a peace not won on the battlefield or in the negotiating room but on the cross and at the empty tomb. It is a rock-solid peace because it is founded on the most solid Rock of all, the Rock of our salvation, the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

This is the peace that we are called to enjoy, proclaim, and celebrate, as we gather now as members of Lutheran Church-Canada and also later as we return to our communities. This is the peace that allows us to live as not just neighbours but as brothers and sisters, as fellow citizens in God’s kingdom, and as the very dwelling place of God.

May this peace always abide in and with us! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Remarks from the President-Elect

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Many of you congratulating me have said you will pray for me. Please do. Please continue to. Because you have just elected one more frail man, with feet of clay, who thinks out loud, and talks too much. If the Lord's church depended on men like me, we'd be doomed. Thanks be to God, Christ the Son of the living God is the foundation of the Church, and not sinners like Ed, Ralph, Bob, Tim, or Dave. So please lift me and our whole church before God's mercy seat.

I grew up in a LCC parsonage and attended LCC's founding convention as a 12 year old, 38 years ago here in Winnipeg. In home, parish, and convention I heard about the hopes and dreams of an independent LCC, training her own pastors. And it's taken 38 years, much blood, sweat, tears, prayers, sacrificial giving, and support from our mother Missouri, but this convention marks the first time our President, Vice President, Regional Pastors, and seminary presidents are all Canadian trained pastors. The whole slate for President and VP were Canadian trained pastors. So LCC, we've grown up! Maybe that's appropriate for a 38 year old. And now we see whether this dream will bear good fruit that will endure. So, again, pray for your church!

As this dream comes to fruition, Canada itself, the formerly Christian West, and most of the world is no longer replacing itself. Birth rates are plummeting worldwide (with Africa and parts of the Middle East the only exceptions). It's like humanity just stopped believing Psalm 127 that "children are a heritage from the Lord... blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them." Somehow, we've set aside our Lord's repeated command, to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; Lev. 26:9; Gen. 11:1-

9; Ac. 2). And while it doesn't surprise us that the world would reject what our Lord says, we believers in God's Word have also fallen down on the job. And many of you here can't do much about it. For unless the Lord makes you like Abraham and Sarah, or Elizabeth and Zachariah there are no more babies coming for you. Over my life most of us didn't even realize that our own attitudes and actions were being shaped more by the world than by the Lord and His Word as we had fewer and fewer babies over the generations. And as we look at the impacts of what we have done, it is important to realize it and repent, for our Lord is gracious and merciful.

I highlight LCC's numerical decline because it is a serious issue and we've also been beating ourselves up over it. But I want to highlight that this is a demographic issue, not an issue of what we believe, teach, and confess. Many pastors and parishioners have looked at declining congregations and said, "What are we doing wrong Lord? How have we failed?" Or we've despaired and said, "LCC is dying. It's done. What's the point?" Repent of that despair. While it is true that many of our children and grandchildren are getting their faith stolen from them by society, the media, and the educational establishment, who so often work hand in hand with the prince of this world it is not true that the Gospel has stopped working. Clearly, we need to keep inoculating our kids against every argument and lofty opinion that holds itself up against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:4-6). But even more than those issues, we are facing an immediate crisis, first and foremost, of fertility. And not just the formerly Christian West is facing it, but the whole world is beginning to face this and wake up to this reality. And that fact puts a whole new spin on

the challenges we have to recruit and train pastors, let alone to recruit and train parishioners. For our challenges are exactly the same as all of Canada's challenges to recruit and train workers in every field.

Over the last 20 years we've all noticed that our medical field, elder care, universities, and almost all entry level roles in businesses are being filled primarily by newcomers to Canada. And when we realize this is happening because the Canadians who already lived here haven't replaced themselves it makes us realize that our seminaries, pastors, and congregations are in the same boat. To illustrate this point, why do you think LCC has received 5 pastors from Australia over the last 4 years, and 6 from Brazil in the last 9? Let alone the pastors colloquizing from Ethiopia, India, and Haiti and being trained by LCC from Sudan, China, and elsewhere? This demographic issue is a Canada problem, not a LCC problem.

Our Lord who says that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church will always provide for His Church, for the harvest is plentiful, but the workers have *always* been few, so **pray** for workers in the harvest! (Matthew 9:37-38)

So our own fertility crisis is a big issue LCC *and* Canada are facing. Canada's government and industry have been trying to solve this demographic issue by massive immigration over the last 20 years, rather than by changing our culture to value marriage and the blessing of children. And since the government isn't encouraging younger generations to get married and have more children and seek to make it easier for them to do that, we need to start encouraging that and working as communities to help our younger generations to be able to start families. And our historically high levels of immigration place strain on all aspects of society, such as the current housing crisis, let

alone the challenge of so many people coming with differing cultural expectations, ways of thinking, and differing languages. Some of Canada's challenges are not unlike the challenges the world had right after the Tower of Babel. And those challenges, sadly, can increase xenophobia and cause the love of many to grow cold. Especially as many newcomers not only have a different culture and values, but many do not believe in Jesus.

But then, some of them do believe in Jesus, *or want to learn about Him*. For instance, here in Winnipeg, almost every congregation has been blessed by at least one very active African family who bring new life and zeal to the congregation, let alone excellent flavours at the potluck. And some congregations here have experienced an influx of Chinese seekers and believers who are interested in Christianity. So, these times are turbulent, but full of opportunity that our Lord has placed before us!

You may also have noticed that this convention passes the baton from Baby Boomer leaders to Gen X leaders. As the last of the Baby Boomers retire most names on the slates were Gen Xers. The generational pattern here is like the moment when Moses ordained Joshua as leader and gave him his marching orders (Num. 27:18-23). And if you've read Exodus recently, you may have noted that of the Exodus generation, only Joshua and Caleb, survived the wilderness wanderings and entered the Promised Land (Num. 14:26-30). And sadly, though most of my generation grew up with some connection to the church, very, very few in Gen X still find themselves inside the fold of the Church. It's as though my generation died to faith during our wilderness wanderings. But the generation born during those wanderings under God's appointed leader Joshua—a type of Jesus who was to come—conquered the promised land. I don't know what the Lord has in store, for I am no Joshua, but the Lord is certainly stirring something especially

amongst young men in their 20s and 30s not just in the West, but globally. So, are you ready to catch that wave and to meet that need amongst those young men?

Many of you have noticed young men walking into your churches. Not in large numbers, but those who show up, are committed. Whether they come from some other confession of Christianity, from secular unbelief, or another religion altogether, when they come in our doors, they've often already read the Book of Concord, or listened to hours of Lutheran Youtubers and podcasters like Pastors Bryan Wolfmuehler, Jordan Cooper, Jonathon Fisk, or Chris Rosebrough.

These young men who walk in are searching for authentic Lutheranism according to our Confessions and our historic liturgy. Ask yourself, will they find it in your congregation? As our congregations get smaller the Lord may be pruning the branches of His vine right now, but He always prunes to bring forth new growth, and this appears to be the beginnings of that new growth (John 15:1-2).

So, Baby Boomers, we thank you for your devoted service to the Lord in His Church. You've borne the burden through the heat of the day and gotten us to this point. And sadly, as your retirement comes, there are not always those in our congregations needed to take up leadership. But I encourage you to pray for, ask, encourage, support, and mentor those who are younger than you to take up leadership of your congregations. They may not do things the way you would like them to be done. In their own generation they may see things differently than you do. The Baby Boomers desired informality and not being shackled by traditions which were seen as getting in the way of authenticity and relational intimacy. But these are not the ways of many in younger generations. Maybe you've already had younger pastors whom you think are

taking the congregation in the wrong direction from your generational perspective. But truth be told, the pathways that may have been meaningful to older generations, that you may still think are what the church needs to do, is not what these young folks are looking for. They need tradition and theology, serious teaching, preaching, and depth, because nothing in their experience has been solid, unchanging, or true. And they need elders who will gently mentor them in the faith and its practice. They don't need a certain approach or style, just the one thing needful: to sit at Jesus' feet to receive His pure teaching (Lk 10:38-42) and His body and blood for the forgiveness of their sins. And those marks of the Church have always been our strengths naturally delivered in the Divine Service. Lean into Christ's sturdy, time-tested means of salvation, for that is how Christ gives out His Gifts which have always created, fed, and sustained the Church.

My favourite Bible verse is Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity." I value harmony at home, in church, in relationships. The foundation of our unity is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But Luther teaches that the blessings of unity flow particularly when we all play our parts according to the stations and callings Jesus has placed on your life in the three realms of family, church, and state. When we take up our crosses and follow Him in each of those callings there is great blessing (Mt 16:24-26). We miss those blessings and create problems these days because we love to push into others' callings, and busy ourselves with their business rather than our own. But we are all men under authority. And in the shadow of Christ's cross is His blessing. North American society forgot that in the quest for individualism. But forgetting to stay within our own callings has set our younger generations adrift on the

tides of secularism which hates our Lord's natural law, hierarchy, and structure.

We are Christ's Church, rooted in God's Word, fed with Christ's flesh, grafted into the living vine by Holy Baptism. We are the pillar and ground of truth (1 Timothy 3:15). We have the answers all men need. We have the foundation on which life is built (Ephesians 2:20). It unites us, and that unity is safeguarded and increased in this world through us faithfully living in the callings our Lord has given each of us. This doctrine of vocation is desperately needed today.

I pray that in the days ahead, with the challenges before us, we focus on the callings we are each given in each realm of life that we might be truly Together One and experience how good and pleasant life together can be. And according to your callings as the holy priesthood of God pray for me, and all those elected at this convention, that the challenges ahead of us may not overwhelm us, that trusting in the Lord of the Church He uses us all to face the times in which we live, for He has indeed brought each of us into the Kingdom for such a time as this.

The Lord be with you. Thank you.

Rev. David Habershtock, President-Elect
June 15, 2026