

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
66TH BIENNIAL SYNOD CONVENTION, JULY 26–28, 2021
Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

President Schroeder called the morning session to order at 8:01 a.m. He announced changes in the morning agenda. The morning devotion was led by Rev. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School president. The devotion, “Here We Stand: With Joy,” was based on 1 John 1:5-8. The hymn, “With the Lord Begin Your Task,” was sung. Crass was thanked for his devotion.

Rev. Daniel Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief, shared a video update. He presented the commission’s recent goals and work. Rev. Carlos Leyrer, chairman of Floor Committee #17: WELS Christian Aid and Relief, read Report 17-01. The men and committee were thanked.

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator, and Rev. Paul Janke, chairman of World Missions, presented updates. A World Missions goal is to serve 500,000 souls led by well-trained pastors in the near future. Forty-four countries beyond the USA are now being served by over 400 pastors. In Vietnam, a goal is to train over 450 pastors; the first group are only a year away from graduating. Online outreach is bringing many new prospects in numerous South American countries. Numerous other information was also shared. Rev. Philip Huebner, chairman of Floor Committee #9: World Missions/Joint Mission Council, presented Report 09-01. The committee and the men were thanked.

Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of Benefit Plans, presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposed new retirement savings plan and then answered questions from delegates about the plan. Rev. Caleb Davisson, secretary of Floor Committee #19: Pension Proposal, presented Resolution 19-01. The resolution was moved and supported. The motion carried. The committees and Benefit Plans and all others involved in preparing the recommendation were thanked.

A break in the morning session was declared at 9:57 a.m. The morning session resumed at 10:31 a.m.

Rev. Michael Schultz, director of the WELS Hymnal Project, spoke of the work on the hymnal project as it began in 2011 and continues to this year. A video was shown. Twelve committees and nearly 100 volunteers have been working on this project. Seventeen books with 3,500 printed pages of music and 3 digital projects with over 20,000 pages of music are under production. A gradual change to the new materials is strongly suggested. Numerous thanks were shared. President Schroeder was presented with the first early copy of the new hymnal produced to the glory of God and the edification of his people. It was moved and supported to thank all involved with the project and to accept Christian Worship as the WELS hymnal. The motion carried. The assembly rose and joined in the singing of the common Doxology.

Rev. Keith Free, administrator, and Rev. Mark Gabb, chairman, Home Missions, presented information. With God’s blessing, the “Every State by ’78!” initiative helped WELS establish congregations in every U.S. state by 1983. Many blessings resulted. Now, an initiative to establish 100 new missions and 75 enhancements in the next 10 years was suggested. Several local initiatives to begin a new mission are currently taking place. The Church Extension Fund and the Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society are wonderful partners to Home Missions. Campus ministry is expanding. Rev. Aaron Mueller, chairman, Floor Committee #8: Home Missions, read Report 08-01. Resolution 08-01 was moved and supported.

The motion carried. All involved in Home Missions were thanked. A motion off the floor, to thank Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn for his service on the Board for Home Missions and to wish God's blessings on the new Home Missions chairman, Rev. Mark Gabb, was moved and supported. The motion carried.

Rev. John Koelpin, chairman, Floor Committee #15: Subsidiaries, read Report 15-01, Report 15-02, and Report 15-03. The committee was thanked and dismissed.

Rev. Nathan Sutton, chairman of Floor Committee #2: Conference of Presidents, read Report 02-02. Resolution 02-04 was moved and supported. The motion carried. The opening service offering totals over \$2,000 with more gifts still being received. Resolution 02-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 02-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. The committee was dismissed with thanks.

After announcements, the morning session closed with the common table prayer led by President Schroeder at 12:01 p.m.

President Schroeder called the afternoon session to order at 1:02 p.m.

Rev. Jonathan Hein, director, and Prof. David Scharf, chairman, of WELS Commission on Congregational Counseling, were introduced. A video was shown explaining the six areas of Congregational Services. Teacher Scott Schmudlach, chairman, Floor Committee #13: Congregational Services "C" – Lutheran Schools, read Report 13-01. The committee and the presenters were thanked.

Rev. Brian Hackmann, chairman, Floor Committee #11: Congregational Services A—Congregational Counseling, Evangelism, Discipleship, read Report 11-01. The committee did not recommend approval of either Memorial 2021-03 or Memorial 2021-05; however, these memorials were read and the reasons for not approving them were shared. Note: Memorial 2021-04 was included in BORAM in error and was not assigned to Committee #11. The presenters were thanked, and the committee was dismissed with thanks.

Teacher James Grasby, chairman, Floor Committee #12: Congregational Services B—Worship, Special Ministries, read Report 12-01. Resolution 12-01, with a phrase added, "pending approval of funding from the Synodical Council," was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 12-02 with the phrase added, "pending approval of funding from the Synodical Council," was moved and supported. The motion carried. The presenters and the committee were thanked.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving, presented his PowerPoint report. Rev. Adam Seelow, chairman of Floor Committee #4: Ministry of Christian Giving, read Report 04-01. The speakers and the committee were thanked.

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS President, shared closing remarks. He thanked the delegates for their time and service. By God's grace the work of the synod points to God himself. He defined "synod," what it is and what it does. In the congregation and with 350,000 fellow Christians, "synod" carries out its functions sharing God's Word in its truth and purity. These are blessings we do not deserve—they are all by God's grace. Here we still stand. "Delegates, go home with renewed zeal and enthusiasm to carry out this work, which depends only on the gracious promise of God."

At 2:40 p.m., it was moved and supported to adjourn the 66th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The motion carried and the attendees stood and joined in the singing of the Doxology.

The closing worship service was held in the LPS chapel at 3 p.m. Presiding minister was Rev. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School President. The preacher was Rev. Charles Westra, president of the South Atlantic District. His devotion was based on Matthew 19:32-39, "We Confess Christ." Prof. Lucas Krogmann served as the organist, and instrumentalists beautified the service. Installed into their offices for a four-year term were Rev. James Huebner, first vice president, and Rev. Robert Pasbrig, recording secretary.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert W. Pasbrig,
WELS recording secretary