

## Memorial (2015-06)

**Subject:** *Name of the synod*

Floor Committee #22

- WHEREAS 1) our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has commanded us to “go and make disciples of all nations;” and
- WHEREAS 2) in accordance with our Savior’s command, we, as a synod, “exist to make disciples throughout the world;” and
- WHEREAS 3) our Savior’s command, and therefore our mission, is to “make disciples” not to make Lutherans; and
- WHEREAS 4) our allegiance is to Christ alone and we are seeking to follow him alone and to lead others to do the same; and
- WHEREAS 5) we want people to meet Jesus, a person, rather than “WELS,” an organization; and
- WHEREAS 6) a Christ-centered new name that focuses on a person rather than an organization may well remind us “whose we are and whom we serve” (Acts 27:23) and encourage us to the love that flows from truth; the godly deeds that come from good doctrine; and the life that comes from faith; and
- WHEREAS 7) a Christ-centered new name will declare us to be a part of the visible body of Christ, that is, the Christian church and eliminate the misunderstanding among many that we are "Lutheran" as differentiated from Christian; and
- WHEREAS 8) as “WELS Lutherans,” initial efforts to share Christ often require time explaining our name and its history instead of proclaiming “HisStory” and His Name; and
- WHEREAS 9) each of the four words in our corporate name necessitate explanations of various lengths that do not directly lead to Christ or, at the very least, precede and delay introducing him to people who don’t yet know him; and
- WHEREAS 10) our corporate name brings “baggage” to those who think they know us and introduces unnecessary digressions toward those who do not; and

WHEREAS 11) we remain unashamedly convinced that the Book of Concord of 1580, that is, the Lutheran Confessions, are “correct expositions of biblical truth;” and

WHEREAS 12) we continue to hold to the Lutheran Confessions because they agree with the Holy Scriptures; and

WHEREAS 13) opposition that inevitably comes with holding to the biblical teachings articulated in the Lutheran Confessions cannot be avoided, but obstacles to confessing Christ—to the extent that they are caused by the name Lutheran itself—can be avoided; and

WHEREAS 14) the name Lutheran did not originate from those who shared his biblical faith but was a contemptuous epithet from those opposed to the evangelical teachings the LORD restored through the Lutheran reformation; and

WHEREAS 15) historically, in the case of our synod’s official magazine, we recognized and responded to the desirability of changing a dear and familiar name that had become antiquated and awkward; therefore be it

Resolved, a) that we consider reorganizing under Jesus’ name, for example something like this: FOLLOWERS of JESUS the CHRIST (a gathering of people who follow the Holy Scriptures and believe that the historic Lutheran Confessions of the Book of Concord of 1580 are a correct exposition of biblical truth); and be it further

Resolved, b) that we appoint an efficiently sized committee who will prayerfully and urgently study this issue and present its recommendation to the next regularly scheduled convention of WELS; and be it finally

Resolved, c) that we will pray for this committee’s work and offer ideas and aid to them as we are requested or moved.

*Rev. Robert Gurgel, Milwaukee, Wis.*