

**2018
59th Regular Convention
Central Illinois District
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
PROCEEDINGS**



Springfield, Illinois
Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center
July 8-10, 2018

1 **MINUTES**

2 Central Illinois District Convention

3 July 8-10, 2018

4
5 Opening service for the Convention was held at 7:00pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in
6 Springfield on Sunday, July 8, 2018. Sermon was preached by Synod 1st VP Rev. Dr. Herbert
7 Mueller.

8 Rev. President Miller called the Convention to order at 8:00am at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in
9 Springfield. Rev. Michael Burdick led the assembly in the opening devotion on John 14:1-6 – let
10 not your hearts be troubled.

11 The portion of the CID Mission video, *Partnership in the Gospel*, featuring Rev. Tom Phillips
12 and the deaf ministry of the district was presented.

13 The Registration and Credentials Committee was still preparing their report, so a brief informal
14 recess was taken. Rev. John Sharp presented the report of the Registration and Credentials
15 Committee. 97 pastoral voting delegates, 102 lay voting delegates, 8 pastoral advisory delegates,
16 2 commissioned advisory delegates, 1 Synod representative, 7 staff, 21 guests, and 18 exhibitors.
17 A quorum was declared present, and the Convention was declared open. Session 1 was opened
18 with prayer by President Rev. Mark Miller.

19 Moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote to ratify the agenda.

20 President Miller read the proposed standing rules. Moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote
21 to adopt the standing rules.

22 Parliamentarian Rev. Dr. John Sias was introduced. Rev. Dr. Sias is a native of the Central
23 Illinois District and currently serves as the Secretary of the Synod.

24 Rev. Dr. Wilfred Karsten, chair of the Resolutions Committee, was called to the dais. As he
25 made his way up, the list of congregations whose constitutions were approved during the
26 triennium was presented. Two amendments to the list of congregations as found in the
27 Convention Workbook: strike Mt. Calvary-Galesburg and add Holy Cross-Vandalia. Ratified by
28 voice vote.

29 Rev. Dr. Karsten presented Resolution 2018-01-01 *To Thank God for the Service of Mr. Glenn*
30 *Goeres* to the assembly. Adopted by voice vote. The assembly rose and sang the Common
31 Doxology.

32 Resolution 2018-01-02 *To Thank God for the Service of The Reverend Joel Cluver* was
33 presented. Adopted by voice vote. The assembly rose and sang the first stanza of *Now Thank We*
34 *All Our God*.

35 The Resolutions Committee was excused and Synod 1st VP Mueller was called to the dais to
36 welcome new workers to LCMS in the past 3 years.

1 District Secretary Mohr presented the nominations for District President. Bylaws call for top five
2 nominees, but must receive at least 5% of the nominations. Only three candidates met those
3 criteria, and two of those declined nomination. Rev. Mark Miller is the only nominee who meets
4 all of the criteria to appear on the ballot.

5 Rev. James Stuenkel, chairman of the Elections Committee, walked the delegates through a
6 series of test ballots with the voting devices before presenting the ballot to the delegates and
7 leading the delegates in prayer before the election.

8 The question “Should Rev. Mark Miller be elected as CID President?” was presented to the
9 Convention. Question was approved by a vote of Yes – 193, No – 4.

10 Rev. Miller provided a brief address.

11 Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb read “The Campus Story,” detailing one example of the work done through
12 our campus ministry.

13 Rev. Dr. Daniel Preus, 5th Vice President of the LCMS and our Regional Vice President,
14 presented the first installment of his Convention Essay: “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.”

15 The nominations ballots for Regional Vice Presidents were presented to the delegates. Current
16 Vice Presidents Bishop and Tibben asked to be removed from consideration for nomination.
17 Nominations ballots were collected to be tallied as the Convention proceeds with other business.

18 Rev. Dr. Karsten was called back to the dais and introduced the other members of the
19 Resolutions Committee: Rev. Jason Braaten, Mr. Lynn Coers, Mr. Robert Dalton, Ms. Berit
20 Ericson, Mr. Eric Spaeth, Rev. Mark Miller, and Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb.

21 R-2018-01-03 – *To Commend Lutherans for Life* was presented to the delegates for
22 consideration. Carried by voice vote. Delegates rose to sing the Common Doxology.

23 R-2018-01-04 – *To Commend LCMS Life Ministry* was presented to the delegates for
24 consideration. A motion to amend at line 14 by striking “that help each person see how all life is
25 a sacred, valued gift from God” and add “To help each person see the God given value of all
26 human lives” was received as friendly amendment. Amendments at Line 22, change “especially”
27 to “particularly” and at line 33 to change “civilly righteous” to “God pleasing.” Resolution as
28 amended carried by voice vote.

29 R-2018-01-05 - *To Confess and Reaffirm Six-Day Creation and the Official Position of the*
30 *Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* was presented to the delegates. Amendment moved to strike
31 the extended quotation from the fourth Resolved and insert “as stated in the Brief Statement
32 (*supra*),” received as friendly amendment. Motion to amend at line 37 to strike “each of which
33 consisted of 24 hours” and add “in six normal earth days.” Lines 11-12 – strike “each of which
34 consisted of 24 hours” and substitute “the same length as the days after creation (Exodus 20:9-
35 11)”. Add “and not according to so-called, “Day-Age” theories.” The committee has received all
36 of the amendments as friendly, so no vote was required. Line 37 will read the same as line 11-12
37 by friendly amendment of the committee. Resolution as amended passed by voice vote.

1 Rev. Stuenkel called to dais for regional Vice-Presidential elections.

2 East Region

3 Rick Milas - 87

4 Michael Mohr - 54

5 James Wright - 47

6 Second ballot

7 ***Rick Milas - 123**

8 Michael Mohr – 67

9 West Region

10 Burdick-60

11 Eddy-76

12 Long-47

13 Second Ballot

14 Burdick – 85

15 ***Eddy – 103**

16 Ranking Ballot (candidate with most votes is 1st Vice President, other is ranked as 2nd Vice
17 President)

18 Eddy – 67

19 ***Milas – 127**

20 Rev. Dr. James Wright was called to the dais as Chairman of the Nominations Committee. He
21 introduced the other members of the committee: Mr. John Jacob, Mrs. Martha Milas, Rev.
22 Clarence Rogers, Mr. Raymond Stuckemeyer, and Mr. Thomas Stuenkel. Candidates for
23 Secretary were presented. Nominations from the floor were requested. As no nominations from
24 the floor were received, it was moved, seconded, and adopted by voice vote, each in their own
25 turn, to close the nominations for Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary,
26 Clergy members of the Board of Directors, Teachers to serve on the Board of Directors, Laymen
27 to serve on the Board of Directors, Clergy on the Congregational Constitution and District
28 Handbook Committee, Lay Lawyer on the Congregational Constitution and District Handbook
29 Committee, Clergy members of the District Nominations Committee, Teachers for the District
30 Nominations Committee, Lay members of the District Nominations Committee.

31 Rev. Dr. Wright was dismissed as Rev. Stuenkel was brought forward to begin balloting for
32 district officers. The following elections were completed:

33 Secretary

34 Mark Eddy – 20

35 ***Michael Mohr – 172**

36 Assistant Secretary

37 Jason Braaten - 76

38 ***James Stuenkel – 116**

1 Treasurer
2 ***Dale Dirks - 115**
3 Danny Magelitz -67

4 Financial Secretary
5 ***James Frazee - 94**
6 Matthew Putnam - 92

7 Synod Representative 1st VP Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller called to the dais to bring greetings on
8 behalf of Synod and present the official report of the Synod. This is the Lord’s church. We are all
9 in this together, called by God to be Joy:Fully Lutheran to share the good news about Jesus.

10 Resolution Floor Committee was called back to the dais and presented Resolution 2018-01-13.
11 The Committee has revised this resolution to include a second resolved that requests the 4-03B
12 Task Force on Registered Service Organizations keep certain matters in mind during their
13 deliberations. A few editorial corrections were received as friendly amendments from the floor.
14 Moved to amend the final line of the first resolved to change “reassess” to “revoke.” Amendment
15 fails by voice vote. Chair called the question. The voice vote was too close to make a
16 determination so a division of the house using electronic device was ordered. Resolution as
17 amended carried (Yes - 99, No - 94).

18 Citing the orders of the day, President Rev. Miller called Rev. Dr. Schurb to the dais for another
19 mission vignette – “Eric.” Chaplain Rev. Michael Burdick led us in a closing devotion. Session 1
20 of the Convention adjourned at 12:25pm for lunch.

21 President Miller called Session 2 of the Convention to order following the conclusion of the
22 CID-CEF Convention at 2:45pm. Session 2 Chaplain Rev. Tom Phillips led the Convention in a
23 devotion on Colossians 1:15-20 – What pleases God? God is pleased with us through Christ.

24 Rev. Stuenkel and the Elections Committee were called forward to continue with elections.

25 CID Board of Directors – Clergy (Elect 4)
26 ***Braaten - 107**
27 Bruer - 76
28 ***Burdick - 111**
29 Burns – 55
30 ***Dominguez – 107**
31 Glock – 87
32 Milas – 29
33 ***Schuermann – 110**

34 CID Board of Directors – Teachers – elected by acclamation
35 ***Jill Gerberdig**
36 ***Nathan Landskroener**

- 1 CID Board of Directors – Layman (Elect 4)
- 2 ***Blessman-100**
- 3 Denham - 75
- 4 ***Dieterich - 104**
- 5 Garlisch - 85
- 6 Marxman - 63
- 7 Schroeder, Aaron -72
- 8 Schroeder, Jon - 45
- 9 ***Wachtel – 111**
- 10 Second ballot, elect one
- 11 Denham - 39
- 12 Garlisch - 58
- 13 Marxman - 32
- 14 Schroeder, Aaron - 40
- 15 Schroeder, Jon - 13
- 16 Third ballot, elect one
- 17 Denham - 41
- 18 Garlisch - 74
- 19 Marxman - 30
- 20 Schroeder, Aaron - 37
- 21 Fourth ballot, elect one
- 22 Denham - 43
- 23 ***Garlisch - 101**
- 24 Schroeder, Aaron - 39
- 25 Congregational Constitutions and District Handbook Committee – Clergy (Elect 2)
- 26 Caithamer - 74
- 27 Hahn - 91
- 28 Hennig - 72
- 29 ***Umbarger - 116**
- 30 CCDHC – Clergy – Second Ballot
- 31 Caithamer - 48
- 32 Hahn - 84
- 33 Hennig - 50
- 34 CCDHC – Clergy – Third Ballot
- 35 ***Hahn - 99**
- 36 Hennig - 83
- 37 CCDHC – Layman – **Edward Schoenbaum** – elected by acclamation.

1 District Nominations Committee – Clergy (Elect 2)

2 Caithamer - 91

3 ***Glock - 116**

4 Hahn - 45

5 ***Koschman - 104**

6 Nominations Committee – Teachers (Elect 2)

7 Crawford – 76

8 Hoffmann – 82

9 Spitz – 67

10 ***Yagow – 129**

11 Nominations Committee – Teachers Second Ballot

12 Crawford – 61

13 Hoffmann – 78

14 Spitz – 39

15 Nominations Committee – Teachers Third Ballot

16 Crawford – 86

17 ***Hoffmann – 93**

18 Nominations Committee – Laymen (Elect 2)

19 Anderson – 81

20 ***Blessman – 95**

21 Garlisch – 58

22 ***Putnam – 121**

23 The Champaign Circuit had caucused during the lunch break to provide a new name for the
24 Circuit Visitor ballot, putting forward Rev. Caithamer to replace the previous nominee who had
25 since accepted a call outside of the district. The following amended slate of Circuit Visitors was
26 moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

27	Altamont	David Speers
28	Bloomington North	Bruce Scarbeary
29	Bloomington South	Chad Lueck
30	Champaign	Jeffrey Caithamer
31	Decatur	Robert Bruer
32	Effingham	Stephen Gillet
33	Iroquois	Timothy Hahn
34	Jacksonville	Gene Strattman
35	Lincoln	Kevin Wendorf
36	Mattoon	John Sharp
37	Peoria	Mark Nelson
38	Quincy	Michael Burdick
39	Rock Island	Robert Hagen

1 Rev. Dr. Daniel Preus presented the second installment of his Convention Essay: “Christians,
2 Suffering, and the Cross.”

3 Greetings were brought to the Convention from Sheila Lutz, President of the CID-LWML. Dale
4 Wetherell and Roger Garlisch also brought greetings from CID-LLL. Debbie Bochenek brought
5 greetings from Concordia Publishing House. Rev. Dr. Daniel Gard greeted the Convention from
6 Concordia University-Chicago. David Fiedler presented on behalf of the LCMS Foundation.

7 Session 2 Chaplain Rev. Tom Phillips was called forward for a closing devotion on Philippians
8 2:5-11.

9 At 6:11pm, President Miller declared the Convention in recess until tomorrow morning. The
10 delegates were to remain in their seats as representatives of the Endowment Fund Convention.

11 July 10, 2018

12 President Miller called Session 3 to order at 8:00am. Session 3 Rev. Charles Olander led the
13 assembly in the morning devotion and memorial service.

14 Rev. Dr. Daniel Preus was called to the dais to present the third part of his Convention Essay:
15 “Christians, Suffering, and the Cross.”

16 District Executive Trip Rodgers called to the dais to present his report. The district has purchased
17 the service for demographic studies. This is available for any congregation or school. The
18 Gatepost is available electronically. National Youth Gathering is coming up next year.
19 Information on district events will be coming throughout the year. Colloquy programs are
20 available for full time church work. There are four individuals that had not turned in their voting
21 keypads.

22 Resolutions Committee called to the dais. Resolution 2018-01-09 - *To Comply with 2004 Res. 4-*
23 *11 “To Assure Uniformity in Articles of Incorporation”* was brought before the Convention. A
24 question was raised regarding naming the Registered Agent in the Bylaws and whether that
25 would require Convention action and approval of the Commission on Constitutional Matters
26 each time that would change. District President Miller and Synod Secretary Sias (acting in his
27 capacity as Secretary of Synod rather than Convention Parliamentarian) clarified that the
28 registered agent can be amended by simply filing a form with the Secretary of State. Resolution
29 passed by voice vote.

30 Resolution 2018-01-11 - *To Approve the Updated Articles of Incorporation for Camp CILCA*
31 was brought before the Convention. A discussion followed regarding a portion of Article VI.
32 Since the Convention is merely ratifying the Articles of Incorporation approved by the Camp
33 CILCA Board of Trustees, we don’t get to amend them. Resolution carried by voice.

34 Resolution 2018-01-08 - *To Authorize Experiment in Cooperative Efforts with Southern Illinois*
35 *District*. A few editorial corrections as well as an amendment striking the phrase “the CID Board
36 of Directors petitions” at the beginning of the resolved, were received as friendly amendment by
37 the committee. Resolution carried by voice vote.

1 Resolution 2018-01-10 - *To Amend Bylaw 2.33* was brought before the committee. A substitute
2 motion was made to make further editorial changes throughout the rest of the Bylaws. The
3 Parliamentarian said that a substitute motion was not necessary to achieve that desired result.
4 The substitute motion was withdrawn, and it was moved and seconded to return the resolution to
5 the committee. Motion to refer back passed by voice vote.

6 Moved and seconded to read just the resolved of the resolutions for the remainder of the
7 Convention. Carried by voice vote.

8 Resolution 2018-01-07 – *To Commend LERT (Lutheran Early Response Teams)* presented to the
9 Convention. Friendly amendment received to move a phrase in the second resolved so that
10 encouragement to congregations and schools was properly phrased. Resolution as amended
11 passed by voice vote.

12 Resolution 2018-01-14 - *To Encourage Thoughtful Planning in Budgeting for Giving* presented
13 to the Convention. No discussion. Resolution passed by voice vote.

14 The committee was dismissed to caucus on necessary resolutions while 1st VP Rev. Dr. Herbert
15 Mueller was called to the dais to present the video portion of his report from the Synod. There
16 were a few minutes remaining at the end of his allotted time for some additional questions and
17 answers.

18 Paul Snyder and Dave Henrichs brought greetings from Concordia Plan Services and made a
19 brief presentation.

20 Rev. Joshua Theilen brought greetings and gave a brief presentation on the work of Camp
21 CILCA.

22 The Resolutions Committee returned to the dais to consider resolutions. A substitute motion was
23 brought to the Convention by the committee. 2018-01-10S adopted by voice vote.

24 Resolution 2018-01-15 - *A Resolution Regarding Concordia College – Alabama* was brought
25 before the Convention. Adopted by voice vote without further discussion. The Convention rose
26 to sing stanza 3 of the hymn *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

27 Resolution 2018-01-16 - *To Encourage Study of the Heidelberg Disputation* was brought before
28 the Convention and passed by voice vote without further discussion.

29 Resolution 2018-01-17 - *To Commend the Organization “Doxology”* was brought before the
30 Convention and passed by voice vote without further discussion. President Miller led the
31 Convention in a prayer of thanksgiving for the Doxology organization.

32 Resolution 2018-01-18 – *To Decline Overture O2018-01-12* presented to the Convention. Passed
33 by voice vote.

34 Resolution 2018-01-19 – *To Encourage Congregations to Consider Higher Things Events*
35 presented to the Convention. Passed by voice vote without further discussion.

1 A motion from the floor and second to consider LO2018-01-22 – *To Appoint a Task Force for*
2 *Review of the 2010 Synodical Restructuring*. Moved and seconded to read the entire overture.
3 Passed by voice vote. Some discussion followed. 2018-01-20 called by voice vote. Voice vote
4 was too close for the chair to determine, so a division of the house was ordered by standing vote.
5 Yes – 73, No – 78. Resolution fails.

6 A final report from the credentials committee was presented by Chairman Rev. John Sharp. 99
7 pastoral voting delegates, 104 lay voting delegates, 9 ordained advisory delegates, 5
8 commissioned advisory delegates, 2 Synod Representatives, 7 district staff, 31 guests, 22
9 exhibitors, total 279.

10 1st VP Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller installed Rev. Mark Miller in his new term as District President.
11 CID President Rev. Miller installed newly elected Vice Presidents Rev. Rick Milas and Rev.
12 Mark Eddy. The District President’s thanks to outgoing Vice Presidents Rev. Dan Bishop and
13 Rev. Kent Tibben was affirmed by the applause of the assembly. Circuit Visitors were installed
14 by President Miller. With thanksgiving to the outgoing members and officers of the Board of
15 Directors, President Miller installed the newly elected members of the Board of Directors.
16 Members of the Congregational Constitution and District Handbook Committee were installed
17 by President Miller.

18 Convention closed with Session 3 Chaplain Rev. Charles Olander leading the delegates in the
19 closing devotion.

20 President Miller gave thanks to Susan Lutz for serving as Convention organist.

21 Moved and seconded that the Board of Directors review, correct, and publish the minutes of the
22 Convention. Carried.

23 Moved and seconded to adjourn. Convention adjourned *sine die* at 11:28am.

24 Post-Convention Business:

25 Rev. Michael Burdick was elected to serve as CID – Board of Directors – Clergy member as well
26 as Quincy Circuit Visitor. Rev. Tim Hahn was elected to serve a second term as Circuit Visitor
27 for the Iroquois Circuit as well as Congregation Constitution and District Handbook Committee
28 – Clergy member. With the exception of the Nominations Committee, you are permitted to serve
29 in only one elected position. Rev. Burdick has elected to serve on the Board of Directors and
30 Rev. Hahn as Circuit Visitor. Per District *Bylaw* 2.05.c, President Miller is appointing Rev.
31 James Hennig (the remaining nominee from the ballot) to serve on the Congregation Constitution
32 and District Handbook Committee, such appointment to be approved by the Board of Directors
33 at their next meeting. Per Synodical *Bylaw* 5.2.2.1, President Miller is appointing Rev. Marlin
34 Rempfer to serve as Circuit Visitor for the Quincy Circuit. Such appointments do not require the
35 approval of the Board of Directors, but President Miller asks the Board of Directors for their
36 assent at their next meeting.

37 Respectfully submitted,

38 Rev. Michael Mohr

39 Central Illinois District Secretary

1 RESOLUTION R2018-01-01

2 **To Thank God for the Service of Mr. Glenn Goeres**

3 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

4 WHEREAS, Scripture reminds us that “For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s
5 field, God’s building.” (1 Cor. 3:9); and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Glenn Goeres served the Central Illinois District for 15 years as the
7 Administrative Assistant to the President – Education and Congregational Life; and

8 WHEREAS, At the time of his retirement in June 2016, in addition to the Central Illinois District,
9 he had served five schools in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota; and

10 WHEREAS, the psalmist tells us, “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Ps.
11 116:15); therefore be it

12 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention gives humble thanks to God for the
13 lifetime of faithful service of Glenn Goeres; and be it finally

14 *Resolved*, that the convention give expression to this thanksgiving by singing the Common
15 Doxology.

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19 RESOLUTION R2018-01-02

20 **To Thank God for the Service of The Reverend Joel Cluver**

21 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

22 WHEREAS, Scripture exhorts us to “remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of
23 God” (Hebrews 13:7); and

24 WHEREAS, The Reverend Joel Cluver served the Central Illinois District for 24 years as
25 Administrative Assistant to the President, and during that time rendered service to the District’s
26 work in Missions, Evangelism, Human Care, and Stewardship, preaching as well as coordinating
27 and administering; and

28 WHEREAS, At the time of his retirement in September 2017, he was the longest-serving mission
29 executive of all the mission executives in the 35 districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri
30 Synod; therefore be it

31 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention gives humble thanks to God for the
32 service of the Reverend Joel Cluver; and be it finally

33 *Resolved*, That the convention give expression to this thanksgiving by singing the first stanza of
34 “Now Thank We all our God.”

35 *Now thank we all our God*

36 *With hearts and hands and voices,*

1 WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry has prepared an informational campaign known as Eyes of Life
2 (eyesoflife.org) to help each person see the God given value of all human lives; and

3 WHEREAS, LCMS Life Ministry is working closely with the newly formed Lutheran Center for
4 Religious Liberty to advocate for life-affirming policies and practices within the civil realm;
5 therefore be it

6 *Resolved*, that we, the Central Illinois District in convention assembled, commend LCMS Life
7 Ministry for its work in advocating for the life, dignity and health of all people from conception
8 to natural death, particularly mothers, unborn children, those who are gravely ill, and those who
9 are dying; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, that we encourage each Circuit of the Central Illinois District to send at least one
11 pastor, one lay adult, and one youth representative to the 2019 Life Conference; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, that we encourage each congregation of the Central Illinois District to avail themselves
13 of the resources available through eyesoflife.org to encourage their members toward a more life-
14 affirming outlook; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, that we encourage each congregation of the Central Illinois District to utilize the work
16 of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in effecting change toward more God pleasing
17 policies and practices in our federal, state, and local governments; and be it finally

18 *Resolved*, that we memorialize the Synod to adopt the above resolution.
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21

22 Resolution 2018-01-05A

23 **To Confess and Reaffirm Six-Day Creation**
24 **and the Official Position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

25 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

26 WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures teach that God is the Creator of all that exists (Genesis 1:1;
27 Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-4); and

28 WHEREAS, Genesis 1 and 2 details the creation of the world by God in six days, the same length
29 as the days after creation (Exodus 20:9-11) and not according to so-called, “Day-Age” theories;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures are inspired by God the Holy Spirit, are without error and
32 infallible (John 10:35, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21); and

33 WHEREAS, The Scripture teaches that Adam was a real man and it is the consequence of his sin
34 that death has come into the world, (Romans 5:12-19); and

35 WHEREAS, Theistic evolution or old earth creationism which teaches that God used an
36 evolutionary process to create mankind and that death is a natural occurrence, not the result of

1 Adam’s sin, is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Holy Scripture; and
2 WHEREAS, The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod regarding creation is,
3 “We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time
4 recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word,
5 and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in
6 Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to
7 science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in
8 immense periods of time, developed more or less of itself. Since no man was present when it
9 pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own
10 record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence
11 and confess with Luther's Catechism: ‘I believe that God has made me and all creatures.’” (A
12 *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, 1932), therefore be it
13 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District confess and reaffirm that God created the world in six
14 days, the same length as the days after creation (Exodus 20:9-11) and not according to so-called,
15 “Day-Age” theories; and be it further
16 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District confess and reaffirm that Adam was a real man and
17 that it is the consequence of his sin that death has come into the world; and be it further
18 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District confess and reaffirm that theistic evolution or old
19 earth creationism which teaches that God used an evolutionary process to create mankind and
20 that death is a natural occurrence, not the result of Adam’s sin, and is in direct contradiction to
21 the teaching of Holy Scripture and be it further
22 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District confess and reaffirm the official position of The
23 Lutheran [SEP]Church—Missouri Synod regarding creation as stated in the *Brief Statement (supra)*;
24 and be it finally
25 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District send this resolution as an overture to the 2019
26 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
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30 RESOLUTION R2018-01-06A

31 **To Address the Role of Laity in the Church Specific to Lay Readers/Lectors in the Public**
32 **Service**

33 Resolution Failed (Yes - 78, No - 107)

34 WHEREAS, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but
35 the [SEP]same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them
36 all in [SEP]everyone” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6); and

37 WHEREAS, God has blessed His people with numerous spiritual gifts as “one body . . . [with]

1 many members, and the members do not all have the same function” but have “gifts that differ
2 according to the grace given to us” (Romans 12:4-6); and

3 WHEREAS, There are numerous ways for the laity, as members of the royal priesthood, to
4 participate in the spreading of the Word in their various stations in life; and

5 WHEREAS, The public reading of Scripture is listed by St. Paul as one of Bishop Timothy’s
6 official duties as pastor (1 Timothy 4:13, cf. Acts 13:15); and

7 WHEREAS, Many congregations in the LCMS have accepted the practice of women speaking the
8 Scripture lessons to the congregation; and

9 WHEREAS, God created man first and then the woman (Gen. 2; 1 Tim. 2:13); and

10 WHEREAS, On the basis of this order of creation God commands women not to teach or to
11 exercise authority over men in the churches, but to remain silent and learn in quietness and all
12 submission, which St. Paul explains as follows:

13 “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach
14 or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was
15 formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and
16 became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in
17 faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” (1 Tim. 2:11-15 ESV)

18 and as follows:

19 “As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For
20 they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If
21 there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is
22 shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Cor. 14:33b-35 ESV); and

23 WHEREAS, “Learn in quietness and all submission” and “they are not permitted to speak” are the
24 explicit apostolic prohibitions that exclude women from speaking the Scripture lessons to the
25 whole congregation in the divine service; and

26 WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) document of 1985,
27 entitled “Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice,” says on page 45
28 that there is no apostolic prohibition of women reading the lessons in the public service, and

29 WHEREAS, 1989 Synod Res. 3-14 states that the “lay reading of Scriptures . . . lie in the area of
30 Christian judgment” (1989 *Proceedings*, 118); and

31 WHEREAS, While circumstances may arise when lay men may and even must read the lessons
32 before the congregation in place of the pastor, the Scriptures specifically prohibit women from
33 this task based on the order of creation; therefore be it

34 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the LCMS call on the CTCR to revisit the 1985
35 CTCR document “Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice,”
36 specifically regarding the practice of women reading the Holy Scriptures publicly before the

1 congregation; and be it further
2 *Resolved*, That Central Illinois District of the LCMS call on the CTCR to revisit the issue of
3 whether the public reading before the congregation constitutes an official duty and authoritative
4 act of the pastoral office in view of 1 Timothy 4:13; and be it further
5 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the LCMS ask the Synod to reconsider 1989 Res.
6 3-14; and be it further
7 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the LCMS affirm that the men, as heads of their
8 own households, should be ~~the~~ leaders in their congregations; and be it finally
9 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the LCMS call on its president and pastors to study
10 together and teach their congregations what the Scriptures teach about the stations in life of men
11 and women in the home, the church, and society, that we might gain a better understanding and
12 stronger agreement on what God's Word says concerning our various stations in life.
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16 RESOLUTION R2018-01-07A
17 **To Commend LERT (Lutheran Early Response Teams)**
18 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

19 WHEREAS, There are now many Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) in the Central Illinois
20 District; and
21 WHEREAS, The members of these teams have received specific training from trained LCMS
22 church workers, lay persons, and from emergency service professionals; and
23 WHEREAS, These teams are recognized by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Federal
24 Emergency Management Agency, and United States Forest Service, and they are utilized by over
25 twenty Illinois emergency management coordinators; and
26 WHEREAS, Natural disasters occur in our fallen world, causing great loss of human life, personal
27 well-being, property, and homes throughout the United States; and
28 WHEREAS, Our Lord commands us to befriend and assist our neighbors who are in need; and
29 WHEREAS, Compassionate human care of all people gives Christians opportunity to show the
30 love of our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore be it
31 *Resolved*, That the church workers, congregations, and schools of the Central Illinois District be
32 encouraged to support LERT through their prayers, their involvement as appropriate in training
33 and deployment, their efforts to increase public awareness of LERT, and their financial
34 offerings; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the congregations and schools of LERT team members be encouraged to support
2 these members so they can be readily available when called to respond to disasters; and be it
3 finally

4 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention, recognize, thank, and praise God for
5 Stephen Born, District Coordinator of LERT; Cynthia Steinwedel, Regional Coordinator; and
6 Randy Wolf, Regional Coordinator and former District Coordinator; and all who work to train,
7 implement, deploy, and support LERT teams.

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RESOLUTION R2018-01-08A

12 **To Authorize Experiments in Cooperative Efforts with the Southern Illinois District**
13 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

14 WHEREAS, The Synod has divided itself into Districts with the expectation that within these
15 Districts not only does ecclesiastical supervision occur, but congregational services are also
16 provided (e.g., Stewardship); and

17 WHEREAS, It might be in the interests of good stewardship of District resources if the Central
18 Illinois District (CID) were to cooperate with a neighboring District in providing certain
19 congregational services; and

20 WHEREAS, Broadly speaking, the congregations of the Southern Illinois District (SID) have
21 circumstances resembling those of the CID; therefore be it

22 *Resolved*, That the 2018 CID convention authorizes the CID Board of Directors during the 2018-
23 21 triennium to explore with the SID ways in which the two Districts might cooperate in
24 providing congregational services, experiment in such cooperative efforts, and report back to the
25 2021 CID convention.

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RESOLUTION R2018-01-09

31 **To Comply with 2004 Res. 4-11 “To Assure Uniformity in Articles of Incorporation”**
Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

32 WHEREAS, the Synod in convention has stated that all district governing documents should be
33 uniform and in conformity with the Synod’s governing documents and resolutions [2016 LCMS
34 *Handbook* 1.5.3.6, 2016 Res. 9-02A, 2004 Res. 4-11]; and

35 WHEREAS, the CID Board of Directors has approved these amendments and revisions; and

36 WHEREAS, the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters [Op. 18-2874] has approved these
37 revisions and declared the 2018 articles in compliance; therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, that the Central Illinois District in convention ratify the amended and revised 2018
2 Articles of Incorporation.

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2015 ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

5 **ARTICLE I** **NAME, DURATION, REGISTERED OFFICE AND AGENT**

6 1. The name of the corporation shall be: **The Central Illinois District of The Lutheran**
7 **Church—Missouri Synod**, a not-for-profit corporation.

8 2. The period of duration of the corporation is perpetual.

9 3. The address of the registered office of the corporation is **1850 N. Grand Ave. West,**
10 **Springfield, Illinois 62702-1626**

11 4. The registered agent of the corporation is the Attorney of the Central Illinois District.

12 **ARTICLE II** **CONFESSIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

13 The objectives of this corporation shall be to unite in a corporate body for religious,
14 educational, and benevolent purposes, the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
15 residing within the bounds of the Central Illinois District, as now constituted, who accept the
16 Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and
17 norm of faith and practice, and who remain true to, and acknowledge as a true exhibition of
18 sound Christian doctrine, all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as they
19 are contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds (the
20 Apostolic, The Nicene, and the Athanasian), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of
21 the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large Catechism, Luther’s Small
22 Catechism and the Formula of Concord, for the purposes of continuing and perpetuating the
23 good work of disseminating the Gospel in accordance with the established doctrine of The
24 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod through religious, educational, and charitable means.

25 **ARTICLE III** **MEMBERSHIP**

26 **A. General Members**

27 The membership of the District consists of all those members of The Lutheran Church—
28 Missouri Synod (congregations, ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—
29 commissioned, as defined by the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri
30 Synod) who have been received into the District at the time of joining the Synod, who have been
31 transferred from another District, or who have been assigned to the District by the Synod.
32 Termination of membership in the Synod terminates membership in the District.

33 **B. Voting Members**

34 All organized congregations that have joined The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and
35 are within the bounds of the Central Illinois District as now or hereafter defined by the Synod
36 hold voting membership.

1 At the meetings of the District of the Synod every such congregation or multiple-
2 congregation parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other
3 by the lay delegate elected and confirmed by said congregation or multiple-congregation parish.
4 These shall be the voting representatives.

5 **C. Advisory Members**

6 Advisory members only are those members of the Synod listed as advisory members in the
7 Constitution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Article V “Membership,” section
8 B. “Advisory Members.”

9 **ARTICLE IV POWERS**

10 The District shall have legal powers to receive, acquire, hold, manage, control, sell,
11 mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of real and personal property and franchise as hereafter
12 may be acquired by this corporation in the interest of its work.

13
14 [2018 Revised] **ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**
15 **OF**
16 **THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT**
17 **OF THE**
18 **LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD**

19 **ARTICLE I NAME, DURATION, REGISTERED OFFICE, AND AGENT**

- 20 a. The name of this corporation shall be “The Central Illinois District of The Lutheran
21 Church--Missouri Synod.”
22 b. The period of duration of the corporation is perpetual.
23 c. The address of the registered office of this corporation as of September 2017 is 1850
24 N. Grand Avenue W., Springfield, Illinois 62702-1626.
25 d. The registered agent of this corporation is David Rolf, 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza
26 #200, Springfield, Illinois 62705.

27 **ARTICLE II OBJECTIVES**

28 The objectives of this corporation shall be to carry out within the Central Illinois District
29 the objectives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

30 **ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP**

31 The membership of this corporation is the congregations, and the ordained and
32 commissioned ministers of religion of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have
33 affiliated with this district.

34 The voting power of this corporation resides in the congregations which are members of
35 the corporation. These congregations exercise this voting power through the accredited

1 pastoral and lay delegates of those same congregations of the Synod that have affiliated with
2 this district.

3 **ARTICLE IV MEETINGS**

4 This corporation shall have general meetings of its members in the years prescribed by
5 the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Special meetings
6 may be called in such manner as may be provided by the Synod.

7 **ARTICLE V OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- 8 a. The officers of this corporation shall consist of a president, vice-presidents as
9 specified by the bylaws of this corporation, a secretary, a treasurer and such others as
10 bylaws may identify.
- 11 b. The board of directors of this corporation shall be of the size and composition as shall
12 be determined in the bylaws of this corporation.
- 13 c. The officers and members of the board of directors shall be elected at the general
14 meetings of this corporation for such terms as shall be specified by the bylaws of this
15 corporation and shall serve until their successors are duly elected and have qualified.

16 **ARTICLE VI PROPERTY**

17 This corporation shall have power to acquire by gift, grants, demise, devise, bequest,
18 purchase, or otherwise, property of every kind and description, real, personal, or mixed; to
19 hold and use such property and deal with, or dispose of, any or all such property by sale,
20 exchange, or gift, when necessary or expedient to carry out the objectives of the corporation;
21 provided that all such property shall be acquired, dealt with, or disposed of in a manner not in
22 conflict with the laws of the State of Illinois or the laws of any state in which said property is
23 located.

24 **ARTICLE VII CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

- 25 a. The Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is also the Constitution
26 of this corporation.
- 27 b. The Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod shall primarily be the Bylaws
28 of this corporation. This corporation may adopt additional bylaws that are not in
29 conflict with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

30 **ARTICLE VIII DISSOLUTION**

- 31 a. In the event this corporation is dissolved or its existence otherwise terminates or is
32 terminated, after the payment of the debts of the corporation, all right, title, and
33 interest in and to its property, whether tangible or intangible and whether real or
34 personal, shall thereupon automatically vest in or be transferred to the Synod, and this
35 corporation covenants and agrees to execute and deliver to the Synod such documents
36 and instruments and to take such other and further actions as the Synod may deem
37 reasonably necessary or desirable, in order to evidence and give full effect to the

1 foregoing. This provision may not be altered or deleted without the approval of or the
2 Board of Directors of the Synod.

- 3 b. If, however, on the date of such proposed dissolution, The Lutheran
4 Church—Missouri Synod, a Missouri Corporation, or its successor, is no longer in
5 existence, the assets of the corporation may distributed to any other Section 501(C)(3)
6 organization as designated by the board of directors.

7 **ARTICLE IX RELATIONSHIP TO THE SYNOD**

8 This corporation, as part of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, acknowledges its
9 allegiance to the Synod and to the convention of the Synod. It submits to the authority of the
10 Synod and the convention. It accedes, recognizes, and accepts the doctrine taught and
11 practiced in the Synod (Art. II) and also the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and
12 Bylaws of the Synod, as currently in effect and as may hereafter be amended from time to
13 time.

- 14 a. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the organizational documents of
15 this corporation and the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws of the
16 Synod, as may hereafter be amended from time to time, the Articles, Constitution, or
17 Bylaws of the Synod shall control and govern.
18 b. This provision may not be altered or deleted without the approval of the Board of
19 Directors of the Synod.
20 c. Neither The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod nor The Lutheran Church—Missouri
21 Synod Incorporated is responsible for the debts or other obligation of this corporation
22 nor do they represent or endorse the fiscal solvency of this corporation.

23 **ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS**

24 Amendments to these Articles of Incorporation may be made at any time at a regularly
25 called meeting of this corporation by a majority of the voting delegates present at such
26 meeting, provided such amendments are not inconsistent with the Constitution or the laws of
27 the United States or the State of Illinois or the Constitution or Bylaws of The Lutheran
28 Church—Missouri Synod, and with prior approval of the Commission on Constitutional
29 Matters of the Synod.
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33 **RESOLUTION R2018-01-10S**

34 **To Amend Bylaw 2.34**

35 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

36 WHEREAS, District Bylaws currently call upon the District Board of Directors to “appoint a
37 Social Ministry Committee consisting of two clergymen, one teacher, and two laymen”; and

1 WHEREAS, National Synod nomenclature has for some years used the term “Human Care”
2 instead of “Social Ministry”; and
3 WHEREAS, The prospect of empaneling the most qualified committee members is increased if the
4 Board of Directors has somewhat greater flexibility in its choice of personnel; therefore be it
5 *Resolved*, That District Bylaw 2.34 be amended as follows:

6 **2.34 The ~~Social Ministry~~ Human Care Committee**

- 7 a. Membership: The Board of Directors shall appoint a ~~Social Ministry~~ Human
8 Care Committee consisting of two ordained ministers, one ~~teacher or~~
9 DCE commissioned church worker from the Synod roster, and two laymen one
10 layman who are is a voting members of a congregations of the District, and a fifth
11 member of a District congregation who is not an ordained minister.
- 12 b. The Duties of the ~~Social Ministry~~ Human Care Committee:
- 13 i. Provide advisory services which will cultivate congregation members in their
14 concern for human care, and shall participate in social education and endeavors
15 to remove or alleviate human suffering;
 - 16 ii. Promote and participate in human care activities from the Office of National
17 Mission and the Office of International Mission;
 - 18 iii. Recommend to the Board of Directors the granting of assistance to
19 congregations, or through them to their members or others, in dire emergencies
20 or disaster situations;
 - 21 iv. Assist the Commission on Mission Services, upon request, in the institutional
22 ministries of the District.

23 And be it finally

24 *Resolved*, That all other references to “Social Ministry Committee” elsewhere in the District
25 Bylaws are changed to “Human Care Committee.”
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29 **RESOLUTION R2018-010-11**
30 **To Approve the Updated Articles of Incorporation for Camp CILCA**
31 **Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)**

32 WHEREAS, Camp CILCA’s Board of Trustees has updated the Camp’s Articles of Incorporation
33 as they seek 501(c)3 status with the IRS and RSO recognition with The Lutheran Church—
34 Missouri Synod, therefore be it

35 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention approve their updated revision of their
36 Articles of Incorporation as stated in Article VI of said document.

37 **Central Illinois Lutheran Camp Association**
38 **Articles of Incorporation**

39 **Article I**

1 **Name**

2 The name of this corporation shall be the Central Illinois Lutheran Camp Association.

3 **Article II**

4 **Purpose**

5 The Central Illinois Lutheran Camp Association is hereby organized by The Central Illinois
6 District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Central Illinois District of the
7 Lutheran Laymen’s League for the purpose of furthering the work of the church through an
8 organized Lutheran center and camp.

9 To this end, the association shall establish, maintain and operate a Lutheran center and camp,
10 together with the necessary facilities therefore at 4124 Camp CILCA Road, Cantrall, Sangamon
11 County, wherein Christian education and fellowship and the safeguarding of the spiritual,
12 intellectual, social and physical welfare of the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri
13 Synod shall be the program.

14 Said corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes,
15 including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt
16 organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section
17 of any future federal tax code.

18 **Article III**

19 Any by-laws, rules and regulations adopted by the Association shall not be in conflict or
20 inconsistent with the doctrines and practices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, nor with
21 the provisions of this Constitution.

22 **Article IV**

23 No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable
24 to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be
25 authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make
26 payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article Second hereof. No
27 substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or
28 otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or
29 intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on
30 behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision
31 of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried
32 on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
33 Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a
34 corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal
35 Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

1 **Article V**

2 In the event of dissolution, for any reason whatsoever, the assets of the Association shall be
3 and become the property of The Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri
4 Synod upon the assumption of all outstanding liabilities then existing the Association, by The
5 Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Should The Central Illinois
6 District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod no longer be in existence, all assets shall be
7 and become the property of The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod upon the assumption of all
8 outstanding liabilities then existing the Association, by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

9 Any assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of
10 Sangamon County, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as
11 said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

12 **Article VI**

13 These Articles shall be in effect upon the concurrence in its adoption by The Central Illinois
14 District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Central Illinois District of the
15 Lutheran Laymen’s League.

16 In the event the Lutheran Laymen’s League fails to concur, then it may be adopted by the
17 Board of Directors of The Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, or
18 by Resolution presented to the convention of the District.

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22 **RESOLUTION R2018-01-12**
23 **To Engage C-WOWs in the Circuits of our District**
24 **Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)**

25 WHEREAS, Witness (telling the Good News about Jesus) is important for all Christians within
26 their respective callings in life; and

27 WHEREAS, Outreach (congregations leading people from initial contact to the ministry of Word
28 and Sacrament) is important for all congregations; and

29 WHEREAS, Encouragement for witness and outreach is helpful for members of the District; and

30 WHEREAS, Resources for witness and outreach are useful for members of the District; and

31 WHEREAS, Visitation circuits are networks of congregations walking together “for mutual care,
32 support, advice, study, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and
33 counsel” (Synod Bylaw 5.1.1); and

34 WHEREAS, The CID Evangelism Commission has recently approved a description for an
35 unofficial position, “Circuit Witness and Outreach Worker” (C-WOW), recommending that one
36 of these workers be appointed in each of the District’s Circuits; therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, That the District in convention endorses the position of Circuit Witness and Outreach
2 Worker; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the District instructs the Circuit Visitors to bring the C-WOW position
4 description to their Circuit pastoral conferences; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the District encourages the Circuit Visitors and pastors of congregations in each
6 Circuit to appoint a C-WOW in their Circuit according to the position description; and be it
7 finally

8 *Resolved*, That the District assigns the Evangelism Commission to report to the next District
9 convention on the implementation of C-WOWs in the Circuits of our District.

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RESOLUTION R2018-01-13A

14

**To Review the Recognized Service Organization (RSO) Status
of Lutheran Senior Services**

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Resolution Passed (Yes - 99, No - 94)

17 WHEREAS, The congregations and founders of Concordia Village, Springfield, Illinois, were
18 faithful to the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the doctrine and practice of The
19 Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod when they joined together to establish a senior living facility
20 in Springfield, Illinois; and

21 WHEREAS, This faithfulness has been challenged repeatedly by Lutheran Senior Services (LSS)
22 since they took over ownership of Concordia Village, especially during the call processes and
23 tenure of the various chaplains who have served the residents of Concordia Village; and

24 WHEREAS, These challenges have included repeated attempts to introduce and practice “open”
25 communion during the chapel services at Concordia Village; and

26 WHEREAS, Concordia Village is not a congregation and therefore has no Scriptural authority to
27 administer the Lord’s Supper; and

28 WHEREAS, The Lord’s Supper is faithfully and regularly administered to the members of our
29 congregations residing at Concordia Village by the pastor of each resident; and

30 WHEREAS, The spiritual needs of the non-LCMS residents at Concordia Village are being
31 addressed by denominationally appropriate worship services and administration of the Lord’s
32 Supper by the majority of the other denominations having residents at Concordia Village; and

33 WHEREAS, Numerous meetings have been held by the Springfield East and West Circuit Visitors
34 and the Central Illinois District President(s) over the past six years with the members of every
35 call committee, the leadership of LSS, and the “called” chaplains to explain and reiterate our
36 Biblical objections to conducting communion services at Concordia Village, as though it were a
37 properly constituted church, as well as our Biblical objections to the unbiblical practice of

1 “open” communion; and

2 WHEREAS, Each of these meetings has failed to convince LSS of the truth of God’s Word
3 concerning the spiritual harm they would cause the residents of Concordia Village should they
4 begin the practice of “open” communion; and

5 WHEREAS, St. Paul reminds us of the dangers of communing in an “unworthy manner” in his
6 First Letter to Corinth: “He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment
7 to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:29); and

8 WHEREAS, The practice of “open” communion would actually be putting those who deny the real
9 presence of Christ’s body and blood in spiritual jeopardy; and

10 WHEREAS, We wish to protect the consciences of LCMS members who have been properly
11 taught correct biblical communion practice; and

12 WHEREAS, To begin an “open” communion practice at Concordia Village would take unfair
13 advantage of those seniors who are no longer able to discern the doctrinal differences among the
14 various denominations, causing them to feel compelled to do what everyone else is doing, and
15 enticing them into a unionistic worship service, which we as faithful adherents to the Scriptures
16 and *The Book of Concord* cannot permit; and

17 WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 6.2.1 (Recognized Service Organizations) instructs RSOs to respect and
18 not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod; and

19 WHEREAS, Our Lord commands in 1 Timothy 4:16, “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the
20 doctrine. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” and in
21 Romans 16:17, “I appeal to you brothers to watch out for those who cause divisions and create
22 obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them,” therefore be it

23 *Resolved*, That, in accordance with Synod Bylaw 6.2.1 (Recognized Service Organizations), the
24 Central Illinois District requests the LCMS Office of National Mission to reassess the RSO status
25 of Lutheran Senior Services.

26 And be it finally

27 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District, noting that the Synod has established a “4-03B Task
28 Force” on Recognized Service Organizations, requests this Task Force to take into account the
29 following matters particularly in reference to RSOs that provide senior living facilities:

- 30 • The propriety of chaplains for such facilities being called by RSOs which are comprised
31 of elements from church bodies that are not in altar and pulpit fellowship,
- 32 • The propriety of RSO agencies, which neither are churches nor claim to be, conducting
33 communion services and calling chaplains to conduct them,
- 34 • The propriety of chaplains called or appointed by these RSO agencies providing primary
35 pastoral care for residents,
- 36 • The degree of input that residents at such facilities should have in the operation of the

1 facilities, including the choice of chaplain(s) for the facilities.
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5 RESOLUTION R2018-01-14

6 **To Encourage Thoughtful Planning in Budgeting for Giving**

7 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

8 WHEREAS, The Lord teaches us to support the ministry of His Word by our offerings (Lk. 10:7, 1
9 Cor. 9:13-14, Gal. 6:6-7, 1 Tim. 5:17-18); and

10 WHEREAS, The Lord teaches us to be generous and cheerful givers, bringing Him first-fruits
11 offerings in proportion to the way He has blessed us, and trusting in Him to supply our needs
12 (Prov. 3:9-10, Mal. 3:10, Lk. 6:38, 1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 8:12, 2 Cor. 9:6-11, Phil. 4:18-19); and

13 WHEREAS, First-fruits giving in proportion to the Lord's blessings requires a thoughtful
14 consideration of the Lord's blessings and a deliberate plan for giving, so that each may give "as
15 he determines in his heart," (1 Cor. 9:7); and

16 WHEREAS, The Central Illinois District lives by example to her constituent congregations,
17 offering approximately one fourth of the contributions received to the broader work of the Lord
18 through the Synod at large, therefore be it

19 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Central Illinois District and the individual members of
20 the congregations be encouraged to engage in thoughtful planning as they prepare congregational
21 and personal budgets, taking into careful consideration the rich temporal and everlasting
22 blessings the Lord has provided, as well as the ministry needs of our congregations, the Central
23 Illinois District, and the Synod at large; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Central Illinois District be encouraged to think of their
25 contributions to the District as proportions of what they receive rather than as a fixed dollar
26 amount; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the individual members of the congregations of the Central Illinois District be
28 encouraged to determine in light of these considerations a generous portion of the Lord's
29 blessings to designate in their personal budgets as offerings to the Lord, and to cheerfully and
30 trustingly bring these offerings to the Lord in their congregations; and be it finally

31 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Central Illinois District be encouraged to determine in
32 light of these considerations a generous portion of the Lord's blessings to designate in their
33 congregational budgets as offerings to the Lord for His work in the Central Illinois District and
34 the Synod at large, and to cheerfully and trustingly remit these offerings through the office of the
35 Central Illinois District.
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2 RESOLUTION R2018-01-15

3 **A Resolution Regarding Concordia College – Alabama**

4 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

5 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has been actively preaching and teaching the
6 Word of God in the American South for over 140 years; and

7 WHEREAS, The institution now known as Concordia College – Alabama was founded in Selma,
8 Alabama on November 13, 1922 to help train teachers for the various mission schools throughout
9 the American South; and

10 WHEREAS, Concordia College – Alabama has served faithfully for nearly a century in training
11 thousands of Lutheran educators and lay people in their godly vocations; and

12 WHEREAS, There is a time for all endeavors of man, which blossom one day and wither the next
13 like the flowers of the field, but the Word of the Lord and His work of salvation endure forever
14 (Ecclesiastes 3, Isaiah 40, James 1); and

15 WHEREAS, Various factors have led to the decision to close Concordia College – Alabama at the
16 end of the Spring 2018 semester; and

17 WHEREAS, The impact of Concordia College – Alabama will continue in our congregations and
18 communities through its former students; and

19 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, through the ongoing work of LCMS Black
20 Ministry and the Office of National Mission, continues to explore many avenues for the work of
21 sharing the Word of the Lord in the American South and throughout the African American
22 community, including such efforts as the Black Clergy Caucus, the Black Family Ministry
23 Convocation, the Rosa Young Academies, and the Lifehouse Mentoring Programs, therefore be it

24 *Resolved*, That we, The Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in
25 convention assembled remember and recognize with thanksgiving to God the good and godly work
26 of the many faculty and staff throughout the history of Concordia College – Alabama in the training
27 and instruction of God’s Word and Christian life; and be it further

28 *Resolved*, That we remember and recognize with thanksgiving to God the good and godly work of
29 the many alumni of Concordia College – Alabama which they have done and will continue to do
30 in our congregations and communities; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That we give voice to our thanks and praise to God for working through Concordia
32 College – Alabama these past 97 years, and pray His continued guidance, as we rise and sing the
33 third stanza of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (LSB #964):

34 *God of our weary years,*

35 *God of our silent tears,*

36 *Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;*

37 *Thou who hast by Thy might*

1 WHEREAS, The Doxology Classic Program includes valuable training not only for pastors, but
2 also for lay leaders in a congregation; and
3 WHEREAS, Doxology is a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri
4 Synod; and
5 WHEREAS, Doxology routinely offers its Classic Program at the Chiara Center, a retreat center
6 centrally located within our Central Illinois District, therefore be it
7 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District in convention encourages every congregation to
8 participate in the continued training provided by Doxology for both pastors and lay leaders; and
9 be it further
10 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the District write a letter of thanks to Doxology for their service
11 to the congregations of our district; and be it further
12 *Resolved*, That the President of the District lead the convention delegates in a prayer of
13 thanksgiving for Doxology; and be it finally
14 *Resolved*, That we memorialize the Synod in convention to adopt a similar resolution.

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18 **RESOLUTION R2018-01-18**
19 **To Decline Overture O2018-01-12**
20 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

21 WHEREAS, the placement of pastoral candidates into specific calls is a complex process in which
22 many considerations are worthy of being considered; and
23 WHEREAS, District and Synod convention floors do not commend themselves as the forums in
24 which such variables can best be taken into account for our seminary graduates and calling
25 congregations; therefore be it
26 *Resolved*, That Overture O2018-01-12 be respectfully declined.

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30 **RESOLUTION R2018-01-19**
31 **To Encourage Congregations to Consider Higher Things Events**
32 Resolution Passed (Voice Vote)

33 WHEREAS, Higher Things has been serving the congregations of The Lutheran Church—
34 Missouri Synod for more than a decade and a half, providing youth catechetical conferences
35 every summer since 2005; and

1 WHEREAS, Higher Things currently provides regional conferences at four different university or
2 college campuses each summer; and

3 WHEREAS, Higher Things holds various weekend retreats for junior high school aged students at
4 local congregations; and

5 WHEREAS, Higher Things is a Registered Service Organization of The Lutheran Church —
6 Missouri Synod; therefore be it

7 *Resolved*, that we encourage the congregations of the Central Illinois District to consider
8 including Higher Things conferences and retreats among their junior and/or senior high school
9 youth group activities; and be it finally

10 *Resolved*, that we encourage congregations of the Central Illinois District to consider hosting a
11 Higher Things Retreat.

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15 RESOLUTION R2018-01-20

16 **To Appoint a Task Force for review of the 2010 Synodical Restructuring**

17 Resolution Failed (Yes - 73, No - 78)

18 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in Convention in 2010 adopted several
19 Resolutions that made significant changes to the governance structure of the Synod, upon
20 recommendation of a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance; and

21 WHEREAS, In the period leading up to the 2013 Synod Convention, the work of restructuring
22 directed by the 2010 Convention Resolutions was undertaken and completed; and

23 WHEREAS, During the past two triennia (2013-2016, 2016-present) the Synod has operated under
24 the new structure, giving sufficient time for a reasoned and thoughtful evaluation of the effects of
25 such structure in practice, and providing valuable insight as to the advantages of and areas for
26 improvement upon the changes adopted in 2010 as they have been put into operation; and

27 WHEREAS, Our Synod, her congregations, and the Church in the United States in general have
28 seen dramatic demographic and financial shifts since the initiation of the restructuring study in
29 2007; and

30 WHEREAS, God has given us the gift of “reason and all our senses,” including the ability to
31 determine whether and how changes planned beginning in 2007, enacted in 2010, carried out
32 from 2010-2013, and in effect for the past two triennia, have proven successful to support the
33 mission of the Synod in bringing the Gospel to the people of the United States and likewise in
34 mission to the world, as well as continuing to meet the changing needs of the Synod given the
35 demographic and societal changes currently occurring; and

36 WHEREAS, It is now appropriate, as a best practice and for effective stewardship, to study
37 whether additional improvements or adjustments could be made to such changes to enhance the

1 efficient governance of our Synod consistent with our mission of sharing the Gospel and
2 supporting fellow congregations in their Word and Sacrament ministry, therefore be it

3 *Resolved*, That the Central Illinois District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod ask the 2019
4 LCMS Convention to appoint a Task Force to review the 2010 Synod restructuring and how that
5 restructuring has worked out, with said Task Force to consist of the Synod President and First
6 Vice President, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod, a District President from each of
7 the Regions of Synod to be appointed by the Council of Presidents, and both an ordained
8 minister and a layman from each region of the Synod to be appointed by the Synod Vice-
9 President for their region; and be it further ^[]_[SEP]

10 *Resolved*, That the aim of the Task Force shall be to assess the effectiveness of the restructuring
11 in maintaining Synod’s ability to carry out her objectives as outlined in Article III of the Synod’s
12 Constitution; and be it finally

13 *Resolved*, That the Task Force make recommendations to the 2022 Synod Convention for any
14 helpful and effective changes to be made to the Synod’s structure so that we as the Synod may
15 continue to be effective in the Article III Objectives.

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1 **2018 CONVENTION ESSAY**

2 ***NOTHING EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED***

3 One day Jesus stood in the court of Pontius Pilate on trial and Pilate asked Him a
4 question. You all remember the event; it is described in the Gospel of John. “What is truth?”
5 Pilate asked. (John 18:38) Jesus did not answer the question. Pilate had asked Jesus three
6 questions prior to this one and Jesus had answered all of them. “Are you the king of the Jews?”
7 Pilate had asked – and Jesus answered. “What have you done?” Pilate had asked – and Jesus
8 answered that question, too. “Are you a king then?” Pilate had asked – and Jesus answered his
9 question. But then Pilate asked a fourth question: “What is truth?” And Jesus did not answer the
10 question. Why not? It is certainly an important question. Couldn’t Jesus have told Pilate that the
11 truth was found in God’s Holy Word, the Scriptures? Couldn’t Jesus have spoken as He did once
12 before when He said to His disciples, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”? Why didn’t he
13 answer Pilate’s question?

14 I think we all know why Jesus didn’t answer Pilate’s question. His question was
15 rhetorical. It was a question that did not expect nor desire an answer. It was a question which
16 contained its own answer within the question. In fact, Pilate’s question was actually a confession
17 of his faith – or lack of it – and instead of asking, “What is truth?”, Pilate could just as well have
18 stated, “There is no such thing as truth.”

19 The faith of Pilate – or perhaps we could say, Pilate’s lack of faith – is quite familiar to us
20 in our pluralistic age. Especially in our country, the United States, a very high percentage of the
21 population seems to believe that truth is a variable and what may be true for you may not be true
22 for me. You have your truth, I have mine. And don’t tell me that your truth is superior to mine.
23 This flexible idea of truth makes possible the strange success of a book and a movie like *The Da*
24 *Vinci Code*. Although the book and movie were fiction and although its major propositions could
25 not be substantiated by fact or documented by historical sources, nevertheless many people
26 actually chose to believe that its views are true.

27 Political pluralism can be a good thing. In a politically pluralistic society opposing
28 political parties can coexist peacefully, even though they have very different ideas about what is
29 best for their nation and people politically. Ethnic pluralism can be a good thing. When people
30 from differing ethnic backgrounds can live together peacefully, each respecting the other,
31 solutions to problems will probably not be violent ones.

1 Even religious pluralism can have benefits. It can affect a society in such a way that
2 people do not kill each other over religious differences, but even though they disagree, tolerate
3 the expression of different beliefs. For Christians, however, religious pluralism becomes a
4 problem, in fact a very serious problem, when all religions, including Christianity, are viewed as
5 having equal possession of the truth. Such religious pluralism dethrones God as the one who
6 gives and is the source of truth and permits human beings to determine for themselves what they
7 will believe and hold as true. Such a view of truth clearly embraces the “faith” of Pontius Pilate,
8 who in response to Jesus’ claims for exclusive possession of the truth, declares with his question
9 that nobody has the right to say such a thing. But Christians declare categorically, “We are
10 determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This is our only
11 Gospel; He is our only hope.

12 We who follow Jesus agree with His answer to Pilate’s third question, “Are you a king?”
13 Jesus says, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have
14 come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears
15 my voice.” John 18:37

16 Let me make two observations about Jesus’ statement. First, he does not say, “I have
17 come into the world to bear witness to a truth.” He says, “I have come into the world to bear
18 witness to the truth.” Second, He does not say, “Everyone who is of the truth hears a voice.” He
19 says, “Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.”

20 In our increasingly pluralistic and syncretistic culture, it is becoming increasingly
21 necessary to declare with utmost clarity and without any shade of ambiguity: There is only one
22 way to know the true God and that is to know Jesus. And that is why we are so determined to
23 preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

24 If we no longer insist upon this truth, that Jesus alone is the way to the Father,
25 Christianity will dissolve. For apart from the truth that we come to the Father only through Jesus,
26 Christianity loses that which makes it distinctive from all other world religions. And if
27 Christianity loses that which makes it distinctive from all other world religions, not only does
28 Christianity lose that which makes it unique, but the world itself loses all hope of reconciliation
29 with God, all hope of forgiveness, salvation, eternal life. Because only within Christianity, and
30 only in the person of Jesus Christ, does the world find a God of mercy and grace, a God who
31 forgives, a God who actually loves with an unconditional love.

1 In every other world religion, if we find a god at all, we find a god who loves if, a god
2 who loves when, a God who loves under the condition that. Only in Christianity do we find a
3 God who loves because. In other religions we find a god who loves if people are obedient and
4 who ceases to love when they are not. In other religions we find a god who loves people when
5 they have fulfilled the requirements the god has set for acceptance or approval. Only in
6 Christianity do we find a God who forgives and accepts because. He forgives because His Son
7 has already been obedient in the stead of the people and God accepts His obedience as theirs. He
8 accepts the people because His Son has already fulfilled, in the stead of the people, all the
9 requirements God has set for His approval. Thus, the people are accepted for the sake of the Son.

10 Therefore, when the Father declares at the Baptism of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son in
11 whom I am well pleased,” this declaration of the Father is more than simply a statement about
12 the Son. For the Son stands in the place of the people. And when the Father declares again at
13 Jesus’ transfiguration, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” once again, this
14 declaration is more than simply saying, “My Son has done well.” The Son stands in the place of
15 the people. The Father’s declaration of approval is a declaration about the people, in whose place
16 the Son stands. That is why St. Paul can say about Jesus that he was delivered for our offenses
17 and raised for our justification (Romans 4:25).

18 This is nothing more than to say that Jesus is our substitute. In the eyes of the Father what
19 He has done we have done. What he has suffered we have suffered. His life is our life, His
20 crucifixion and punishment, our crucifixion and punishment, His death our death. And since he
21 is, as St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 15:20), the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep, His
22 resurrection not only foreshadows, but also causes the resurrection to eternal life for all who trust
23 in Him.

24 This message about Jesus’ life, suffering and death, this message about Jesus as substitute for
25 the people, this message about Jesus’ resurrection and ours, this message about forgiveness,
26 deliverance from death and punishment and eternal salvation for all who trust in Him, this
27 message is the Gospel through which the Holy Spirit has created the church by creating faith in
28 the hearts of people. This is the message that has created and sustained your faith and is at the
29 center of everything that makes you God’s child. This is the message, and there is no other, that
30 offers hope to a sinful and lost world. Therefore, we must not lose this message. Luther warns us,

1 “...if this article concerning Christ – the doctrine that we are justified and saved through Him
2 alone and consider all apart from Him damned – [if this article] is not professed, all resistance
3 and restraint are at an end. Then there is, in fact, neither measure nor limit to any heresy and
4 error.”ⁱ

5 Christ alone is our salvation, Christ the rock on which we stand;
6 Other than this sure foundation Will be found but sinking sand.
7 Christ, His cross and resurrection, Is alone the sinner’s plea.
8 At the throne of God’s perfection Nothing else can set him free.ⁱⁱ

9

10 “Christ alone is our salvation; nothing else can set us free.” Does it ever bother you that
11 we Christians embrace a faith that seems to be so exclusive? Christianity does teach, after all,
12 that there is no salvation for anyone outside the Christian faith. There is no other Gospel. Jesus
13 Himself says, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.”
14 (John 14:6) In his epistle to the Ephesians Paul makes it clear that we can approach God with
15 confidence and in freedom, but only when we approach God with faith in Jesus. (Ephesians 3:12)
16 The Apostle Peter preached about Jesus shortly after the day of Pentecost and said, “Salvation is
17 found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be
18 saved.” (Acts 4:12) The Apostle Paul emphasizes the same point in his first epistle to the
19 Corinthians. He says, “No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is
20 Jesus Christ.” (I Corinthians 3:11) Again, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, I am the door for the
21 sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to
22 them. I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved.” (John 10:7-9) How are we to be
23 saved? Only through Jesus.

24 And a slightly different question: How are we to know God and to see God? Jesus
25 answers that question in response to Phillip’s request that Jesus show them the Father. He says,
26 “Have you been with me so long, and yet you have not known me, Phillip? He who has seen me
27 has seen the Father.” (John 14:9) Jesus says to the Pharisees, “If God were your Father, you
28 would love me.” (John 8:42) There is only one way into the sheepfold and that is through Jesus.
29 There is only one way to the Father and that is through the Son. There is only one way to know

1 the true God and that is to know the incarnate God – Jesus. We therefore declare nothing except
2 Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

3 This exclusivity is clearly taught not only in the Scriptures but in our Lutheran
4 Confessions. Thus, we read in the *Augsburg Confession*,

5 Whoever knows that in Christ he has a gracious God, truly knows God,
6 calls upon him, and is not, like the heathen, without God. For the devil and the
7 ungodly do not believe this article concerning the forgiveness of sin, and so they
8 are at enmity with God, **cannot call upon him**, and have no hope of receiving
9 good from him. (Tappert, p. 44)

10

11 For the sake of time, I will forego reading fifteen or twenty other quotations from the
12 Confessions which teach this same truth that one cannot know, come to or pray to the true God
13 apart from Jesus. But I would like to share a few choice quotations from a man we all respect –
14 Martin Luther. Listen to him teach about the exclusivity of the Christian faith.

15 On the contrary let everyone see to it that he is certain his worship and service
16 of God has been instituted by God’s word, and not invented by his own pious
17 notions or good intentions. Whoever engages in a form of worship to which God
18 has not borne witness (John 5:31-37; John 8:18) ought to know that **he is serving**
19 **not the true God but an idol** that he has concocted for himself. That is to say, **he**
20 **is serving** his own notions and false ideas, and thereby **the devil himself**; and the
21 words of all the prophets are against him. For the God who would have us
22 establish worship and service of him according to our own choice and
23 inclination—without his commission and word—does not exist. There is only one
24 God, he who through his word has abundantly established and commissioned all
25 the various stations of life and the forms of worship and service in which it is his
26 will to be served. We should abide by this and not turn aside from it either to the
27 right or to the left, doing neither more nor less, making it neither worse nor better.
28 **Otherwise there will be no end of idolatry, and it will be impossible to**
29 **distinguish between true worship and idolatry, since all have the true God in**

1 **mind**, and all use his true Name. To this one and only God be thanks and praise,
2 through Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord blessed forever. Amen. (AE 35, 272-273)

3 Again listen to the words of Luther.

4 It does Jews, Turks, and heretics no good to profess a very great
5 devoutness and to boast against us Christians that they believe in the one
6 God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and also call Him "Father" with
7 intense earnestness. For all that, their worship consists of nothing except
8 futile and useless words with which, against the Second Commandment,
9 they take the name of God in vain and misuse it. Thus Christ tells the
10 Jews in John 8:54: "It is My Father that honoreth Me, of whom ye say that
11 He is your God, yet ye have not known Him." Here you see that they do
12 not know who God is; and when they call Him "Creator" and "God" and
13 "Father," they do not know what they are saying...Therefore they actually
14 have no God, but they misuse the name of "God" in sin and shame and
15 invent their own god and creator, who is supposed to be their father and
16 whose children they profess to be. (*What Luther Says, An Anthology*,
17 compiled by Ewald M. Plass, Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis,
18 Missouri, 1959 vol. II, page 548, #1663.)

19 It has become common in the United States, following a tragic event of some kind, to
20 hold an interfaith worship service. For example, after the 9-11 attacks, an interfaith prayer
21 service was held at a large stadium in New York City. Clergy from various different faiths
22 participated – Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian. The service began with an invocation and
23 ended with a benediction. In between were some of the other elements of a worship service,
24 such as hymns, prayers and a sermon. The expressed intent was to provide people of every faith
25 the opportunity to receive comfort within the context of a single service. The problem, of course,
26 is that such a service declares loudly to the entire world that:

- 27 1. All the religions represented are valid, in fact, equally valid.
- 28 2. There is religious truth to be found in every religion. No religion has an exclusive
29 claim to truth. And

1 3. It is appropriate to place Jesus on the stage with all the other world's gods. He is one
2 of them, but not the only one.

3
4 Since 9-11, other tragedies have occurred and been followed by such interfaith prayer
5 services. The massacre in Newtown is an example. The bombing at the Boston marathon is
6 another. In some of these cases pastors of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have
7 participated, causing a great deal of division within our church body. Some have insisted that we
8 need to be present at such events. Our absence, they say, will testify to our lack of concern.
9 Others, including myself, contend that this is a First Commandment issue. “You shall not have
10 any other gods before me,” or as the Hebrew states, “You shall not have any other gods in my
11 face.” Our God is a jealous God according to Exodus 20. To place Him on the stage with all the
12 other gods, as though He is just one among many, is a flagrant breaking of the First
13 Commandment. In addition, participation in such a service strongly implies that the prayers
14 prayed to false gods will actually be heard. This encourages people to believe that there is hope
15 where there is no hope. When this happens, it is sad. In the midst of sickness, war, destructive
16 natural events such as floods and storms, surrounded by death, Christians have hope. Christians
17 have someone who can truly deliver us in the time of need. To Him we should go and we should
18 encourage people to go nowhere else. Jesus is the door through whom we have access to the
19 Father. To point people in any direction other than to Jesus is to point them to a locked door. It is
20 to point them to another gospel, which is no Gospel.

21 Imagine you are thirty people in a room filling up with a poisonous gas. The room has 12
22 doors. 11 are locked. Those who do not get out quickly will die. You cry out, “Get out one of the
23 doors.” And you run out the one you know to be unlocked, permitting the others to perish. You
24 could be considered a murderer if you acted this way. We simply cannot give people the
25 impression that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. The results of
26 such a message are truly disastrous. But the culture in which we live insists that this must be the
27 message. When Christians cry out, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by
28 which we must be saved,” (Acts 4:12) the world cries out, “There are many names by which we
29 may be saved.”

1 Religious pluralism is not going to go away and the survival of orthodox Christianity
2 hinges upon whether Christians will be led by the Holy Spirit as He speaks in His Word or by
3 Satan’s seductive song. And Satan’s song always points away from Christ. It frequently points
4 toward something called God, but it always points away from Jesus. And it always denies the
5 exclusive claims of Christianity. But to soft-pedal the exclusive nature of Christianity is to be
6 complicit in the damnation of the unbeliever for it is to divert his attention from Him who alone
7 can save. We preach Christ crucified and only Christ crucified. There is no other Gospel.

8 The teaching of the Bible on this subject is very clear. You must be a Christian to go to
9 Heaven. There is no salvation outside the Christian Church. Only through Jesus does anyone
10 have access to the Father; only in Jesus can one find the true God who alone is able to save us.
11 Nobody comes into the church apart from Jesus. Is Christianity therefore an exclusive religion?
12 It says, “Only Christianity! You cannot be a Buddhist; you cannot be a Muslim; you cannot be a
13 Hindu; you cannot be a Mormon; you must be a Christian. Only Christians go to Heaven. All
14 others go to Hell.” Yes, Christianity is an exclusive religion. And to many people that seems
15 negative.

16 But Christianity contains a beautiful paradox. Although it is truly exclusive, it is at the
17 same time the most inclusive religion in the world. Many other religions claim to be inclusive,
18 but by requiring a satisfactory keeping of the law, they effectively exclude everybody.

19 Christianity, on the other hand, although it does indeed offer salvation only to those
20 within Christendom, it excludes no one from Christendom. No one is told, “You may not be a
21 Christian.” No one is told, “You are the wrong color or you speak the wrong language or you are
22 the wrong sex or you are not intelligent enough or even you are not good enough.” Christianity is
23 open to everybody. This is the message that must be proclaimed whenever we talk about the
24 Church’s mission; this has been the message of the Christian Church for the last 2,000 years:
25 God’s grace is universal; it is offered to everyone; it is meant for everyone.

26 St. Paul says, “Through the Gospel, the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members
27 together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 3:6) St.
28 Paul says, “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13) St. Paul
29 says that God, “...wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1
30 Timothy 2:4) And again, “The grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men.”

1 (Titus 2:11) St. Peter says, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should
2 come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:13)

3 God’s grace is universal. That’s why wise men, who were not Jewish, came to Bethlehem
4 (Matthew 2); that’s why Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39); that’s why
5 certain Greeks came to see Jesus (John 12:20 ff.); that’s why St. Paul became an apostle to the
6 Gentiles – because God’s message of grace is meant for everybody. What does Jesus’ Great
7 Commission say? “Go and make disciples of all people.” (Matt. 28:19) Πάντα τα ἔθνη the Greek
8 says – all the peoples. Christianity is not a Western religion; it is not an Eastern religion; it is a
9 faith for all the world, promising mercy and grace to everyone through Jesus the Savior.

10 Jesus says, “Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” John 6:37) Whoever! Now
11 that’s not an exclusive faith at all, is it? And it’s not incorrect to say that we really ought to be
12 excluded. We certainly haven’t done anything to deserve God’s salvation. We know His
13 commandments and we routinely ignore them. We know how we ought to live; we know how we
14 ought to treat other people; we know how eagerly we should be reading and listening to God’s
15 Word and how fervently we should be seeking to serve Him and obey Him in everything He
16 desires – and we know that we don’t even come close to what we should be.

17 Yet, God says, “I do not exclude you. Everything you should have been, my Son has
18 been. Everything you should have done, my Son has done. And He did it for you. My grace
19 covers you; my grace is universal; it’s meant for everybody.”

20 “But,” we think to ourselves, “it’s not just what I haven’t done. It’s what I have done.”
21 Every one of us here today could with total honesty make the confession of the prodigal son and
22 say, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against you and am no longer worthy to be called
23 your child.”

24 But God still says, “I do not exclude you. Whatever sins you have committed, regardless
25 of what they are, have been borne by my Son on the cross. For your sins of lust, selfishness,
26 maliciousness, adultery, murder and even blasphemy – my Son died. He did not die simply for
27 mild sinners; He died for all. He did not die just for some of your sins; He died for all of them –
28 from the time you were born until the time you die, His blood washes you clean from every sin.
29 Therefore, I do not exclude you. There is only one way in which you can be excluded and that is
30 if you do not believe Me when I tell you that I love you, that I sent My Son to die for you, that

1 for His sake I forgive you and that I give the kingdom of Heaven to all who look to Him for
2 salvation. You see, my grace is universal; it's meant for everybody; it's meant for you."

3 God's universal grace – is a theme that ought to be proclaimed by every preacher in every
4 church of every land because there is no human being for whom this message of love and
5 salvation is not meant.

6 How different from some organizations that instruct their members not to reveal the
7 secrets of the order since those secrets are meant for only a select few! When I was at the
8 seminary here in Springfield, preparing for the ministry, I worked at Staab Funeral Home and
9 was often able to observe Masonic funerals. I remember on one occasion approaching one of the
10 Masons present and asking him what was the significance of the white apron he wore around his
11 waist. His answer? There was none; without a word he turned around and walked away. The
12 secrets of the Masonic lodge are not to be revealed to the uninitiated!

13 What a contrast to Christianity which wants the truth of salvation to be proclaimed to all
14 people! Jesus said to His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every
15 creature." (Mark 16:15) All the world should hear the message of God's love and forgiveness in
16 His Son Jesus Christ! All the world should know that although salvation is found in no other, it is
17 most certainly found in Jesus who offers to all who trust in Him forgiveness for all sins, victory
18 over death and Hell, and an eternal life of joy and glory.

19 Paradoxically, this all-inclusive message will only be preserved when we insist on the
20 exclusive claims of Jesus Christ. When Christians become embarrassed about Christianity's
21 exclusivity, when they wish to open up the possibility for salvation also for those who do not
22 believe in Jesus, as Pope Francis has done, they effectively close the door of Heaven to
23 everybody. For if salvation is proclaimed or offered apart from Christ, it is offered as a salvation
24 that can be obtained only by works. And if salvation is to be by works, it cannot be by grace. As
25 St. Paul says, "If it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work." (Rom.
26 11:6)

27 But if salvation is to be by works, we are lost every one of us, which is precisely why
28 God sent His Son into the flesh. It was the only way to redeem us. This Son came; He took our
29 place in keeping the law; he took our place in overcoming all temptation; he took our place in
30 bearing shame and reviling and punishment and suffering and death and all consequences of sin

1 because he became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. This is
2 why we are determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

3 It is the mission of the Church to proclaim this message. It is a message about God's mercy;
4 it is a message primarily about God's forgiveness of the sinner through His Son Jesus Christ.

5 In Jesus and only in Jesus God's mercy was poured out upon us and is always offered to
6 us. Paul says in I Corinthians, "No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid,
7 which is Jesus Christ." There is no other Gospel. Still – many people look to other gods for
8 salvation. And in our country this is happening more and more.

9 It doesn't really make any difference where you're looking, if you're not looking to
10 Christ. When the Children of Israel sinned in the wilderness, God sent snakes as a punishment to
11 bite them. When the people were bitten, they would soon die – but God instructed Moses to set
12 up a snake on a pole and whoever looked upon that snake would live. The people could look
13 wherever they wanted, but only if they looked to the snake would they live. They could choose
14 to look at Moses or at the mountains or at the sun or at their feet. They wouldn't live unless they
15 looked at the snake. And so it is for us. That snake on the pole pointed forward to Jesus.
16 Salvation is found only when we look to Jesus hanging on the cross for us and risen from the
17 grave.

18 You can look to yourselves if you want to, you can look to the charismatic cult leaders, to
19 money, to medicine, to other gods called by other names – it's all the same – it's all idolatry – it
20 will all help you about as much as if you worshipped Odin or Thor – it will all help you about as
21 much as if you took a quarter, put it on the shelf and prayed to it – because In all the world there
22 is only one name given us by which we must be saved – and that is the name of Jesus. He alone
23 took our guilt upon Himself; Mohammed never did it. He alone was nailed to the cross for our
24 sins; Buddha never did it. He alone has taken our place under the law; Joseph Smith never did it.
25 He alone has conquered death through His resurrection; no one else has ever done it. He alone
26 can save us. To look anywhere else for salvation is futile. And that is why we are determined to
27 "Know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

28 On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

29 Most people today find this Christian position a very offensive one. Most people prefer to
30 think, "You have your beliefs, I have mine." But Christianity says, "No, only in Christ."
31 Christianity says, "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter

1 through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”
2 (Matt. 7:13) There is no other name. There is no other Gospel.

3 Only in Christ. Only in Christ did God become man. Only in Christ do we see one who
4 kept God’s law on our behalf. Only upon Christ did the Father pour out His anger at sin. Only in
5 Christ, through His death and resurrection, has Satan been defeated. Only Christ has the power to
6 give eternal life. Only Christ was anointed by the Spirit and sent by the Father to bring this life.
7 Do you see what blasphemy it is to look in hope to another when only Christ has saved us and
8 opened Heaven for us?

9 That’s why St. Paul says, “No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid,
10 which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11) That’s why St. Peter says, “There is no other name
11 under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) That’s why we sing in
12 church, “On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.”ⁱⁱⁱ

13 Christ, the solid Rock, remains always at the center of our confession as Lutherans and as
14 God’s people. With the Son of God at the center, faith will live and grow and the Church’s
15 mission will always be clear: Proclaim Christ – His person, His work – that sinners may be
16 brought to faith, nourished, strengthened, and preserved in that faith unto the end – unto eternal
17 life. There is no other Gospel than this one, the one with Jesus at the center, and with Him at the
18 center, offering hope to the world. And that is why we will continue to, “Know nothing except
19 Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

20 ***THE CHRISTIAN’S CROSS***

21 Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take
22 up his cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) Just as Jesus bore a cross when He came to save
23 us, so we who follow Him also bear a cross. It is not easy to be God’s children. At times we
24 suffer precisely because we are Christians. At other times God gives us crosses to carry because
25 He loves us. In every case, however, He who bore the heaviest cross of all and who has given
26 meaning to all the crosses we bear, promises us that He will never forsake us and that in the most
27 trying times of life His strength will be made perfect in our weakness.

28 Before I continue with my presentation, I would like to address one potential disagreement
29 with what I am going to say today. I have just referred to two kinds of crosses, those we bear
30 because we speak and act as Christians and those God places upon us because He loves us. There
31 are some who would contend that the only true crosses are those that we bear because of our

1 speech and actions as Christians. Thus, for example, Stephen clearly bears a cross when he is
2 stoned and Paul also when he is stoned. But those sufferings that Christians experience that are
3 **not** directly the result of their faithful testimony ought not to be called crosses in the true sense,
4 some would say.

5 I do not wish to argue. Clearly there is a valid and good distinction to be made between the
6 general suffering of Christians and that suffering that is the direct result of their Christian
7 testimony. Perhaps it will be sufficient for our purposes today to speak of the Christian's cross in
8 the narrow sense and in the broad sense. In the narrow sense the Christian's cross is the
9 persecution or suffering he endures as the direct result of his Christian proclamation and life.
10 Paul writes to the Philippians, "It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should
11 not only believe in Him, but also suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29 Peter says, "If you are
12 insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of Glory and of God rests
13 upon you." 1 Peter 4:14 Paul and Peter are referring to the cross in the narrow sense, the
14 sufferings we endure for the sake of Jesus, because we are Christians.

15 In the broad sense the Christian's cross is all the suffering he endures, whether due to
16 God's wise and loving but often impenetrable will for him, or due to his Christian testimony and
17 life. Thus, in the broad sense the cross would include all the persecution or insults or bad
18 treatment we receive simply because we live and speak as Christians and the various other
19 sufferings or trials God, in His wisdom, determines to send to us. In Romans 8 Paul asks, "Who
20 shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine, or
21 nakedness, or danger, or sword?" Romans 8:35 When Paul refers to persecution and the sword,
22 these are references to the cross in the narrow sense but famine and nakedness can also bring
23 great suffering to the Christian and would be seen as the cross in the broad sense. In 2
24 Corinthians, chapter 12 the Apostle Paul talks about the great suffering through which he went.
25 Much of it was because of the message he preached about Christ. He talks about imprisonments
26 and beatings. The cross in the narrow sense. He also talks about shipwrecks and hunger and thirst
27 and cold and exposure. These could be seen as the cross in the broad sense. Hopefully, this
28 distinction will be helpful.

29 But before we continue, one more observation needs to be made. Not all suffering can be
30 labelled as a cross. For example, if a person commits adultery and comes down with a venereal
31 disease, he should not see this as a cross, but as a natural consequence of sinful behavior. If a

1 man gambles away everything he owns because of an obsessive desire to gain what is not his, he
2 should not see his poverty as a cross. Or if a person steals and is sent to prison, he should not sit
3 in his cell and think to himself, what a heavy cross God has sent me. Joseph could do that when
4 he was imprisoned as a result of refusing the advances of Potiphar's wife. But when we violate
5 God's law and experience the natural consequences of our sinful behavior, we should not with
6 hypocrisy talk about the crosses God has sent us.

7 The Apostle Peter writes,

8 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test
9 you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as
10 you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his
11 glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed,
12 because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer
13 as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 1 Peter 4:12-15

14

15 Crosses are sent by God. He placed a cross upon His own Son and He places crosses upon
16 His children here on earth but when sinful behavior results in retribution or evil consequences,
17 these should not be seen as crosses, either in the narrow or the broad sense.

18 Just another note: My presentation will draw occasionally from my book, *Why I Am a*
19 *Lutheran*. Some of you have read my book and I hope you will not mind hearing some of the
20 same thoughts again.

21 The Bible provides many examples of how the faithful suffer. Joseph ends up in prison
22 because he refuses to be seduced by Potiphar's wife. Jeremiah was put in a cistern in a dungeon
23 and was moved from one prison to another for one reason and one reason only – he proclaimed
24 the Word of God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace because,
25 though King Nebuchadnezzar commanded it, they refused to fall down in worship of an idol.
26 Daniel was put into a lion's den because he would not compromise his faith by worshipping
27 King Darius and thus engaging in idolatry. The list goes on and on. Surely the example of the
28 Apostle Paul is one of the most powerful in all of Scripture. From the little evidence we have in
29 the Scriptures, we get the impression that before his conversion to Christianity Paul lived a
30 relatively successful and burden-free life. But in his second epistle to the Corinthians Paul

1 recounts what he went through **after** he became a Christian. I have referred to Paul's sufferings
2 before but I think reading his account in detail is instructive for our purposes today.

3 Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more
4 abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.
5 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was
6 beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; A night and a
7 day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of
8 robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the
9 city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren,
10 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often,
11 in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what come upon me daily: my
12 deep concern for all the churches.

13

14 This bearing of the cross is one of the greatest paradoxes in the life of every Christian – not
15 just in Paul's life. In one of his letters to the Thessalonians St. Paul touches upon this great
16 paradox: For the Christian joy and trouble go hand in hand. Paul writes, "... in spite of severe
17 suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." (1 Thessalonians
18 1:6) Although becoming a Christian brings the greatest joy a human being can experience, God
19 does not promise us an end to trouble and suffering until our term on earth has ended. In fact,
20 Jesus says, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will
21 have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33 Thus, in the midst of
22 tribulation, Christians have joy in the knowledge that through Christ, the final victory is theirs.

23 What greater joy can there be than to know that the heavenly Father Himself loves us, that
24 for the sake of His Son Jesus He forgives us, and that through the power of the Holy Spirit He
25 makes us His children through faith in His Son? What greater joy can there be than to know that
26 the Son of God Himself took away our sin and guilt and shame by making them His own – so
27 that we might stand before God as Holy and righteous and pure? What greater joy can there be
28 than to know that because of what Jesus has done we who believe in Him have been made God's
29 children – and not just children but heirs who will inherit an eternal kingdom of glory? And all
30 this joy comes to us through the cross of Jesus.

1 But this great joy that Christians have is accompanied by sorrow, affliction, tribulation,
2 persecution or trouble. As I said at the very start, Jesus Himself says, “If anyone would come
3 after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) Just as
4 Jesus bore a cross when He came to save us, so we who follow him also bear a cross. This truth
5 is frequently ignored by preachers who promote a “theology of glory,” spouting that those who
6 are faithful enough to God will experience His love and His blessings in proportion to their
7 faithfulness. The measure of one’s faith becomes the key to all the physical blessings we receive
8 in life: if you have enough faith, you will have good health, you will have plenty of money, your
9 endeavors will all succeed and God will give you everything you ask for. God becomes like a
10 grand soda machine in the sky. Just as with a soft drink machine you put in the right amount of
11 money, press the desired button and get your drink, so also you send your prayer skyward and if
12 it is prayed with the right amount of faith, you get what you ask for.

13 This view of God and faith is completely at odds with the testimony of history, our own
14 experience and the words of Scripture. Do people tell you success will come your way and all
15 problems will disappear if your faith is strong enough? Don’t believe them. It’s a lie. Was the
16 faith of the Apostle Paul not strong enough? If the Prosperity Preachers are correct, why the
17 shipwrecks, why the beatings, why the thorn in the flesh? Do the TV preachers tell you that your
18 suffering will go away, your illnesses will go away, your sicknesses will disappear if you will
19 simply place yourselves in the hands of the healers and believe? **Don’t** believe them. It’s a lie.
20 God may indeed heal you or He may not. We pray, “Thy will be done,” not “My will be done.”

21 By the way this gimmick of the faith healers is just that, a gimmick, when they say, “If
22 your faith is strong enough you will be healed.” If you are actually healed, who will take credit
23 for it? Why the faith healer, of course. And if you’re not healed, who gets the blame? You do,
24 right? You didn’t have enough faith. So it’s a case of ‘heads I win; tails you lose.’ And how
25 often did Jesus or his disciples, for that matter, use this gimmick? We never see Jesus, after an
26 attempted healing, say, “Oh, my. It didn’t take. I guess you didn’t have enough faith.” No, when
27 he said, “Get up and walk,” the person got up and walked, and jumped and ran. And so it was
28 also for His disciples.

29 The fact of the matter is that the lack of suffering or the abundance of success has nothing
30 to do with a Christian’s faith. Christians suffer just as much as anybody else. In fact, Jesus makes
31 it clear that suffering will at times be intimately connected with our Christian faith. What does

1 Jesus say will happen to His disciples if they are faithful to Him? “You must be on your guard,”
2 He says. “You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On
3 account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.” (Mark 13:9) And
4 this “promise” was made not only to the twelve disciples, but also to all who wish to follow
5 Jesus. In His *Sermon on the Mount* Jesus says to **all** who were listening, “Blessed are those who
6 are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are **you**
7 when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of
8 me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they
9 persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

10 Just as Jesus bore a cross, we who follow Him will bear a cross precisely because we **do**
11 follow Him. I will never forget the first time this truth became clear to me. I was working on an
12 iron ore boat for U.S. Steel. I was 18 and just out of high school. One day, a few weeks after I
13 started work, I was sitting in the kitchen when Joe, one of the deckhands, entered. He was drunk,
14 mad, and looking for a fight. He was an ex-convict with a reputation of being mean. He saw me,
15 remembered that someone had told him I was going to be a “preacher” and began a vicious
16 verbal attack. He insulted me, my mother, my father, my brothers and sisters, my looks, my
17 abilities and anything else he could think of to insult and all the insults were infused with the
18 most foul and profane language he could muster. When I did not rise to the bait, he began to
19 insult Christianity as a stupid religion. When I continued to remain silent, he attacked
20 specifically my hope in Christ and concluded by saying, “Preacher, when you die, you’re goin’
21 to the same place I’m goin’ and everybody else is goin.’ Six feet under. There ain’t no hell and
22 there ain’t no heaven. You’re goin’ six feet under and that’s where you’re gonna stay!” When it
23 was apparent Joe was done, I said, “Joe, some time when you’re sober, I would be happy to talk
24 to you about any of the things that are on your mind.” Joe just looked at me, turned around and
25 walked out. Joe never did give me the opportunity to talk to him, but the chief cook who had
26 witnessed the whole event took me aside afterward and said, “It took me forty years to learn to
27 do what you just did. Any time you want to talk to me, I will be happy to listen.” The cook and I
28 had frequent talks together after that.

29 A couple of things became clear to me as a result of this episode. First of all, if we live and
30 speak as Christians, we will at times be persecuted, made fun of, ostracized or penalized in some
31 way. If we actually live as Christians, we will bear a cross as Jesus did. And so St. Paul says, “To

1 you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His
2 sake.” (Philippians 1:29) St. Peter says, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery
3 trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice to the extent
4 that you partake of Christ’s sufferings that when His glory is revealed you may also be glad with
5 exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, **blessed** are you for the Spirit of
6 glory and of God rests upon you.” (I Peter 4:12-14)

7 Contrary to the proclamation of the prosperity preachers, when we live as Jesus’ faithful
8 disciples, we will bear a cross, we will suffer for His sake. In fact, contrary to what the
9 Prosperity Preachers proclaim, it is likely that the more faithful we are, the more we will suffer.
10 At the same time, God uses the crosses He sends for our benefit and the benefit of others.
11 Sometimes it is difficult for us to see this, especially when the crosses are not the result of our
12 Christian testimony but are simply placed upon us by God for reasons that are not apparent to us.
13 Not every cross we bear is a result of the way we speak and live as Christians. God frequently
14 places burdens upon us to accomplish His will for us and for others. Sometimes these crosses are
15 particularly difficult for us to accept and to understand.

16 I will never forget a visit I made once to a young man in the hospital named Matthew.
17 Matthew was a member of my congregation when I lived in Colorado Springs, Colorado and He
18 had been diagnosed with leukemia. He was about 18 or 19 years old at the time. Unfortunately,
19 he was allergic to penicillin and therefore the treatment that he would be receiving was
20 experimental. It was not at all sure that he would survive. As Matthew became weaker and
21 weaker and closer to death, I visited him more frequently and each day we talked about what it
22 meant to be a Christian and also what it meant to be a Christian in suffering. One day Matthew
23 told me about an interesting conversation he had had with his doctor. His doctor was one of the
24 most well-known specialists in treating leukemia in the country. And one day he had come to
25 Matthew and told him, “I have something to give you that I believe will help to make you better.
26 I have given this to a number of other patients and they have all recovered. Now I would like to
27 give it you and I believe it will help you. Please take this. It is a Buddhist stone. It has helped all
28 the others I have given it to and now I would like to give it to you.” Well, Matthew took the
29 stone but the next day when the doctor returned, Matthew said to him, “Doctor, I want to thank
30 you for your concern, but I need to return this stone to you. You see, I don’t need it. I have my
31 God. I don’t need this stone.” Matthew’s testimony to his doctor was not particularly eloquent,

1 but what it lacked in eloquence it made up for in courage. Think of it! This doctor had Matthew's
2 life in his hands. Many people would not have risked offending the doctor. But Matthew could
3 not remain silent. He had to speak and make clear his faith even if he risked further suffering.

4 Eventually, Matthew recovered from his illness. I believe he was the first ever to recover
5 from leukemia using the experimental treatment he received. So what was the purpose of the
6 cross God had him bear? Not only was he sick and recovering for about a year. When the
7 university he intended to attend learned about his illness, they revoked his scholarship. What was
8 the purpose of the suffering Matthew went through? Perhaps only this, that since that time God
9 has encouraged many people in their Christian faith through the story of his courage and his
10 testimony. And who knows? Perhaps his witness even had an impact on the doctor. Sometimes
11 we see the results of God's work in our lives. Sometimes we don't.

12 God always has a purpose in the crosses He places upon us. Sometimes the greatest cross is
13 His apparent absence from us. It looks as though He isn't helping us. It seems as though He
14 doesn't hear us. A child runs away from home and the parents ask, "Where is he? Where's
15 Jesus? Why doesn't He help me?" Someone loses his job or has a severe financial setback and
16 he asks, "Where is he? He promised to take care of me and my family. Where is he?" A loved
17 one lies dying in the hospital. The family is helpless to alleviate the suffering or to prevent death
18 and they ask, "Where is he? He's supposed to help me. Where is he?"

19 We are not unbelievers. We believe in Jesus. But this world and what goes on in it,
20 presents us with some pretty severe challenges to our faith. And the world seems to mock us
21 constantly. "Look at you Christians. You think you're so special. You're no different. You get
22 sick and suffer and die just like everybody else. Where is he, this Jesus, you trust in? He said
23 he'd help you. He said, 'Come to me and I'll give you rest.' Where is he? He said he'd come
24 again to judge the world. Where is he?"

25 Many of us look at the world and we think to ourselves, "How could it get much worse?
26 War, famine, plagues, violence, rampant godlessness, paganism and unbelief, earthquakes,
27 floods. Now in our country, an increasing hostility toward Christianity and yes, even suffering
28 for living out one's life as a Christian." We may very well be tempted to ask, "Why does God
29 permit these things? Where is He? A number of years ago I was in Kenya. I learned that about
30 35% of the entire population is HIV infected. In some hospitals 80% of the babies are born HIV
31 infected. I saw an orphanage that housed 17 orphans, many of whose parents died of AIDS. Two

1 of these orphans were sitting outside the mud hut in which all 17 lived. A week earlier I was in
2 southern Sudan where over 2,000,000 people had died during the last 20 years due to civil war. I
3 saw many people missing arms or legs. It seems like everywhere we look, the question begs to
4 be asked, “Where is he?” And sometimes we get confused and sometimes our faith is shaken.

5 And then, when we look at our own lives, it gets even harder. There are days when we feel
6 overwhelmed by the troubles that confront us. Perhaps we live with physical pain that never goes
7 away or we live with emotional pain over failures that haunt us. Or maybe family relationships
8 break down and our hearts break as well, or money problems face us and we begin to lose hope.
9 Perhaps a personal tragedy overtakes us or someone we love very much and we are tempted to
10 become angry or bitter. Or maybe we live under so much stress that we are convinced we won’t be
11 able to handle it any more. Countless situations and events seem to proclaim that life is a lottery.
12 Maybe you’ll be lucky; maybe you won’t. Where is God’s plan? How can there be a plan in the
13 destruction, the injustice and the heartbreak that we can see almost everywhere we look? Every day
14 we are assaulted by temptations to believe that there is no plan, that God does not love us, that He
15 won’t take care of us, that there is no point in hoping anymore.

16 “Dear God,” we cry out, “how can I bear this? Why don’t you help me?” We are in good
17 company when we pray such words. In many of the psalms we hear God’s people crying out to Him
18 in anguished expressions of pain and distress. Can you hear the misery in the Psalmist’s voice?
19 “Lord, why do you cast off my soul? Why do you hide your face from me?” (Psalm 88:14) Can
20 you hear the anguish in the words of Asaph? “How long Lord? Will you be angry forever?” (Psalm
21 79:5) Can you hear the overwhelming distress in another of Asaph’s psalms? “Will the Lord cast
22 off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise
23 failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender
24 mercies?” Ps. 77:7-9

25 How often has a pastor stood at the foot of a hospital bed or in the home of a man or woman
26 whose marriage is dissolving or of parents whose children are leaving the Christian faith or a wife
27 whose husband has died and heard the question, filled with pain, “Pastor, why? Where is God’s
28 love? Where is God’s mercy?”

29 In the first place, you need to know that you are in good company when you cry out in
30 anguish to God. You are in the company of Jacob who wrestled with an angel, seeking God’s
31 blessing when he was returning home and was in great fear of Esau. You are in the company of

1 David who was a fugitive fleeing from Saul and who was undermined by his son Absalom and
2 who frequently called to God out of his misery. You can read about it in his psalms. And finally
3 you are in the company of Jesus who cried out from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you
4 forsaken me?”

5 When you are in distress or you are in suffering and your heart cries out, “Why?”, God
6 hears your cry. And He answers your anguished question. He has already answered your
7 questions in many ways in His Word. St. Paul comforts the Corinthians with these words: “No
8 temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let
9 you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way
10 out so that you can stand up under it.” (I Corinthians 10:12) God does not abandon us. He knows
11 what we are experiencing. In fact, His own Son has experienced what we have. The writer to the
12 Hebrews says about Jesus, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with
13 our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was
14 without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive
15 mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16) Jesus, our high priest,
16 knows and understands our weaknesses. He will hear our prayers and answer us. Or don’t you
17 believe that?

18 Jesus says, “Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will
19 be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks
20 it will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8. These are not empty promises just to give us hope when there is
21 no hope. These are the true words of the Son of God. Of course, He does not give us everything our
22 sinful hearts desire. He knows better than we do what we need and what is best for us. He, after all,
23 is God; we are not. However, life is not luck, it is not random. There is a God who watches over
24 us, who protects us and provides for us. He hears our anguished cries for help; he hears our prayers
25 of need. He loves us; He’s with us. His name is Jesus; He says, “I am with you always, even to the
26 end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

27 We may not always understand the way He answers us, so God sometimes points us to the
28 day when all suffering will end. He reminds us that we are pilgrims here on earth (1 Peter 2:11) who
29 look forward to an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us. (1 Peter 1:4) He reminds us
30 that, “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”
31 (Romans 8:18)

1 But the answer to our suffering as Christians does not just lie in our future salvation. God
2 has a purpose in our suffering here on earth. Sometimes we are actually able to see God's
3 purpose. Frequently we don't see it but God promises us through His apostle Paul that, "all
4 things work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to His
5 purpose." (Romans 8:28) God uses our suffering and weakness to drive us first to a confession of
6 our helplessness before Him – and then to Jesus. For even though we are Christians, our sinful
7 flesh continues to tempt us to believe that we can do without God's grace, without His mercy and
8 without Christ. The devil tempts us constantly to consider what fine people we are and how
9 worthy we are. Yes, he tries to seduce us away from Christ and away from God. So God, because
10 He loves us, shows us our weaknesses and places crosses upon us to bring us once again and
11 daily to cry to Him for mercy. Jesus must always be the answer to all the Christian's questions
12 and prayers. Through crosses He places on those He loves, God assures that His children will
13 never stop looking to Jesus as Savior.

14 One of the greatest temptations we face, and one of the most common, is to see our
15 sufferings or our crosses as punishments. It happens frequently that in the face of trial or trouble,
16 a person will be led to ask, "What did I do to deserve this?" I'm guessing all of you have thought
17 that way at one time or another. "Why is this happening to me? Why is God treating me this
18 way?" Or even, "I don't deserve this! Why is this happening to **Me**? This is absolutely not fair!"

19 Do you want fair? Do you want God to look at you and what you've done and what you've
20 said and what you've thought – and make no mistake, He knows what you have thought – you
21 want Him to look at what you have done and said and thought and been and be fair? Woe is me,
22 if God gives me what I deserve. I don't want fair; I want mercy. And that is what God gives me
23 in His Son. And you know this is true. You don't want what you deserve either. And you are
24 grateful for God's mercy.

25 But if God is merciful, why are these things happening to me? It is not because He is
26 punishing you. Jesus makes this truth clear to His disciples who also labored under the false
27 impression that there was a one to one connection between sin and suffering. In the Gospel of
28 John (John 9:1-5) we are told that as Jesus went along,

29 ...he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who
30 sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his
31 parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be

1 displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent
2 me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the
3 light of the world.” Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with
4 the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of
5 Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home
6 seeing.

7
8 So what was the purpose of the man’s blindness? It was not punishment for sin. It was that
9 God might be glorified. And He was, wasn’t He, through this wonderful work of Jesus that
10 millions have read about and been comforted by since that time. And when you bear crosses, the
11 purpose is the same, whether you see it or not.

12 It is, of course, natural that **we** would see our suffering as punishment. That’s the way life
13 works among us sinners, isn’t it? You do something wrong – you get punished and you suffer. A
14 man robs a bank – he gets put in jail and he suffers. A man is unfaithful to his wife – she
15 divorces him and he suffers. He pays alimony and child support. A child disobeys his parents –
16 he gets spanked or grounded or deprived of something he treasures, and he suffers. In **our minds**
17 we connect suffering with punishment and so it is only natural that we would see the sufferings
18 we go through in life as God’s punishment. But it is not so. Jesus illustrates again in the Gospel
19 of Luke.

20 Luke 13:1-5 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about
21 the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered,
22 “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans
23 because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will
24 all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do
25 you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you,
26 no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

27
28 Jesus makes it clear that there is not a one to one correspondence between sin and
29 suffering. You cannot point at specific suffering in the life of a person and conclude, on that
30 basis, that God is punishing that person for a specific sin. No, suffering comes to us all, and it
31 surely can be connected to the Fall into sin. But one cannot identify it as God’s punishment upon

1 sin. As Jeffrey Hemmer put it in his book, *Man Up*, "...just as good gifts are not a sign of our
2 heavenly Father's extra favor, so disaster is not a sign of His particular wrath against the person
3 it befalls."^{iv}

4 Our Lutheran Confessions put it this way:

5 Scripture explains that Job's afflictions were not imposed on him because of
6 his past misdeeds. So afflictions are not always punishments or signs of wrath.
7 When in the midst of troubles terrified consciences see only God's punishment
8 and wrath, they should not feel that God has rejected them but they should be
9 taught that troubles have other and more important purposes. They should look at
10 these other and more important purposes, that God is doing his alien work in
11 order to do his proper work, as Isaiah teaches in a long sermon in his twenty-
12 eighth chapter... Therefore troubles are not always penalties for certain past
13 deeds, but works of God, intended for our profit, that the power of God might be
14 made more manifest in our weakness.^v

15
16 I would like to suggest that our inclination to look at suffering in life as God's punishment
17 upon us is based on our lack of appreciation for the nature of God's forgiveness through Christ.

18 Do you believe that God has forgiven you? Do you believe that as far as the East is from
19 the West He has removed your transgressions from you? Psalm 103 Do you believe that He was
20 wounded for your transgressions and He was crushed for your iniquities, Is. 53, so that you
21 might not be wounded and you might not be crushed? Or do you believe that Jesus' punishment
22 on the cross was just a show, a mockery, a symbol, and that in spite of His sacrifice, we still need
23 to be punished for our sin? Do you believe that He died in vain and His resurrection means
24 nothing, and we must still pay for our own sin? Do you think that God is still angry with us, in
25 spite of the fact that all of His wrath was directed at His Son Jesus on the cross? This is
26 apparently what the Roman Catholic Church believes as indicated in its doctrine of Purgatory
27 where one makes satisfaction for the temporal penalties incurred by sin. Is this what you believe,
28 not that you would say that it happens in Purgatory, but that it already happens in this life as God
29 punishes us for our sins, sins for which Jesus has already paid, by sending troubles and disasters
30 and sufferings as retribution for our wrongdoing? Is this what you believe?

1 Frequently, the problem in our thinking is that we don't understand how different God's
2 thinking is from ours. In particular, we don't understand how greatly His forgiveness differs
3 from ours. You see, His forgiveness is based on the life and the passion and the death and the
4 resurrection of His Son. It is therefore a perfect and complete forgiveness. Since Jesus' life for us
5 was perfect, God's forgiveness of us is perfect. Since Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His death
6 completely cover our sins, God's forgiveness is complete. He forgives for Jesus' sake and there
7 are therefore no conditions or qualifications to His forgiveness.

8 He does not forgive the way we forgive. You husbands and wives, how often has it
9 happened that your spouse has done something wrong, something that really hurt you, and then
10 he or she apologizes? And you forgive – but not completely. You shove that offense into the
11 back of your mind, and are prepared to trot it out again next time, or a year from now, or twenty
12 years from now. It is part of your arsenal to employ against your spouse sometime in the future
13 when it becomes useful. You ever forgive that way?

14 God doesn't. God never says to us, "I forgive you but I'm still going to damn you for what
15 you have done." God never says, "I forgive you but I am still angry at you." God never says, "I
16 forgive you but next time you are really going to get it." God never says, "I forgive you **but...**"
17 When God forgives, it is a perfect, complete and absolute forgiveness. You see when His Son
18 died on the cross, **all** His anger at sin was poured out upon Him. When John the Baptizer pointed
19 at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," he was
20 describing precisely what Jesus did. He took away the sin of the world. And God does not say,
21 "Yes, He took away the sin of the world, but now I'm going to punish you for it." No! He took it
22 away. He took all your sins away. And how did He do that? He was punished for them Himself.
23 "Cursed is everyone who dies upon a tree," Scripture says. And He died upon a tree, cursed, not
24 for his own sin but for yours and mine. He was cursed, he was punished, in order that we might
25 go free. And if God now says that in spite of what His Son has done, we must still be punished
26 for our sins, then I don't understand the Gospel that I have been preaching for 43 years.

27 But I do understand the Gospel. It meant something when Jesus, on the cross, said, "It is
28 finished." And what Paul says is true when he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to
29 those who are in Christ Jesus." And the crosses we bear are **not** punishment for sin. And they are
30 actually to benefit the sinner, not to punish him. It may not seem that way to us, but that is what
31 God's Word teaches.

1 But, as I pointed out earlier, the crosses Christians bear are sent by God not only for the
2 benefit of the one who bears the cross, but also for the benefit of others. Thus St. Paul says in his
3 Epistle to the Philippians, “I want you to know, brothers, that the things which happened to me
4 have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the
5 whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brothers in
6 the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without
7 fear.” (Philippians 1:12-14) We who are Christians need to remember that we are all together
8 members of one church. We are family – God’s family. What do family members do for each
9 other? They help each other. Thus, the crosses God places on His children provide their
10 Christian brothers and sisters with opportunities to show each other their love. And such acts of
11 love are multiplied in the lives of millions of Christians countless times each day. In his first
12 epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul teaches that we who are Christians are all members of the body
13 of Christ who is the head of the church. He tells us that, “there should be no division in the
14 body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part
15 suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ,
16 and each one of you is a part of it.” (1Corinthians 12:25-27) In his second epistle to the
17 Corinthians he expands on this concept. He calls our heavenly Father,

18 ...the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our troubles, so that we can
19 comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from
20 God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through
21 Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and
22 salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you
23 patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm,
24 because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our
25 comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

26
27 Because we are members of the same body, when one of us suffers we all share in that
28 suffering, when one of us rejoices we all share in the rejoicing. Thus, the crosses God sends us,
29 as well as the joys, are meant for the blessing of the entire family of God. Christians are one
30 family, brothers and sisters in Christ who is our head. As members of the same family, we

1 rejoice in helping one another. Our joy grows when we see how our Lord looks at our works of
2 love for others. Jesus describes what God will say to His people on the Day of Judgment.

3 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by
4 my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation
5 of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty
6 and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I
7 needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in
8 prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord,
9 when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to
10 drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and
11 clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King
12 will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these
13 brothers of mine, you did for me.’ (Matthew 24:34-40)

14

15 Thus, in showing love to other Christians, in helping them bear their crosses, we show our
16 love for Jesus. And in the patient bearing of the crosses God has placed upon us, we become
17 more like Him who bore a cross for all the world and in the bearing of that cross, redeemed us.

18 And here in Jesus is the final and strongest answer to all our questions about the crosses we
19 bear. When we suffer and can see no good in our suffering, no reason in our pain, no purpose in
20 our anguish, the Holy Spirit leads us once more to look to Jesus. Who could have imagined that
21 God could bring such good from such suffering? Surely Jesus’ followers did not think so.
22 Undoubtedly, their thoughts were more along the following lines: “See Him on the cross,
23 suffering and dying. He said He is the Son of God. Surely He can stop this suffering. He can
24 come down off the cross. What good can come of this? Look! Now He dies. It is the end.” Yet
25 out of apparent defeat came victory – victory over sin, death, hell and all that could hurt us.

26 Thus, it is in the cross of Christ Himself that the holiest purpose for all our crosses is
27 revealed. For it was in the cross of Christ that our sins were swallowed up. It was in the cross of
28 Christ that our guilt and shame were covered. It was in the cross of Christ that we were
29 reconciled with God. It is through the cross of Christ that we have been forgiven. And we
30 needed to be forgiven, didn’t we? The Book of Genesis describes us also when it says, “The
31 Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts

1 of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Or do you think that you are an exception
2 when Solomon says, “*there is no man that sinneth not*”? (I Kings 8:46) No, “there is no
3 difference,” Paul says. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). And
4 so in the Augsburg Confession, one of our Lutheran Confessions, we read,

5 Our Churches also teach that since the fall of Adam all men who are
6 propagated according to nature are born in sin. That is to say, they are without
7 fear of God, are without trust in God, and are concupiscent. And this disease of
8 vice or origin is truly sin, which even now damns and brings eternal death on
9 those who are not born again through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

10 Our churches condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that the vice of
11 origin is sin and who obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits by
12 contending that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.^{vi}

13

14 “Behold I was shapen in iniquity,” David says, “and in sin did my mother conceive me”
15 (Psalm 51:5). And our lives have testified over and over again that what David confessed is true
16 also of you and me. And there was no hope for us apart from God and His mercy. There was no
17 earthly solution to the violations against God’s law that you and I had committed and that had
18 earned us His everlasting anger and punishment. There was no way out for you and me apart
19 from Jesus Christ. So He went to the cross and there He washed our sins away and saved us.

20 And now God places crosses upon us. Why? So that He might save us! Yes, He gives us
21 crosses to save us. Not because we earn his favor through the bearing of these crosses. No. Not
22 because through our own suffering we merit His forgiveness. No. He gives us crosses to bear
23 because He knows us. He knows that even though we are His children through faith in Jesus
24 Christ His Son, we are still tempted daily, greatly. We are tempted to greed, we are tempted to
25 envy, we are tempted to slander, we are tempted to sexual sins, we are tempted to hatred, we are
26 tempted to laziness, we’re tempted to bitterness and meanness. But none of these temptations is
27 as dangerous as the one temptation that can separate us from God forever. We are tempted to
28 unbelief. We are tempted to believe that we don’t need God’s forgiveness and mercy. And so
29 because He loves us God places crosses upon us to remind us that we are weak and that we need
30 Him. We do not go from victory to victory. We do not overcome all odds to succeed in every
31 endeavor. We do not climb every mountain and ford every stream. We collapse on the way up

1 the mountains life places in our path. And we turn back in fear from those streams that become
2 raging torrents and threaten to overwhelm us. We are not omniscient; we are not omnipotent. We
3 are human, we are sinful, we are weak and it is of our sinfulness and our weakness that our
4 crosses remind us. Every cross God sends is a reality check to show us our sin and to show us
5 our weakness and to point us again to the only cross that can save us, the cross of Jesus, where
6 our sins were washed away. It is because He loves us that He sends us crosses so that in our need
7 we will constantly look to Him who alone can save us. What does He say to us in the book of
8 Hebrews? “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are
9 rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens.” (Hebrews 12:5-6)

10 And thus the cross of suffering became a sign for all Christians, a sign of God’s love and
11 therefore a sign of salvation and hope and everlasting life. Just as God out of the greatest
12 possible suffering brought the greatest possible good, so will He also out of our crosses cause
13 “all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called
14 according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) “I am the door,” Jesus said. Indeed! He is! He is the
15 door to Paradise. But all who step through that door are carrying crosses as He did. “I am the
16 way,” Jesus said. Indeed! He is! He is the way to the Father and to everlasting life. But the way
17 is walked and the destination is reached by Christians bearing crosses.

18 And while we are on that way he encourages us with His Word. In the first place He
19 assures us through the words of His Apostle Paul, “No temptation has overtaken you except such
20 as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you
21 are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear
22 it.” (I Corinthians 10:13) In the second place, God shows us the context within which all
23 suffering of Christians is to be seen. Through the mouth of His Apostle Peter, He says, “The God
24 of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while,
25 will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever
26 and ever.” (I Peter 5:10-11) This is God’s purpose in the crosses He sends us – to restore us, to
27 make us strong, firm and steadfast.

28 He needs to do this for us because God’s ultimate purpose in sending us crosses is to bring
29 us to Himself for all eternity in Heaven. These troubles and trials are God’s way of sustaining us
30 in the faith until the end. St. Paul encourages us, when undergoing afflictions to keep our vision
31 focused on God’s future for us. And that future goes beyond this world and this life. “Therefore

1 we do not lose heart,” says St. Paul. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is
2 working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the
3 things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are
4 temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor. 4:16-18

5 And so there is one more thing that needs to be said about the crosses Christians bear. They
6 are holy crosses. They are holy in the first place because they are sent by God. They are holy in
7 the second place because they are sent to God’s holy people. In his first epistle the apostle Peter
8 declares to Christians, “...you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual
9 house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus
10 Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5 You are a holy priesthood.

11 Later in the same chapter Peter says to Christians, “...you are a chosen race, a royal
12 priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the
13 excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9 You
14 are a holy nation.

15 In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul says about the Corinthian Christians, “...your
16 body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.” 1 Corinthians 6:19 Your body is a holy temple.

17 You are a holy priesthood, you are a holy nation, you are a holy temple in whom the holy
18 God Himself dwells. In the eyes of God, through Jesus Christ, and through faith in Him, You are
19 holy. Through faith in Jesus everything about you is holy – your person is holy, your life is holy,
20 your crosses are holy crosses.

21 Non-Christians do not bear crosses. But Christians do and their crosses are sanctified by the
22 cross of Christ. This happens through faith. Just as the Christian is justified and seen as holy in
23 the eyes of God through the cross of Jesus, so sufferings become true and holy crosses for the
24 one who has faith in Jesus.

25 Of course, there are differences between the cross of Jesus and that of His followers. The
26 suffering of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the cross of Jesus are an atoning suffering, death and cross.
27 This cannot be said of the crosses of Christians. Also Christ bore His cross without sin.
28 Christians do not. They bear their crosses while complaining, doubting and rebelling.
29 Nevertheless, their crosses are holy through faith in Jesus Christ. They are never holy crosses in
30 and of themselves but only because born by those who have faith in Jesus, just as the Christin is
31 never holy in and of himself but only through the imputation of the merits of Jesus.

ⁱ Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 704.

ⁱ *The Lutheran Hymnary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1935) hymn 81, stanza 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Lutheran Worship*, hymn 368.

^{iv} Hemmer, Jeffrey, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017) p. 227.

^v *The Book of Concord*, Theodore Tappert, ed., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) p. 207. All subsequent references to this edition of the Lutheran Confessions will be abbreviated "Tappert."

^{iv} Tappert, p. 29.

I Peter 5:6-10 Vs. 7 "Casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you." Vs. 9 You experience sufferings experienced by you brotherhood in the world.

Genesis Curse

The curse takes place not simply to punish but also out of love for the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

Hebrews 2:10 The Captain of salvation is "made perfect" through sufferings. Greek?

I Peter 4:12-14 In the fiery trial we partake of Christ's sufferings. Most likely reference to the fact that we are persecuted for righteousness' sake as He was. Again not an atoning suffering.

If Christ is the head how can the body not suffer? The Head has suffered the greatest suffering of mankind. The body of Christ follows the Head – also in suffering.

Whose faith heals the healed? By whose authority are they healed? Heads I win, tails you lose.

Crosses are not punishments. Essay on mental illness.

John16:33