



*Our Great*  
**HERITAGE**  
SYNOD CONVENTION 2017

**Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

**Minutes**

July 31–Aug. 3, 2017

Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Wed., Aug 2, 2017**

At 8 a.m., President Mark Schroeder wished the delegates, “Good morning,” and introduced Rev. James Hoff, who led the opening devotion based on Romans 3:21-28. The hymn “I Know My Faith Is Founded” was sung. Hoff was thanked for his devotion.

Teacher Jeff Wiechman, chairman for Floor Committee #21: Elections, reported. Four run-off elections were needed. Board for World Missions layman, Glenn Bechler and Arlin Bornschlegl; Board for Ministerial Education teacher or staff minister, David Wilson and Gerald Zeamer; Board for Ministerial Education layman, Paul Hahm and Richard Krahn; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Governing Board chairman, Rev. Jonathan Scharf and Rev. Eric Steinbrenner. After the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

At 8:20 a.m., Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of the Board for World Missions, and Rev. Paul Janke, chairman of the Board for World Missions, were introduced. Illustrated PowerPoint presentations were offered. Two videos from the “Moments with Missionaries” series were shown. They depicted southeast Asia seminary students and work in Manila, the Philippines. The men were given a round of applause.

At 8:50 a.m., Rev. Keith Free, administrator of the Board for Home Missions, and Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of the Board for Home Missions, were introduced. Their presentation included projected maps and slides. A round of applause thanked the men for their presentations.

At 9:22 a.m., Rev. Jonathan Hein, representing the Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG), was introduced. He explained the recently completed study entitled,

“A Demographic Study of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.” A video describing this study was shown. Numerous questions were asked and answered. Members of the CMSG were introduced, and each spoke about their field of expertise: Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director, Commission on Worship; Rev. Michael Hintz, director, Commission on Evangelism; Pastor Michael Hintz, Commission on Evangelism; Rev. Gary Pufahl, chairman, Commission on Adult Discipleship; Teacher James Rademan, director, Commission on Lutheran Schools; Rev. James Behringer, director, Special Ministries, who introduced Dr. Erhard Opsahl, president of the Lutheran Military Support Group who presented a small flag display to President Schroeder. Opsahl was thanked with a round of applause.

A break was declared at 10:41 a.m. The morning session resumed at 10:56 a.m. First Vice President James Huebner took the chair.

Teacher James Rademan, director, Commission on Lutheran Schools; Teacher Thomas Plitzuweit, associate director, Commission on Lutheran Schools; and Teacher Cindy Holman, national coordinator of Early Childhood Ministries, were given the floor. Each were thanked for their presentations with rounds of applause.

Behringer presented additional comments, urging congregations to submit the names of those serving in the military. He also noted materials available for the deaf, the blind, and others with special needs. Hein also shared closing thoughts. Special thanks were extended to Hintz, who will be retiring.

At 11:13 a.m., continuing education for called workers was addressed. Teacher James Rademan and Dr. John Meyer addressed the growing need to educate principals for the 21st century. A PowerPoint presentation illustrated the large turn-over of principals in our schools. Reference was made to diagrams included in the convention binder that describe the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative. The men were thanked with applause.

At 11:42 a.m., Mr. Bill Ziche, president of Northwestern Publishing House, presented a report using PowerPoint. He emphasized the goal of providing doctrinally sound printed materials and electronic materials on the NPH website to the members of WELS. He referred the delegates to the report from NPH contained in BORAM. He was thanked with applause.

After announcements, the morning session adjourned for lunch at 12:08 p.m. Rev. James Hoff offered the meal prayer. Included in the prayer was the family of Rev. Michael Killinger, whose father was called home to heaven this morning. During the lunch hour,

Rev. Michael Schultz presented the update on the worship planning materials for those who did not hear the presentation yesterday.

The afternoon session was called to order by President Schroeder at 1:15 p.m. Rev. Glenn Obenberger, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), was introduced. He brought fraternal greetings from the ELS. He emphasized the evangelical Lutheran spirit which is shared by the church bodies in fellowship with WELS. A medallion was presented to President Schroeder. Schroeder responded with a gift from WELS to Obenberger. He emphasized that prayers will continue to be offered for the ELS by WELS. There was a round of applause.

President Schroeder introduced Rev. Michael Herbst, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany. Herbst summarized the current situation of the various Lutheran churches in Germany, many of which no longer accept the clear Word of God. Illustrations were projected on the screen at the front of the assembly. He shared some of the history of his church body and photos of each congregation, its location and pastors. He also spoke of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). President Schroeder presented a gift to Herbst. He expressed his thanks. There was a round of applause.

At 1:50 p.m., Prof. John Brenner, chairman of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, was introduced. He introduced Rev. Dr. Kebede Yigezu of the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia. Yigezu brought greetings from his church, quoting John 8:31 and shared information about his church body using a PowerPoint presentation. He described the church body's seminary, working to preserve biblical truth. Recent history, including the visits of WELS representatives, was also detailed.

Rev. Jonathan E. Schroeder, chairman of Floor Committee #4: Commission on Inter-Church Relations, moved Resolution 04-01. The motion was supported. The motion carried by the assembly rising and applauding. President Schroeder presented Yigezu with a gift. Yigezu expressed his thanks.

Prof. Brenner introduced two pastors representing the East Asia Lutheran Synod. The pastors introduced the assembly to their church body using a PowerPoint presentation. There were questions and answers provided. Rev. Jon Schroeder moved Resolution 04-02. The motion was supported. The motion carried by the assembly rising and applauding. President Schroeder presented each man with a gift. The pastors expressed their thanks and honor in being part of this event.

Prof. Brenner introduced the leader of the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM), Pastor Titus Tse. A PowerPoint presentation was used by Tse to introduce SALEM to the assembly. Rev. Jon Schroeder moved acceptance of Resolution 04-03. The motion was supported and approved by the assembly rising and joining in a round of applause. President Schroeder presented Tse with a gift from WELS. Pastor Tse thanked the group and promised "to keep the faith."

The assembly rose and joined in singing "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage."

At 3:09 p.m. a break was declared. The afternoon session resumed at 3:33 p.m.

Rev. Jon Schroeder presented Resolution 04-04. Acceptance was moved and supported. The motion carried.

Schroeder read Report 04-01. It was moved and supported to dismiss Floor Committee #4 with thanks. The motion carried.

Rev. John Braun and Prof. Thomas Nass were introduced and shared a PowerPoint presentation, "Reformation 500." Short vignettes were shown. Thanks were expressed for those who assisted with the Reformation 500 planning. Prof. Nass spoke of a project by the CELC, "Ninety-Five Theses for the 21st Century." A paper copy was provided for each delegate. A short video of the reading of some of the theses was shown.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director, Ministry of Christian Giving, addressed the assembly. A video depicting a home visit by a Christian Giving counselor was shown. Lueneburg was thanked for his presentation.

Rev. Robert Hein was introduced. He showed a video depicting the work of WELS Christian Aid and Relief. The report in BORAM is found on pages 90-92. As humanitarian aid is provided, there is also often opportunity to share the gospel, sometimes in places where the sharing of God's Word is not welcomed. Mr. Mark Vance is retiring after years of service with Christian Aid and Relief. Hein was thanked for his report with a round of applause.

Rev. Mark Voss presented a PowerPoint regarding the synod's review of the Christian Standard Bible. The printed report is in BORAM, pages 15 and 16. The Translation Liaison Committee offered many suggestions to the Bible's publisher as the translation was being revised, about half of which were accepted. The review process of WELS' Christian Standard Bible Review Committee was described. One hundred twelve reviewers have been involved, and about half have submitted their reviews. The

Outreach paperback copy of this Bible has statements that are of concern to us. Other versions of the Christian Standard Bible do not. Voss was thanked for his report with applause.

Rev. Jeff Wiechman, chairman of Floor Committee #21: Elections, presented the committee's report. Report 21-01 was read. It was moved and supported to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Second Vice President Joel Voss took the chair. Rev. Jon Scharf, chairman of Floor Committee #1: President's Report, presented the committee's work. Resolution 01-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 01-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Reports 01-01 and 01-02 were read. Floor Committee #1 was thanked for its work.

Teacher Jamie Luehring, chairman of Floor Committee #14: Congregation and Ministry Support Group #3 (Lutheran Schools), presented the committee's report. Resolution 14-01 was moved and supported. There was discussion. A division of the house showed that the motion was defeated. Resolution 14-02 was moved and supported. There was discussion, especially regarding the suggested timeline of two years. It was moved and supported to remove the time references in Whereas #7. The proposed amendment carried. The amended motion carried. Report 14-01 was read. The committee will again meet to receive a resolution offered from the floor.

After announcements, the afternoon session adjourned at 5:27 p.m. with prayer led by Rev. James Hoff.

In the evening, the movie "A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy" was shown. Following the movie, Rev. John Braun, chairman of the Reformation 500 Committee, and Mr. Steve Boettcher, producer of the movie, answered questions from the audience.

Rev. Robert W. Pasbrig, recording secretary