

MINUTES OF THE 18TH CONVENTION OF THE NEBRASKA DISTRICT
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

June 12-13, 2015

Friday Afternoon – June 12, 2015

Convention Opening Worship Service

The 18th Convention of the Nebraska District of The Lutheran—Missouri Synod opened on Friday afternoon, June 12, 2015, beginning at 1:30 p.m. with a communion worship service in the Crystal Ballroom 1-2 of the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska. Rev. Dr. Nabil Nour, Fifth Vice President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, was the preacher. Rev. Nour's text was John 17:15-19. Christians are in the world, not of the world. The world is sad and tragic, full of laws and rules. Christ has redeemed us from our sin and we belong to Him. We are called to go into the world and share the Gospel. The joy of our salvation fills our hearts.

Following the opening worship service, the delegates proceeded to the convention floor in the Diamond Ballroom of the Younes Conference Center.

Credentials Report – Rev. David Palomaki

Nebraska District President Russ Sommerfeld called on Rev. David Palomaki, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, to provide the initial registration report. He reported the presence of 277 voting delegates at the beginning of the convention. Ninety-three advisory delegates and 99 guests have also checked in. He then presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the District policy for funding the District Convention, Synodical Convention, and third year "every member visit" initiative provides for annual assessments to all District congregations according to their communicant membership as reported annually; and

WHEREAS, the District policy also provides that the annual assessments shall be paid ten (10) days prior to the respective convention, and no delegates shall be certified unless his/her congregation's assessment is timely paid; and

WHEREAS, twenty-nine (29) congregations have paid their assessments, but not by the deadline; and

WHEREAS, these congregations have sent delegates to this convention who are otherwise certified, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the convention waive the District policy for the twenty-nine (29) congregations who have paid their assessments and permit these delegates to be certified.

The resolution was MOVED and SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Announcement – Introductions

President Sommerfeld welcomed everyone to the 18th Convention of the Nebraska District of the LCMS. He referred to the change of venue from the past. Special appreciation was expressed to Concordia University, Nebraska for its serving very well in the past as our host. He noted that there was no dissatisfaction that has led to a change in location. He thanked the Kearney Circuit for hosting our opening worship service and for the musicians and Kearney Circuit pastors who led us in worship.

President Sommerfeld introduced special guests: Rev. Dr. Nabil Nour, Fifth Vice President of the LCMS; Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the LCMS; Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, convention keynote speaker; Rev. Eugene Gierke, former President of the Nebraska District, and his wife Linda; members of the Nebraska District Board of Directors; Rev. James Rasmussen, assistant secretary; and Mr. Kermit Brashear, parliamentarian.

Adoption of Convention Agenda and Standing Rules

It was MOVED and SECONDED to adopt the printed agenda with only one emendation: changing “Individual Circuit Caucuses to Elect Circuit Visitors Where Needed” from Friday evening at 9:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. on Friday afternoon. MOTION CARRIED.

President Sommerfeld requested Rev. Roland Jank, Jr., District Secretary, to read the standing rules to the convention delegates. It was MOVED and SECONDED to adopt the standing rules. MOTION CARRIED.

Welcome of New Members of the Synod – Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison

President Sommerfeld introduced and welcomed to the convention Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Harrison shared words of welcome for the new members of Synod since the last convention, including one new congregation received during the triennium – Life Church Lutheran, Lincoln, Nebraska – as well as 22 ministers ordained and 31 ministers commissioned.

Elections Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen, Chairman of the Elections Committee, was introduced. He shared the ground rules that are to be followed in the voting procedure and gave the delegates opportunity to practice using the voting pads.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe, Chairman of the Nominations Committee, was introduced. The following names were presented for District President (page 67 of the *Convention Workbook*):

Rev. James DeLoach

Rev. James Fandrey

Rev. Richard Snow

The Chair closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the District President slate. MOTION CARRIED. Rev. Scott Bruick, convention chaplain, offered a prayer for this election.

Election of District President

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen placed the ballot before the convention for a vote. The vote was taken with the following results:

- Rev. James DeLoach 38%
- Rev. James Fandrey 7%
- Rev. Richard Snow 56% (elected)

Rev. Sommerfeld asked Rev. Richard Snow and his wife, Valorie, to come forward. District President-elect Snow thanked the delegates for their support and then asked for their prayers as he takes on this new responsibility.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for the election of Region A Vice President (page 68 of the *Convention Workbook*). Rev. Dean Hanson had been removed. The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for the election of Region B Vice President (pages 69-70 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for the election of Region C Vice President (pages 70-71 of the *Convention Workbook*). Rev. Richard Snow was removed due to his election as District President. The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for the election of Region D Vice President (page 72 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

Elections Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region A Vice President and Chaplains Michael Meyer and Scott Bruick led us in prayer for this election and for all subsequent Vice President elections. The vote was taken with the following results:

- Rev. Rob Kuefner, Jr. 42%
- Rev. Craig Niemeier 58% (elected)

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region B Vice President. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Scott Bruick	33%	39%
Rev. Bart Fouts	11%	10%
Rev. Scott Porath	46%	51% (elected)
Rev. Charles Schmidt	10%	

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region C Vice President. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Michael Awe	27%	35%
Rev. David Kuhfal	43%	51% (elected)
Rev. Carl Lilienkamp	11%	
Rev. Frank Winter III	19%	14%

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region D Vice President. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Brent Kuhlman	38%	42%
Rev. Patrick Sparling	15%	
Rev. Karl Ziegler	47%	58% (elected)

The results of ranking for the Vice-Presidents were:

1 st Vice President -	Rev. Scott Porath	36%
2 nd Vice President -	Rev. Karl Ziegler	34%
3 rd Vice President -	Rev. Craig Niemeier	19%
4 th Vice President -	Rev. David Kuhfal	12%

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for Circuit Visitors (page 73 of the *Convention Workbook*). It was noted that the Plainview, Wayne, and West Point Circuits would need to caucus to fill out the ballot.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for District Secretary (page 74 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for commissioned minister member on the District Board of Directors (page 75 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for Region A lay member on the District Board of Directors (page 76 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for Region B lay member on the District Board of Directors (pages 77-78 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for Region C lay member on the District Board of Directors (page 79 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for Region D lay member on the District Board of Directors (page 80 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for three ordained ministers for the District Nominations Committee (pages 81-82 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for a commissioned minister for the District Nominations Committee (page 83 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for three lay members for the District Nominations Committee (pages 84-85 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for two ordained ministers for the District Constitution Committee (pages 86-87 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for a commissioned minister for the District Constitution Committee (page 88 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for a lay member for the District Constitution Committee (page 89 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for an ordained minister on the Board of Regents – Concordia University, Nebraska (pages 90-91 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed the nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for a commissioned minister on the Board of Regents – Concordia University, Nebraska (page 92 of the *Convention Workbook*). The President closed

nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented. Later, it was MOVED and SECONDED to open up this ballot. The MOTION CARRIED. Wendy Going McCarty was then added to this ballot. The President then closed the ballot.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for two lay members on the Board of Regents – Concordia University Nebraska (pages 93-94 of the *Convention Workbook*). Wendy Going McCarty was not included since she is a commissioned minister. The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Rev. Michael Awe presented the ballot for a member of the Synod Nominations Committee (pages 95-96 of the *Convention Workbook*). Rev. Keith Grimm was not included. The President closed nominations after there were no floor nominations. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the ballot as presented.

Question and Answer Time with President Harrison

President Sommerfeld introduced Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, the President of the LCMS, to the Convention. President Harrison noted healthy signs in the Synod. Financially, the Synod paid back \$16 million in intrafund borrowing over the past five years. An effort to double its number of career missionaries from 70 to 140 has nearly reached its goal. He encouraged congregations to support missionaries, saying the Synod has the potential to exceed its all-time high of more than 250 missionaries. Domestically, the Synod faces challenges in declining membership. Some of this is related to demographic changes. The Synod needs more outreach to ethnic minorities. On the subject of close communion, President Harrison said congregations should not have bulletin statements that present a set of beliefs and invite nonmembers who hold those beliefs to commune. Instead, he said, guests should be asked to speak to the pastor. Pastors can use pastoral discretion, he said. If churches follow that policy, close communion “largely ceases to be an issue among us,” he said. In regard to other worship practices, he said congregations should keep such elements of the Divine Service such as Confession and Absolution, the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, leaving them “untold freedom” in contemporary worship settings.

Taking questions, he said the Synod is challenged to be loving and still hold fast to Biblical teaching on sexuality as societal attitudes change on such things as homosexuality. The Synod can help congregations with legal questions related to potential government coercion of churches to perform same-sex marriages. He said the Synod is moving toward transitioning from the licensed lay deacon program, preferring the use of Specific Ministry Pastors. In response to a question about a college professor’s adherence to Synod doctrine, he said he intends to “fix” the Synod’s system of dispute resolution in regard to doctrinal issues.

The convention was recessed at 5:49 p.m. after a mealtime prayer by Chaplain Scott Bruick. The Plainview, West Point, and Wayne Circuits were encouraged to caucus to elect a new Circuit Visitor.

CONVENTION MINUTES

Friday Evening – June 12, 2015

Convention Reconvenes

President Sommerfeld called the convention to order at 7:08 p.m.

In the World

A video with this theme was shown to the convention.

President's Report

First Vice President Rev. Richard Snow chaired the convention while President Sommerfeld gave the District President's report. President Sommerfeld began by saying that Holy Baptism is our "passport" into the world. Baptized Christians are under the protection of the Triune God as citizens of God's "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). Today in our society Christians are often viewed as "intolerant" and are vilified for our beliefs. Yet we are called to proclaim Christ to the world and reach out in love to those devastated by sin.

He noted that the Nebraska District ranks 3rd in the LCMS in financial support for the Synod, out of 35 districts. He gave an overview of District ministry efforts, including support for K-12 Lutheran education, college campus ministry, outreach on the Winnebago Indian Reservation and ministry to immigrants. The District also works through partnerships agencies such as the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and Lutheran Family Services.

The president encouraged the delegates to "be like Jesus" in the world, but not to be "of the world." He concluded by showing a video on the church's role in the world. As he prepared to leave office, Rev. Sommerfeld told the delegates, "It has been an honor to serve you for the past 12 years."

Greetings from Concordia University Nebraska – Dr. Brian Friedrich

Rev. Dr. Friedrich thanked Rev. Sommerfeld for his service and welcomed him to the faculty of Concordia University as an assistant professor of theology. To be a faithful Christian institution in the world, but not of it, Concordia seeks to remain Christ-centered. Roughly 23 percent of CUNE's undergraduates are from the Nebraska District. Forty percent of Concordia's students are preparing for full-time church work. The university posted record enrollment of more than 2,300 students in 2014-15, and has more than 20,000 alumni. Dr. Friedrich encouraged the delegates to support the university and to continue to send students to study there.

Not of the World

Another video presentation was given to the convention.

Convention Keynote – Rev. Dr. Brent Smith

President Sommerfeld introduced Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, Nebraska native and international missionary who is now the Executive Director of Mission Development for the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Dr. Smith thanked the Nebraska District for its support of Mission Central, through which his ministry as an international missionary received funding. Referencing Shakespeare’s “Hamlet,” he said that “to be or not to be” in the world is not the question. Jesus sent his followers into the world (John 17:18) to proclaim His salvation. We are not to be on a “community safari” where we merely observe people in trouble in our community, but do nothing to help. John’s gospel calls the people of the church not to be isolationistic, but to interact with the world. “If we are going to circle the wagons, let’s do it around the whole world,” he said. He gave the delegates a handout to discuss at their tables. He used Scripture to show the contrast between Spirit-led qualities and actions “in the world” and sinful behavior that is “of the world.” There are mission opportunities across Nebraska, and Lutherans have much to offer their neighbors. “May the Spirit prompt you to go out of this place into the world with your gifts and talents in your occupations and that powerful word of proclamation,” he said.

In the World

Another video with Nebraska District pastors talking about taking Christ to their community was shown to the convention.

Floor Committee – Rev. Kenton Birtell

Rev. Kenton Birtell, chairman of the Floor Committee, was introduced to the convention. He presented the following resolutions:

Resolution #1.01 [Proposed Resolution #1.05] (Overture #1.07 from *Convention Workbook*) “To Support Operation Barnabas.” The Committee MOVED adoption. MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.02 [Proposed Resolution #1.08] (Late Overture #L1.09) “To Honor Former District President Rev. Eugene Gierke.” The Committee MOVED adoption. MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.03 [Proposed Resolution #1.09] (Late Overture #L1.10) “To Honor District President Rev. Russell Sommerfeld.” The Committee MOVED adoption. MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.04 [Proposed Resolution #1.10] (Late Overture #L1.11) “To Recognize Retiring District Office Staff.” The Committee MOVED adoption. MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.05 [Proposed Resolution #1.01] (Overture #1.01 from *Convention Workbook*) “To Strengthen the Nebraska District Board of Directors.” The Committee MOVED adoption. Discussion ensued. The orders of the day were called.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe presented a revised list of circuit visitors that included these additions: Plainview Circuit - Rev. Terell Huber, Christ, Creighton and Bethlehem, Verdigre; Wayne Circuit - Rev. Harrison Goodman, St. John, Winside and St. Paul, Carroll; and West Point Circuit - Rev. Robert Schilling, St. John, Pender.

Elections Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

The Committee MOVED for ratification of the slate of circuit visitors. MOTION CARRIED.

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for the election of District Secretary. The vote was taken with the following results:

Rev. Brent Kuhlman 49%

Rev. James Rasmussen 51% (elected)

“For All the Saints”

Conference Chaplains Bruick and Meyer read from Revelation 7. Thanks was expressed for those workers in our Nebraska District who have gone before us and are now at rest in the Lord. The list of rostered workers who have died during the last three years was read. We then sang four stanzas of “For All the Saints.” A prayer of thanks to God was offered.

The convention was recessed at 9:41 p.m. until Saturday morning, June 13.

CONVENTION MINUTES

Saturday Morning – June 13, 2015

Convention Reconvenes

President Sommerfeld called the convention to order at 7:50 a.m. Chaplain Bruick led the assembly in prayer for special concerns and for the work of the convention.

Opening Bible Study Study – LCMS Vice President Rev. Nabil Nour

President Sommerfeld introduced LCMS Fifth-Vice President Rev. Nabil Nour from Armour, South Dakota. Teaching from Matthew 16:13-28, Rev. Nour posed the question, “Who is Jesus?” That is the key question everyone must answer. Jesus called himself the Son of Man. He was human. Peter confessed that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He is both God and man. To make this same confession, we need the Holy Spirit to first reveal the truth to our hearts and minds. The gospel of grace doesn’t make sense to us otherwise. Jesus said to Peter, “On this rock, I will build my church.” (v. 18) The rock is Peter’s faith in Jesus. In response to God’s grace, we are called by Jesus to be willing to die for our faith.

Credentials Report – Rev. David Palomaki

Rev. David Palomaki reported 332 voting delegates, 94 advisory delegates, and 112 guests and staff had checked in. The total attendance at the convention was 538. This report was received with approval by the assembly.

Approval of Minutes – Rev. Terell Huber

Rev. Terell Huber, Chairman of the Minutes Committee, reported his Committee’s review of the Convention Minutes from Friday, June 12. After a thorough review, a few minor items were suggested to be added for a complete record. The Committee then found the minutes to be an accurate record of convention proceedings. A motion was MOVED and SECONDED to approve those minutes. MOTION CARRIED.

Introduction of Exhibitors

President Sommerfeld introduced exhibitors for the convention: American Church Group of Iowa and Nebraska; Camp Luther; Concordia Plan Services; Concordia Publishing House; Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne; Concordia University Nebraska; Grace Place Wellness Ministries; Lutheran Church Extension Fund; The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; LCMS Foundation and Gift Planning; Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska; Lutheran Heritage Foundation; Lutheran Laymen’s League of Nebraska; Lutherans For Life; Nebraska North and South LWML Districts; Mission of Christ Network; Nebraska District LCMS; Orphan Grain Train; Phil’s Friends; Service Corps of Lutheran Business Executives; and Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat. They were welcomed and thanked.

Convention Keynote – Rev. Dr. Brent Smith

Chaplain Meyer prayed for Rev. Dr. Brent Smith before he began his presentation. Dr. Smith said the church should seek to spread the gospel in every town in Nebraska. There are 529 incorporated townships in Nebraska and 247 LCMS congregations. By planting more churches, we can increase the harvest of believers for eternity with Christ. He noted that the Synod in its history has frequently changed methodologies but has preserved its theology. He said we should be open to considering new methods to reach people, such as employing ordained deacons and bi-vocational church workers. He showed the delegates a mapping program they could use to identify new people and non-Christians in their neighborhoods to target outreach.

Not of the World

Another video clip was shown to the convention.

Elections Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region A lay member of the Board of Directors. Convention Chaplain Bruick led the convention in prayer. The vote was taken with the following results:

Jim Conner	68% (elected)
Jim Hersh	32%

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Region B lay member of the Board of Directors. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>
Randall Klein	8%			
Dave Knorr	31%	42%	48%	58% (elected)
Mick Onnen	29%	34%	40%	42%
Elroy Reetz	18%	15%	12%	
Dick Rockenbach	14%	10%		

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for the election of Region C lay member on the Board of Directors. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Paul Meyer	30%	43%
Doug Trampe	27%	
Virginia Von Seggern	43%	57% (elected)

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for the election of Region D lay member on the Board of Directors. The vote was taken with the following results:

Louis Riva	48%
Steve Trusty	52% (elected)

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for the election of Area I (Regions A & B) commissioned minister on the Board of Directors. The vote was taken with the following results:

Rhonda Burk	54%
Andrew Rohwer	46%

The President ruled this vote be voided. Because of voter error in the use of the keypads, a revote was taken.

Rhonda Burk	54% (elected)
Andrew Rohwer	46%

Floor Committee—Rev. Kenton Birtell

Proposed Resolution #1.01 was again brought to the floor. Discussion continued. An amendment was proposed and seconded to change “voting” in line 34 to “non-voting advisory.” After much discussion, the amendment was brought to a vote. AMENDMENT PASSED. The AMENDED MOTION passed.

Nebraska Church Planting Team – Rev. Dr. Mark Hannemann

The President introduced Rev. Dr. Mark Hannemann, Divine Shepherd, Omaha, who is chairman of the Nebraska Church Planting Team. Dr. Hannemann introduced a video outlining the work of the team. The team is encouraging the planting of new churches in the district. 156 million Americans are unchurched, according to Barna Group. The LCMS was planting churches at a rate as high as 3.5 churches per day in the 1950s.

Treasurer’s Report – Paul Pettit

The President introduced our long-time Nebraska District Treasurer, Paul Pettit, to the convention. The District Treasurer reported on the District’s financial position, including (as of the fiscal year ended 1-31-15) total assets of \$10,175,808 and liabilities of \$739,045. Revenues for the fiscal year totaled \$3,739,503. Expenses totaled \$3,658,538. The total change in net assets totaled \$702,187. Undesignated support to be sent by the District to the Synod for the 2016 fiscal year totals \$1 million, the same as in fiscal 2015.

New President’s Acceptance Address

The President introduced Nebraska District President-elect Rev. Richard Snow. Rev. Snow said he was humbled, honored, intimidated and overwhelmed by the call to serve as District President, and excited to be part of the Lord’s work. He said it will be difficult to leave his work as pastor of St. John, Battle Creek. Like Isaiah, he said, he is “a man of unclean lips” among “a people of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6). Nevertheless, God called Isaiah, saying “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah responded, “Here am I, send me!” Pastor Snow acknowledged challenges such as declining church membership. But in the midst of those challenges, Christ is present among us in Word and Sacrament. He cleanses us by His blood, shed on the cross. He is there as we care for one another and serve our communities. The Synod’s theme of “Mercy, Witness, Life Together” calls us to strengthen one another in Word and Sacrament and look for ways to meet the needs of our communities and strengthen families in the faith. Rev. Snow concluded, “I hope you will join me in saying, ‘Here am I. Send me!’ ”

Convention Chaplains Bruick and Meyer led the convention in a table prayer and in a prayer for special concerns.

The convention was recessed at 11:37 a.m.

CONVENTION MINUTES

Saturday Afternoon – June 13, 2015

Convention Reconvenes

President Sommerfeld called the convention to order at 1:06 p.m. He announced the results of the Advisory Ordained Minister caucus to select a representative to the next Synodical Convention: Rev. Norman Porath, Rev. Harold King (alternate). Not announced but reported were the results of the advisory commissioned minister caucus. Selected as representatives to the next Synodical Convention were: Judy Bartels, William Leech, Steve Stortz, and Harlan Anson. Alternates chosen were Bruce Wall and Wendy Heider. Chaplain Meyer then led the convention in prayer for special concerns and the final session of this convention.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe indicated that Rev. Paul Beyer was removed from the ballot for District Nominations Committee Ordained Minister due to his election as circuit visitor.

Election Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for the election of three ordained ministers for the District Nominations Committee. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>		
Rev. Michael Awe	47%	53% (elected)		
Rev. Jeff Bloom	16%	14%		
Rev. Bart Fouts	8%	7%		
Rev. Andrew Kennell	12%	14%		
Rev. Robert Kuefner, Jr.	11%	12%		
Rev. Carl Lilienkamp	6%			

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>
Rev. Jeff Bloom	29%	35%	50%	58% (elected)
Rev. Bart Fouts	20%	22%	21%	
Rev. Andrew Kennell	18%	15%		
Rev. Robert Kuefner, Jr.	24%	28%	29%	42%
Rev. Carl Lilienkamp	8%			

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Bart Fouts	22%	17%
Rev. Andrew Kennell	30%	30%
Rev. Robert Kuefner, Jr.	41%	53% (elected)
Rev. Carl Lilienkamp	7%	

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for District Nominations Committee Commissioned Minister. The vote was taken with the following results:

Linda Ahrens	60% (elected)
Andrew Rohwer	40%

Nominating Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe indicated that Dave Knorr was removed from the ballot due to his election to another position.

Elections Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for lay member of the District Nominations Committee. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Kim Cornett	27%	33%	31%
Mick Onnen	31%	40%	53% (elected)
Ron Rathe	12%	8%	
Glenn Van Velson	19%	19%	16%
Burnell Von Seggern	11%		

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Kim Cornett	46%	59% (elected)
Ron Rathe	14%	10%
Glenn Van Velson	29%	31%
Burnell Von Seggern	11%	

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Ron Rathe	25%	18%
Glenn Van Velson	50%	59% (elected)
Burnell Von Seggern	25%	23%

In the World

Another video was shared with the convention.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe presented the current ballot for District Constitution Committee with these names dropped off because of election to other positions: Rev. Christopher Asbury, Rev. Terell Huber, Rev. Robert Kuefner, Jr., Rev. James Rasmussen, and Rev. Charles Schmidt. This leaves only two names on the ballot: Rev. Bart Fouts and Rev. Andrew Kennell.

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to reopen the ballot for nominations. The MOTION CARRIED. The name of Rev. Terry Makelin was then added by floor nomination. The motion to close the ballot was then made. The MOTION CARRIED.

Nebraska Rural Ministry Team – Rev. Aaron Witt

The President introduced Rev. Aaron Witt, chairman of the Nebraska Rural Ministry Team. Rev. Witt presented three myths about rural and small town ministry: 1. It's easy. 2. There's no "real ministry" to be done. 3. Such congregations are stepping stones, not destinations. Debunking Myth 1, he said pastors in small and rural communities take on many responsibilities and work long hours. On Myth 2, there is real ministry to be done, as shown by the fact that statistics show many unchurched in rural areas. And on Myth 3, many benefits can result when small-town ministry is made a destination and not a stepping stone. The team is encouraging and equipping pastors and lay leaders for small town and rural ministry. Plans include mentoring of pastors and helping organize events in which congregations engage their small communities.

Floor Committee – Rev. Kenton Birtell

Resolution #1.06 [Proposed Resolution #1.02] (Overture #1.02 from Workbook). "To Amend Synod Bylaw 3.2.4.1." The Committee MOVED adoption. The MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.07 [Proposed Resolution #1.03] (Overtures #1.04 and 1.05 from Workbook). "To Submit Mission and Ministry Emphases to the Synodical Convention." The Committee MOVED adoption. The following friendly amendment altering the Resolution was accepted by the Floor Committee: In line 9 add the words "of Jesus Christ" after the word "Gospel" and in line 15 add the words "of Jesus Christ" after the word "Gospel." The MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution #1.08 [Proposed Resolution #1.04] (Overture #1.06 from Workbook). "To Encourage Additional Education Training for Pastors." The Committee MOVED adoption. The MOTION FAILED.

The Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe reminded the convention of the three names currently on the ballot for the District Constitution Committee: Rev. Bart Fouts, Rev. Andrew Kennell, and Rev. Terry Makelin.

Election Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for District Constitution Committee ordained ministers. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Bart Fouts	44%	58% (elected)
Rev. Andrew Kennell	33%	42%
Rev. Terry Makelin	22%	
Rev. Andrew Kennell	74% (elected)	
Rev. Terry Makelin	26%	

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for District Constitution Committee commissioned minister. The vote was taken with the following results:

Stan Fehlhafer	35%
Stuart Tietz	65% (elected)

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for District Constitution Committee lay member. The vote was taken with the following results:

Richard Kreutzer	54% (elected)
William Kuester	26%
Paul Schudel	20%

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Board of Regents – Concordia University Nebraska ordained minister. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Rev. Eugene Gierke	44%	52% (elected)
Rev. Justin Hannemann	10%	8%
Rev. Lonnie Jacobsen	9%	
Rev. Joshua Lowe	26%	31%
Rev. John Nelson	11%	9%

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Board of Regents – Concordia University Nebraska commissioned minister. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Krista Barnhouse	39%	54% (elected)
Scott Ernstmeyer	26%	26%
James Knoepfel	21%	21%
Wendy Going McCarty	13%	

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Board of Regents – Concordia University Nebraska lay member. The vote was taken with the following results:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Ryan Burger	30%	37%	41%
Kurt Grote	16%		
Lyle Middendorf	26%	26%	
Andrew Stadler	28%	38%	59% (elected)
Ryan Burger	51% (elected)		
Kurt Grote	12%		
Lyle Middendorf	37%		

Nominations Committee – Rev. Michael Awe

Rev. Michael Awe announced that Linda Ahrens, Rev. Bart Fouts and Rev. Keith Grimm are not on the ballot for Synod Nominations Committee. Linda Ahrens and Rev. Bart Fouts were elected to other positions, while Rev. Keith Grimm has left our District.

Election Committee – Rev. Jonathan Rathjen

Rev. Jonathan Rathjen presented the ballot for Synod Nominations Committee. The vote was taken with the following results:

Rev. Russell Sommerfeld	69% (elected)
Mr. Bruce Wall	19%
Mr. Donald Weber	12%

Installation of Officers

The Rev. Nabil Nour, the LCMS Fifth Vice President, led a service of installation for those newly elected with the exception of the newly elected Presidium, which will be done at a later time. President Sommerfeld thanked Rev. Nour for his teaching and preaching among us.

Thanks and Recognition

Thanks were expressed to our convention chaplains, to those pastors who appeared in the video clips, to the host congregations from the Kearney Circuits – Grace, Pleasanton; Faith, Hazard; Holy Cross, Kearney; and Zion, Kearney – to the pastors and musicians from those congregations who served at our opening worship services, to Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, the technicians who served us, the District staff – especially Nichole Hetz, Kim Hofer, Candi Menze – Kermit Brashear, our parliamentarian; Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr., our District Secretary; and Rev. James Rasmussen, our Assistant Secretary. Thanks was expressed to all those who have served the Nebraska District in elected positions and are leaving office.

Minutes Review Committee – Rev. Terell Huber

Rev. Terell Huber reported that time did not allow a review of this morning's minutes. Such a review will now become the responsibility of the District Board of Directors. He and his committee were thanked by the Convention.

Credentials Report – Rev. David Palomaki

Rev. David Palomaki gave the final registration statistics. He reported 332 voting delegates, 97 advisory delegates, and 112 guests for a total of 541 in attendance. A motion was made and seconded to accept this report and thank the Credentials Committee. The MOTION PASSED.

Closing Remarks

President Sommerfeld closed with words from Philippians chapter 1 and thanked the delegates for their efforts.

Not of the World

A final video carrying out the Convention theme was shown.

Adjournment

President Sommerfeld adjourned the convention at 3:06 p.m. after pronouncing the benediction on the delegates.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr., Secretary

Rev. James Rasmussen, Assistant Secretary