



Our Great
HERITAGE
SYNOD CONVENTION 2017

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Minutes

July 31–Aug. 3, 2017

Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Tues., Aug 1, 2017

At 8 a.m., President Mark Schroeder wished a good morning to all. Several announcements were made. President Schroeder then introduced Mrs. Karen Fischer, former president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. Fischer narrated the presentation of the flags of all countries in which WELS carries out mission work or a country that has a church body in fellowship with WELS. The ladies were thanked for their presentation with a round of applause.

President Mark Schroeder called the 64th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to order at 8:30 a.m. The opening devotion, hymn, and prayer were led by Pastor Douglas Tomhave, pastor at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis. The devotion was based on Ephesians 2:4-10, and the hymn "By Grace I'm Saved" was sung. He was thanked for his devotion.

President Schroeder welcomed Luther Preparatory School president, Matthew Crass, to the stage. Crass provided a short history of ministerial education in WELS and offered assistance to the delegates from the various representatives of the school. He was thanked for his presentation.

President Schroeder offered a prayer for God's guidance during the elections taking place at this convention. Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, conducted the nominating ballot for the office of first vice president of WELS. After the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

President Schroeder announced that the opening worship service offering totaled \$2,735. Contributions can still be placed in a chest located on the convention floor. The recipient will be determined later in this convention.

At 9 a.m., President Schroeder introduced special guests and observers:

Rev. Michael Herbst, Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany

Rev. Dr. Kebede Yigezu, Lutheran Church of Ethiopia

Rev. Paul Zhao and Rev. Jonathan Li, East Asia Lutheran Synod

Rev. Titus Tse, South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission

Rev. Glenn Obenberger, Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. Dr. Jon Vieker, Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

Rev. Michael Eichstadt, Church of the Lutheran Confession

Each was welcomed with a round of applause.

At 9:05 a.m., President Schroeder presented the written “President’s Report.” The text of the report was projected on a large screen at the front of the assembly. A copy of the report is available on the WELS convention website, wels.net/2017synodconvention, filed in the “Key convention documents” folder. President Schroeder was given a round of applause.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. Nominated for first vice president of WELS were Pastors James Huebner, David Kolander, and Jonathan Scharf. Biographies of the nominees were projected on the screen. After the ballots were cast, Wiechman declared the ballot closed.

At 9:50 a.m., a 25-minute break was declared.

The morning session resumed at 10:17 a.m., and the floor was given to Mr. Todd Poppe, chief financial officer of WELS, who provided information about the synod’s financial results and plan. He summarized the information printed in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM) starting on p. 127 using a PowerPoint presentation. A round of applause followed his presentation. A shredder was then used to symbolize the retirement of the WELS debt of \$22,400,000. A round of applause followed the shredding ceremony.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. A fourth name was added to the ballot for the office of first vice president of WELS, making the first ballot void. Added was the name of Pastor Jonathan Schroeder. His biography was

shared with the assembly on the large screen. The ballot was cast for the position of first vice president. After all ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Prof. Earle Treptow, chairman of the Compensation Review Committee, a standing committee of WELS, summarized the committee's report printed in BORAM starting on p. 100. A PowerPoint was used in the presentation. He presented a "test drive" of the new web-based calculator to assist calling bodies in determining compensation. Questions were entertained and answered. Treptow was given a round of applause for this presentation.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported the need of a run-off for the position of first vice president. Candidates were Pastors James Huebner and David Kolander. After all the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Pastor Paul Prange, representing the Board for Ministerial Education, was given the floor. He began a summary of the Board for Ministerial Education's BORAM's report, beginning on p. 163, using a PowerPoint presentation with photographs. The presidents of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary were introduced. Also introduced was Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman of the Board for Ministerial Education. Those introduced and Prange were given a round of applause. Questions were asked during the nominating ballot described below.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, announced the election of Pastor James Huebner to another four-year term as first vice president of WELS. He continued with the nominating ballot for the position of WELS recording secretary. After the ballots were collected, he declared the nominating ballot closed.

There was a floor request that copies of the presentations be made available to the delegates.

Pastor Duane Tomhave offered the meal prayer, and the morning session adjourned. Photographs of the delegates from each district were taken through the course of the convention.

During the lunch hour, Pastor Michael Schultz, Hymnal Project director, presented a printed and PowerPoint presentation about the Hymnal Project. Half of the delegates were asked to stay and hear the presentation; the other half of the group were asked to attend the presentation on Wednesday during the lunch break.

The Tuesday afternoon session was called to order at 1:16 p.m. by President Schroeder.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. Names on the ballot for the position of recording secretary included Pastors John Bortulin, William Carter, Daniel Habben, Robert Pasbrig, and Jonathan Schroeder. Also on the ballot was teacher Benjamin Priebe. Biographical information was provided. After ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Prof. John Brenner was welcomed. He presented the convention essay, "God's Word is our great heritage." A copy of the essay is available on the WELS convention website, wels.net/2017synodconvention, filed in the "Key convention documents" folder.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. A run-off ballot for the position of recording secretary included the names of Pastors Robert Pasbrig and Jonathan Schroeder. After the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Benner continued and concluded the reading of the essay. He was given a round of applause. Questions were asked and answered. It was moved and supported to thank the essayist. The motion carried.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. Pastor Robert Pasbrig was re-elected as recording secretary. The first ballot for various synod boards and commissions was presented. For each position, opportunity was given for nominees from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor for any of the positions and nominations for each position were declared closed. After the ballots were cast, the election was declared closed.

After several announcements, the afternoon session adjourned at 3:12 p.m. Floor committees met for the remainder of the afternoon.

Beginning at 7 p.m., Pastor Nathan Seiltz, administrator, Multi-Language Publications; and Missionaries Paul Nitz, Malawi, Africa; Luke Wolfgramm, Russia; John Hartmann, Zambia, Africa; and James Enderle, East Asia presented information about their mission work.

Rev. Robert W. Pasbrig, recording secretary