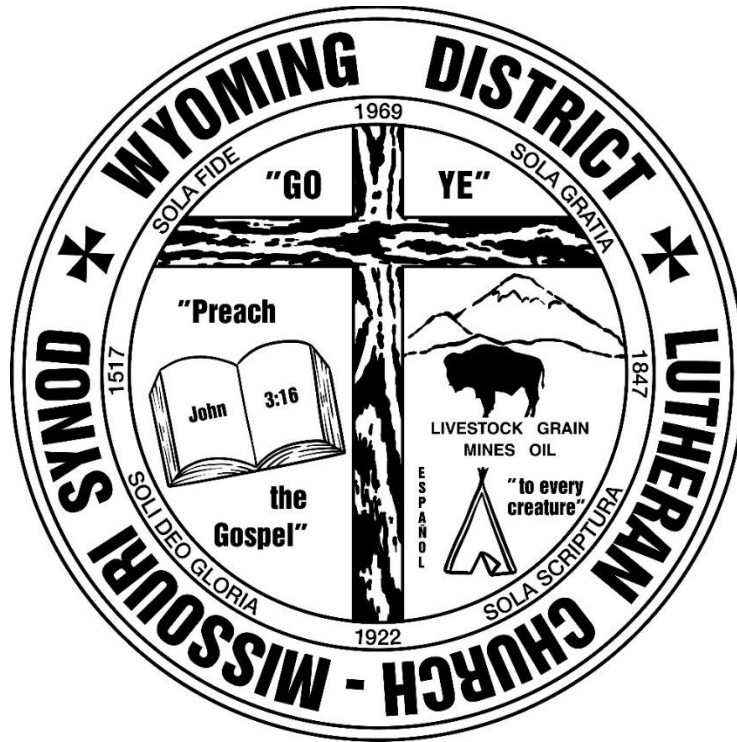


21st Convention
WYOMING DISTRICT

of the

LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

“Spiritual Warfare”



2025 CONVENTION WORKBOOK

May 1-3, 2025

Lutheran Ministries Center
2400 Hickory Street
Casper, WY 82604
307-265-9000

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CONVENTION AGENDA

Thursday, May 1

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Registration and Opening Hearings (9:30am-11:00am)
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Opening Worship: Rev. Paul Cain, 1 st Vice President
1:00 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Formal Opening; Credentials Report
1:05 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Announcements
1:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Conference Business
1:25 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.	Elections Committee
1:35 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.	State of the District: President John E. Hill
1:55 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Greetings
2:15 p.m. - 2:25 p.m.	Nominations Committee
2:25 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.	Elections Committee
2:35 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Anniversary & Service Awards: Rev. Ted Bourret
2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Caucus–District Regions; Advisory–Ordained
3:00 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.	Break
3:20 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Elections Committee
3:30 p.m. - 4:25 p.m.	President’s Report (Essay): President John E. Hill
4:25 p.m. - 4:35 p.m.	Elections Committee
4:35 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.	Conference Business and Announcements
4:45 p.m. - 4:55 p.m.	Closing Prayer: Rev. David Bott, Chairman, CCS
4:55 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Dinner and Worship Preparation
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Worship Service {Rev. Jonathan Lange, Preacher} Trinity Lutheran Church, 1240 S. Missouri, Casper

Friday, May 2

8:00 a.m. - 8:05 a.m.	Call to Order, Announcements
8:05 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Opening Devotion: Rev. Ted Bourret, 3 rd Vice President
8:30 a.m. - 8:40 a.m.	Elections Committee
8:40 a.m. - 9:05 a.m.	Resolutions Committee
9:05 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	Elections Committee
9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Synod Report I: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS President
10:00 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.	Break
10:20 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Synod Report II (with Q and A): Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS President

11:00 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.	Essay I with Q and A: Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau
11:55 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Announcements
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.	Opening Devotion: Rev. Travis Sherman, Chairman, CMS
1:40 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Essay II with Q and A: Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau
2:35 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.	Resolutions Committee
2:55 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Unfinished Business
3:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Break
3:20 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Essay III with Q and A: Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau
4:15 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.	Minutes Review Committee Reports
4:25 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.	Treasurer’s Report: Mr. John Schmall
4:35 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	LCEF Vice-President’s Report: Mr. Jeffrey Snyder
4:45 p.m. – 5:10 p.m.	Resolutions Committee
5:10 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Announcements
5:15 p.m. – 5:35 p.m.	Closing Devotion: Rev. Darrell Debowey, District Secretary
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Banquet, Fellowship, and Meeting with Synod and District Officers

Saturday, May 3

8:00 a.m. – 8:05 a.m.	Call to Order and Announcements
8:05 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Memorial Service: Rev. Marvin Temme
8:30 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.	Resolutions Committee
9:50 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	District Administrative Team (DAT) Report and Ingathering
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Commission on Congregational Services (CCS) Report
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Commission on Mission Services (CMS) Report
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Resolutions Committee
11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Unfinished Business
11:30 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.	Closing of Convention: Matins and Installation of Officers Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS President
12:10 p.m.	Adjourn and Formal Convention Closing

CONVENTION RULES

1. The Chair shall see that the agenda is followed as closely as possible.
2. Each member of the Convention, when recognized by the Chair, shall state his name.
3. Each speaker from the floor and from the Resolutions Committee is encouraged to be **brief**. (Synod's Convention has a 2-minute rule)
4. If a substitute motion is offered, the Convention shall first decide, by majority vote without debate, whether to consider the substitute or not. If the decision is in the affirmative and the substitute motion is subsequently adopted, the original motion fails; if the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or to adopt, the original motion is again before the house. (This is the so-called 'Behnken rule' for dealing with substitute motions.)
5. Questions of privilege shall be addressed in writing to the chair, or its appointee, instead of consuming Convention time.
6. Resolutions prepared by the floor committee which are not acted upon by the Convention before adjournment die. The subject matter may be reintroduced at the next Convention by means of an overture.
7. The preface, preamble, and whereas sections shall be considered an integral part of the resolution or overture, and as such subject to the same serious consideration and adoption in all its parts as the main motion itself.
8. Unless covered by the above, parliamentary procedure shall be governed by the most recent edition of **Robert's Rules of Order**.
9. Only substantive amendments to a resolution shall be offered from the floor (those impacting its purpose or effect). Any editorial corrections or non-substantive changes to introduced resolutions should instead be shared in writing with the Secretary. Until a resolution is presented to the delegates, any such changes should be suggested directly to the floor committee chair.
10. Since we are a small District (family) we have always been as informal as possible.
11. Christian love and courtesy dictate.

Practical Pointers on Parliamentary Procedure

The motions or points listed below, 1 through 9, are in order of precedence.

In other words:

- A. When any one of them is pending, you cannot introduce one that is listed below it.
- B. You can introduce one that is listed above it.

I want to:	You say:	Can you interrupt a speaker to make this motion?	Is a second necessary?	Is the motion debatable?	Can this motion be amended?	Is a vote required?
Adjourn	I move we adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority Vote required
Recess	I move we recess until...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority Vote required
Register a complaint	Point of Privilege, Mr. Chairman...	Yes	No	No (any resulting motion is debatable)	No	No vote required (Chair decides)
Suspend further consideration of a matter (to table)	I move we table this matter	No	Yes	No	No	Majority Vote required
End discussion or further debating of matter	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
Postpone consideration of a matter	I move we postpone this matter until...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
Have further study on a matter	I move we refer this matter to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Vote required
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended to read...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Vote required
Introduce a matter of business (A primary motion)	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required

These are general points, proposals, and motions that have no order of precedence over one another. You may introduce any one of them at any time, except:

- A. When a motion to adjourn is pending
- B. When a motion to recess is pending
- C. Point of privilege is pending

I want to:	You say:	Can the speaker be interrupted to make this motion?	Is a second required?	Is the motion debatable?	Can this motion be amended?	Is a vote required? What percent required?
Object to error in procedure or to a personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	No vote required; Chair votes
Request for information	Point of information	If urgent and to the point	No	No	No	No vote required
Verify Voice Vote by taking actual count	I call for a division of the house	No, but division must be called by the Chair before	No	No	No	No, unless someone objects then majority required
Object to consideration of a matter you consider improper or undiplomatic	I object to consideration of this question	Yes	No	No	No	Two-thirds vote required against consideration
Take up a matter which has been previously tabled	I move we take from the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority vote required
Reconsider something already disposed of	I move we reconsider our action relative to...	Yes, but for record only (business at hand takes precedence)	Yes	Yes, IF original motion was debatable	No	Majority vote required
Consider something out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
Vote on a ruling of the chair	I appeal the Chair's decision	Yes	Yes	Yes, IF original motion was debatable	No	Majority vote required

CONVENTION PERSONNEL

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN

Rev. John Hill, President
Wyoming District - LCMS

CONVENTION MANAGER

Mr. Jeff Snyder, Casper

CONVENTION PAGES

Mr. David Preus, Casper
Mr. Bridger Allred, Casper
Mr. Noah Waterbury, Casper

CONVENTION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Rev. John Hill, Casper
Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston
Rev. Darrell Debowey, Laramie
Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan
Rev. Ted Bourret, Potter
Mr. Jeff Snyder, Casper

REGISTRATION AND CREDENTIALS

Mrs. Tiffany Hoff, Casper
Rev. Darrell Debowey, Laramie

HOST CONGREGATION

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
1240 S. Missouri
Casper, WY 82609
Rev. Jon C. Olson

SYNODICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

CONVENTION PARLIAMENTARIAN

Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy, President
Concordia University System

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan
Rev. Jeffery Grams, Scottsbluff
Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Rawlins
Rev. Jacob Benson, Lovell
Mr. Nevin Lawrence, Torrington
Mr. Chance Hall, Bridgeport
Mr. Brian Joachim, Green River
Mr. Jerry Goetsch, Cheyenne
Mr. Nathanael Hahn, Casper

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Dan Holthus, Casper
Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, Lusk
Rev. Travis Sherman, Gordon
Mr. Ken Steffens, Sidney
Mr. Landis Benson, Worland

REVIEW COMMITTEE #1

BOD/PASTORS CONFERENCE MINUTES

Rev. Travis Berg, Lander
Rev. Zachary Viggers, Gillette
Mr. Joe Cook, Casper
Mr. Richard Scott, Worland

REVIEW COMMITTEE #2

CMS/CCS MINUTES

Rev. John Preus, Cheyenne
Rev. Allan Wierschke, Hay Springs
Mr. Gregory Schmall, Bayard
Mr. Dylan Ohman, Laramie

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Richard Neugebauer, Gering
Rev. Jonathan Durkopp, Douglas
Mr. Bob Berry, Cody
Mr. Ben Backus, Scottsbluff

THE WYOMING DISTRICT

DISTRICT STAFF

Rev. John Hill, District President
Mr. Jeff Snyder, Business Manager/LCEF VP
Mrs. Tiffany Hoff, Executive Assistant

HONORARY DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

Rev. Richard Boche, Cheyenne
Rev. Dr. Ron Garwood, Cody

CONGREGATIONS

60 Member Congregations
1 Campus Congregation
6,703 Communicant Members
8,349 Baptized Members

ROSTERED MEMBERS

48 Active Pastors
27 Emeritus Pastors
0 Candidate Pastors
8 Active Commissioned
12 Candidate Commissioned
6 Emeritus Commissioned

SCHOOLS

6 Preschools (4 standalone)
5 K thru 8th grade
2 High Schools

WYOMING DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rev. John Hill, Casper	President
Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan	First Vice-President
Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston	Second Vice-President
Rev. Ted Bourret, Potter	Third Vice-President
Rev. Darrell Debowey, Laramie	Secretary
Mr. John Schmall, Scottsbluff	Treasurer
Rev. Kenneth Mars, Cody	Pastor-at-large
Mr. Steve Coniglio, Riverton	Commissioned Member
Mr. Blake Pieper, Hay Springs	Lay Member

CIRCUIT VISITORS

Rev. Richard Neugebauer, Gering	Chimney Rock Circuit
Rev. Scott Firminhac, Torrington	Pine Ridge Circuit
Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper	Powder River Circuit
Rev. Jared Korb, Worland	Yellowstone Circuit
Rev. Daniel Mulholland, Fort Bridger	Headwaters Circuit
Rev. Joshua Scheer, Cheyenne	High Plains Circuit

COMMISSION ON MISSION SERVICES

Rev. Travis Sherman, Gordon	Chairman
Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Rawlins	Chairman-Elect
Mr. Chuck Hall, Cheyenne	Campus Missions

Mr. Larry Rice, Glenrock
Mrs. Terri Denniston, Torrington
Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Rawlins
Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan

Ethnic Missions
LWML District President
Missions Support
CMS Advisor

COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

Rev. David Bott, Jackson
Vacant
Mr. Josh Witkop, Casper
Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper
Mr. Jeff Snyder, Casper
Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston
Rev. Joshua Scheer, Cheyenne
Rev. Richard Mueller, Alliance
Rev. Zachary Viggers, Gillette
Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston

Chairman
Chairman-Elect
Adult Ministry/Leadership
Evangelism
LCEF
Marriage, Life, & Family
Stewardship
Student Aid & Recruitment
Youth/Outdoor Ministry
CCS Advisor

DISTRICT RECONCILERS

Rev. Kenneth Mars, Cody
Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper
Mr. Ronald Mischnick, Alliance
Mr. Kyle Rice, Casper

MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Mr. Ken Temme, Casper
Mrs. Tera Rice, Glenrock
Rev. John Hill, Casper

ARCHIVIST

Mrs. Tera Rice, Glenrock

DISTRICT LEGAL CONSULTANT

Mr. Larry Harrington, Casper (outgoing)

CONSTITUTIONS CHAIRMAN

Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston

MINISTERIAL GROWTH AND SUPPORT (CONTINUING EDUCATION)

Rev. Mark Mumme, Laramie

ROSTER OF VOTING LAY DELEGATES

CONGREGATION

LAY DELEGATE

ALTERNATE LAY DELEGATE

Chimney Rock Circuit #1

Mount Calvary, Bayard**	Gregory Schmall	John Schmall
St. Paul's, Bridgeport	Chance Hall	
Zion, Chappell**	Brayden Neustel	
Faith, Gering	Keegan Harkins	Mike Sindt
Salem, Gurley**	<i>See St. Paul's, Potter</i>	
St. Paul's, Potter**	Robert Hilpert	Stephen Geu
St. James, Scottsbluff**	<i>See Mt. Calvary, Bayard</i>	
St. John's, Scottsbluff	Ben Backus	
St. Paul's, Sidney**	<i>See St. Paul's, Potter</i>	
Trinity, Sidney**	<i>See Zion, Chappell</i>	

Pine Ridge Circuit #2

Immanuel, Alliance	Ronald Brown	Timothy Narjes
Our Savior's, Chadron**	<i>See Grace, Gordon</i>	
Bethlehem, Crawford**	Edward (Buzz) Tollman	Gary Witt
Grace, Gordon	Barb Schaer	Ben Schaer
Redeemer, Harrison**	<i>See Bethlehem, Crawford</i>	
Zion, Hay Springs**	<i>See St. Paul, Rushville</i>	
St. Paul's, Lusk		
Trinity, Morrill**	<i>See Our Savior, Torrington</i>	
Our Savior, Torrington**	Nevin Lawrence	Rick Arntt
St. Paul, Rushville**	Jennifer Fiscus	

Powder River Circuit #3

Prince of Peace, Buffalo		
Mount Hope, Casper	Joe Cook	
Trinity, Casper	Josh Witkop	
Zion, Douglas**	Allen Gorrel	
Trinity, Gillette	Thomas Shepherd	
Our Redeemer, Glenrock**	<i>See Zion, Douglas</i>	
Bethlehem, Moorcroft**	David Wagner	
Immanuel, Sheridan	Scott VanDorsten	Justin Carlson
Mt. Calvary, Sundance**	<i>See Bethlehem, Moorcroft</i>	

Multi-congregational parishes have only **one lay vote and **one** pastoral vote.

CONGREGATION

LAY DELEGATE

ALTERNATE LAY DELEGATE

Yellowstone Circuit #4

Christ the King, Cody
Zion, Emblem
Grace, Greybull
St. John's, Lovell
Immanuel, Powell
St. Paul's, Thermopolis
St. Luke's, Worland

Bob Berry

John Olin
Ralph Fink
Morgon Grover
John Kissel
Richard Scott

Rick Smiley

August Brandt
Jeff Dittmer
Landis Benson

Headwaters Circuit #5

Mt. Calvary, Dubois
Christ Our Savior, Star Valley**
Our Saviour, Evanston**
Shepherd of the Valley, Ft. Bridger
Emmanuel, Green River**
Redeemer, Jackson**
St. Paul's, Kemmerer**
Bethel, Lander
Peace, Marbleton**
Our Savior's, Pinedale**
Christ, Rawlins
Trinity, Riverton
Trinity, Rock Springs
Platte Valley, Saratoga

Susanna Gehrt
Steve Trogden
See St. Paul, Kemmerer
Chuck Robbins
Brian Joachim
See Christ Our Savior, Star Valley
Brandon Theule
Jim Luchsinger
Rick McCaslin
See Peace, Marbleton
Leslie Schmidt
Scott Christensen
See Emmanuel, Green River

Ron Campbell

Paul Sprick
Cris Hopkin
Zachary Heward
Steven Young

High Plains Circuit #6

Immanuel, Burns**
King of Glory, Cheyenne
Our Savior, Cheyenne
Trinity, Cheyenne
St. John's, Kimball**
St. Andrew's, Laramie
Zion, Laramie
Grace, Pine Bluffs**
Trinity, Wheatland
Zion, Grover, CO**

Paul Mistarka
Matt Huckfeldt
Jeremy Goetsch
Kenneth Eppich
See Immanuel, Burns
Dylan Ohman
Ronald Christensen
See Zion, Grover

Mark Weisbrook

Merle Ziegelman

Multi-congregational parishes have only **one lay vote and **one** pastoral vote.

ROSTER OF VOTING PASTORAL DELEGATES

CONGREGATION

PASTORAL DELEGATE

ALTERNATE

Chimney Rock Circuit #1

Mount Calvary, Bayard**	Rev. George Naylor	
St. Paul's, Bridgeport	Rev. Peter Preus	
Zion, Chappell**	Rev. Neil Carlson	
Faith, Gering	Rev. Richard Neugebauer	
Salem, Gurley**	<i>See St. Paul, Potter</i>	
St. Paul's, Potter**	Rev. Ted Bourret	
St. James, Scottsbluff**	<i>See Mt. Calvary, Bayard</i>	
St. John's, Scottsbluff	Rev. Jeffery Grams	
St. Paul's, Sidney	<i>See St. Paul, Potter</i>	
Trinity, Sidney**	<i>See Zion, Chappell</i>	

Pine Ridge Circuit #2

Immanuel, Alliance	Rev. Richard Mueller	
Our Savior's, Chadron	<i>See Grace, Gordon</i>	
Bethlehem, Crawford**	<i>Vacant</i>	
Grace, Gordon	Rev. Travis Sherman	
Redeemer, Harrison**	<i>See Bethlehem, Crawford</i>	
Zion, Hay Springs**	<i>See St. Paul, Rushville</i>	
St. Paul's, Lusk	Rev. Darren Pflughoeft	
Trinity, Morrill	<i>See Our Savior, Torrington</i>	
Our Savior, Torrington	Rev. Scott Firminhac	
St. Paul, Rushville**	Rev. Allan Wierschke	

Powder River Circuit #3

Prince of Peace, Buffalo	Rev. Roger Mullet	
Mount Hope, Casper	Rev. Andrew Richard	
Trinity, Casper	Rev. Jon Olson	
Zion, Douglas**	Rev. Jonathan Durkopp	
Trinity, Gillette	Rev. Zachary Viggers	
Our Redeemer, Glenrock**	<i>See Zion, Douglas</i>	
Bethlehem, Moorcroft**	Rev. Norman Wacker	
Immanuel, Sheridan	Rev. Paul Cain	
Mt. Calvary, Sundance**	<i>See Bethlehem, Moorcroft</i>	

Multi-congregational parishes have only **one lay vote and **one** pastoral vote.

CONGREGATION

PASTORAL DELEGATE

ALTERNATE

Yellowstone Circuit #4

Christ the King, Cody
Zion, Emblem
Grace, Greybull
St. John's, Lovell
Immanuel, Powell
St. Paul's, Thermopolis
St. Luke's, Worland

Rev. Kenneth Mars
Vacant
Vacant
Rev. Jacob Benson
Rev. Daniel Harrington
Rev. Samuel Needham
Rev. Jared Korb

Headwaters Circuit #5

Mt. Calvary, Dubois
Christ Our Savior, Star Valley**
Our Saviour, Evanston**
Shepherd of the Valley, Ft. Bridger
Emmanuel, Green River**
Redeemer, Jackson**
St. Paul's, Kemmerer**
Bethel, Lander
Peace, Marbleton**
Our Savior's, Pinedale**
Christ, Rawlins
Trinity, Riverton
Trinity, Rock Springs**
Platte Valley, Saratoga

Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein
Rev. David Bott
See St. Paul, Kemmerer
Rev. Daniel Mulholland
Rev. Andrew Hill
See Christ Our Savior, Star Valley
Rev. Jonathan Lange
Rev. Travis Berg
See Our Savior, Pinedale
Vacant
Rev. Patrick Baldwin
Rev. Stephen Kieser
See Emmanuel, Green River

High Plains Circuit #6

Immanuel, Burns**
King of Glory, Cheyenne
Our Savior, Cheyenne
Trinity, Cheyenne
St. John's, Kimball**
St. Andrew's, Laramie
Zion, Laramie
Grace, Pine Bluffs
Trinity, Wheatland
Zion, Grover, CO

Rev. Ellery Steffensen
Rev. Mark Maas
Rev. Joshua Scheer
Rev. John Preus
See Immanuel, Burns
Rev. Mark Preus
Rev. Mark Mumme
Vacant

Vacant

Rev. Marcus Baikie

Multi-congregational parishes have only **one lay vote and **one** pastoral vote.

ROSTER OF ADVISORY DELEGATES ORDAINED

Rev. David Anderson, Cheyenne
Rev. Lee Wisroth, Powell
Rev. Ralph Jaeger, Laramie
Rev. Lowell Kayser, Colorado Springs, CO
Rev. Paul Beyer, Casper
Rev. Richard Boche, Cheyenne
Rev. Ralph Morris, Gering
Rev. David Boehnke, Casper
Rev. David Caspersen, Cheyenne
Rev. Sam Christensen, Riverton
Rev. Philip Found, Bayard
Rev. Philip Grovenstein, Powell
Rev. Harold Hintzman Jr., Cheyenne
Rev. Dan Holthus, Casper
Rev. Darrell Debowey, Laramie
Rev. Daniel Praeuner, Ranchester
Rev. John Rasmussen, Cheyenne

Rev. Albert Kasten Sr., Chappell
Rev. Don Rieman, E. Aurora, NY
Rev. Lee Rupert, Maplewood, MN
Rev. Marvin Temme, Cheyenne
Rev. Terry Wiley, Thermopolis
Rev. Michael Wittrock, Chadron
Rev. John Christensen, Thermopolis
Rev. Christopher Curry, Casper
Rev. Dr. Christian Preus, Casper
Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, Casper
Rev. Thomas Obersat, Paige, TX
Rev. Dr. Ron Garwood, Cody

ROSTER OF ADVISORY DELEGATES COMMISSIONED

Mrs. Dixie Ailts, Gillette
Mrs. Tiffany Baikie, Cheyenne
Mrs. Karen Bergquist, Riverton
Mrs. Darcia Boche, Torrington
Mrs. Bonnie Bourret, Potter
Mrs. Shirley Bundschuh, Rolla, MO
Mrs. Elizabeth Carlson, Sheridan
Mrs. Garnet Dwyer, Cody
Miss Stanna Funk, Gering
Mrs. Jennifer Kaelberer, Cody
Mrs. Cecelia Postma, Riverton
Miss Tarayca Walters, Casper
Mrs. Leah Wierschke, Rushville,
Deac. Melissa Harrington, Powell
Mrs. Susan Tucker, Riverton

Mrs. Diane Christensen, Thermopolis
Miss Brianna Erdman, Mankato, MN
Miss Natasha Bonine, Ravenna, NE
Miss Anna Hahn, Casper
Mr. Nathanael Hahn, Casper
Miss Hannah Engwall, Casper
Mrs. Jill Mueller, Alliance
Mrs. Cheri Rae Pollum, Cheyenne
Mr. Lukas Sollberger, Cheyenne
Mr. Steve Coniglio, Riverton
Dr. Caleb Karges, Casper

ABOUT OUR ESSAYIST

Dr. Harold Ristau has served the church faithfully for over twenty years. A native Canadian, Dr. Ristau earned his M.Div. at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary (CLTS) in St. Catherine's, Ontario, in 2000. He holds an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Waterloo (1996) and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from McGill University (2007).

From serving as a parish pastor in an inner-city, multi-ethnic Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS) congregation in Montreal, which included prison chaplaincy and ministry to refugees, and from the mission field with Chinese and Muslim immigrants in Canada to the mission field in Africa, Dr. Ristau has committed his life to proclaiming the gospel to the lost and using his unique gifts to serve the Church in challenging positions all over the globe.

In addition to his extensive service for Lutheran Church Canada and LCMS ministries, Dr. Ristau also served honorably as a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces in both English and French Canada for eleven years with the Air Force, paratroopers, and Special Operational Forces, serving alongside U.S. Military. Deployed to the Middle East on several occasions, Dr. Ristau has been honored by the Canadian government and Chief of National Defense with one of their highest commendations for his work in Afghanistan.

Called as a professor to CLTS in 2017, Dr. Ristau led accreditation and recruitment efforts for the seminary. In 2021, CLTS deployed Dr. Ristau to Lutherans in Africa in Kenya as missionary and Academic Dean at the Lutheran School of Theology.

Dr. Ristau has authored several books including *Spiritual Warfare* and has written articles on topics ranging from theology to contemporary culture.

In addition to serving as President at Luther Classical College, Dr. Ristau is an assisting pastor at Mount Hope Lutheran Church and a member of the college teaching faculty, holding the Walter C. Dissen Chair in Confessional Lutheranism. This endowed professorship is named in honor of a prominent LCMS layman who served on several synodical boards and bequeathed \$2 million to LCC to ensure faithful theological teaching for generations to come.

Dr. Ristau, married to his wife Elise, is the father of five children and grandfather of one. His two eldest sons have been admitted among the historic first cohort of students at Luther Classical College.

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ECCLESIASTICAL REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. John E. Hill

Spiritual Warfare: "Foil Thy Foes with Joy"

The English poet Robert Southwell (1561?-1595) was the inspiration for many of the great English poets of the Elizabethan age and beyond (e.g. Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and others). This poem, included in Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, paints a picture of spiritual warfare at the birth of Jesus.

This little Babe so few days old
is come to rifle Satan's fold;
all hell doth at his presence quake
though he himself for cold do shake;
for in this weak pitched wise
the gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,
his naked breast stands for a shield;
his battering shot are babish cries,
his arrows looks of weeping eyes,
his martial ensigns Cold and Need
and feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitched in a stall,
his bulwark but a broken wall;
the crib his trench, haystacks his stakes;
of shepherds he his muster makes;
and thus, as sure his foe to wound,
the angels' trump alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight,
stick to the tents that he hath pitched].
Within his crib is surest ward,
this little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

With what astonishment and joy we see that all the ferocious powers of hell are conquered in the infant flesh of the newborn Son of God! "He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly" (*Magnificat*). His shivering, cold, and feeble flesh bears the sins of all the world. His boyish blood is "God's own blood" (Acts 20:28), the price of our redemption. By his death he satisfies the justice of God's wrath against sinful man. By his sacrifice on the cross and by his blessed resurrection he surprises the gates of hell and defeats our old evil foe with all his abominable weapons and all his marshaled hosts. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

The poem reminds us that spiritual warfare—God's war against the devil, sin, death, and hell—is not like the warfare of this world. It is indeed fought in the flesh and blood of men and women, boys and girls, in their bodies and minds, hearts and souls, but not with human or earthly power. The battle fought and the victory won in the flesh of Jesus Christ our God and our brother is now worked out through God's Word in the world and in our own lives. "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

It is in prayer that we see this battle most clearly. Luther teaches us that to pray the Lord's Prayer is to engage in spiritual warfare:

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will. (SC Third Petition)

Again, in the Sixth Petition, we confess that God is not our enemy, tempting us to unbelief and the destruction of our souls, but that he gives to us his own victory over the devil,

God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory. (SC Sixth Petition)

Our hymns remind us of this great spiritual battle and bring us comfort, courage, and confidence in Christ's salvation. At Christmas we sing,

Forth today the Conqueror goeth,
Who the foe, Sin and woe,
Death and hell o'erthroweth.
God is man, man to deliver;
His dear Son Now is one
With our blood forever. (TLH 77.2; compare LSB 360)

In the season of Lent we sing,

Should some lust or sharp temptation
Fascinate my sinful mind,
Draw me to Your cross and passion,
And new courage I shall find.
Or should Satan press me hard,
Let me then be on my guard,
Saying, "Christ for me was wounded,"
That the tempter flee confounded. (LSB 421.2)

At Easter we sing, in Luther's great hymn, of the decisive victory over our spiritual foes in Christ's resurrection:

It was a strange and dreadful strife
When life and death contended;
The victory remained with life,
The reign of death was ended.
Holy Scripture plainly saith
That death is swallowed up by death,
Its sting is lost forever. Alleluia! (LSB 458.4)

Or again, in Paul Gerhardt's wonderful hymn:

Now hell, its prince, the devil,
Of all their power are shorn;
Now I am safe from evil,
And sin I laugh to scorn.
Grim death with all its might
Cannot my soul affright;
It is a pow'rless form,
Howe'er it rave and storm.

The world against me rages,
Its fury I disdain;
Though bitter war it wages,
Its work is all in vain.
My heart from care is free,
No trouble troubles me.
Misfortune now is play,
And night is bright as day. (LSB 467.3-4)

Time fails us to quote all the beautiful texts that take up this great spiritual warfare and draw us into our Lord's victory. There are many dozens of hymns that give words to our spiritual warfare. We enter the battle fray not with fear or cowardice, not with anxiety or despair, not with pride or self-confidence, but with faith in Jesus Christ and with his eternal and unending joy. As the poet sings, "If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy, then flit not from this heavenly Boy."

Community

These past four years we have meditated on God's gift of community to man. He births us into the human family. He births us again through the waters of Holy Baptism into the family of the church, the congregation of those who will inherit salvation. He places us in civil communities, where we are to help, serve, defend, and love our neighbors in this world. He teaches us to bear their sins and forgive them. He teaches us to humble ourselves, confess our own sins, and seek the good of our brother and our neighbor. He teaches us to receive and give thanks for these divinely established communities in the three estates of our homes, our congregations, and our civil communities.

Our own place in these intersecting and overlapping communities is not a mere theory but the daily reality of our lives. It is also the goal and outcome of heaven (Revelation 4, 5, 7, etc.). We daily practice living in community even while we are enjoying this gift from God. Our life together in the Wyoming District also models this same gift. Here is a brief summary of our annual activities together:

- **Pastors and Teachers Conferences:** The pastors meet twice annually in district and monthly in their circuits. The teachers meet once annually.
- Our annual District evangelism conference is the **Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation**, where our pastors and laity, young and old, gather to worship and learn together.
- The **Wyoming District Lutheran Youth Camp** (Lander Camp) brings our older children and teenagers together with pastors and other adults under God's Word, where lasting friendships are formed across the district.

- The **Luther Women’s Missionary League** gathers women together regularly in congregations, zones, and the district.
- The annual **Homeschool Conference** brings home educators and their children together for three days each year to renew friendships and give each other mutual support and encouragement.
- The **Fathers and Sons Retreat** meets annually to encourage fathers and future fathers in their divinely given vocations.
- The **pastors wives** meet annually to build their mutual support and encourage one another.
- Our pastors meet for **Continuing Education** at various locations: Thermopolis, Fort Robison, Cheyenne, Casper.
- The Headwaters Circuit has pioneered a family gathering for their widely scattered circuit: the **Uinta County Family Retreat** (to which the whole district is invited).
- Luther Classical College annually hosts the **Christian Culture Conference** in Casper.
- The Nebraska circuits have held **youth** and whole **family gatherings** at Alliance on a monthly basis. Similar local and circuit events have been held in various places to bring our youth and others together.

Hear again the exhortation of the Holy Spirit regarding your place and participation in your own congregation: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Summary of District President Activities

The Wyoming District is comprised of 60 congregations in 6 visitation circuits, with about 6,700 communicants. My primary duty as district president is to encourage and strengthen our pastors and congregations with God’s Word. To that end, I personally visit our congregations and pastors, with assistance from our circuit visitors and vice-presidents. I assist with vacancies and other congregational needs and provide advice and call lists for the calling of pastors. I also provide leadership to the district in our common life together. Here is a summary of the past four years of my activities (calendar years 2021-2024):

- 277 meetings or visits with congregations
- 1800+ visits/conversations with individuals (district and Synod)
- 186 times preaching
- 41 times teaching Bible Class or confirmation class
- 41 formal presentations in congregations, circuits, District, Synod
- 21 formal congregation visitations

- 3 ordinations
- 17 installations of pastors. 16 of our 60 congregations received a new pastor!
- 15 Circuit Pastors Conferences (Winkels)
- 7 District Pastor/Teacher conferences
- 130 District meetings over 139 days (Board of Directors–5 annually; Circuit Visitors–2 annually; Praesidium–5 annually; Commission meetings; etc.)
- 46 Synod meetings; 160 days of meeting and travel (Council of Presidents, Synod Convention, other)
- 94 Luther Classical College meetings, involving parts or all of 107 days
- 19 continuing education events over 64 days

Highlights of my work over this past term include:

- Teaching Augsburg Confession articles XXII-XXVIII to a gathering of pastors at our continuing education in Thermopolis, November 2022. I used resources I had prepared for our regular study at the district's Board of Directors meetings.
- Moderating a Koinonia meeting for LCMS International Church Relations in Ontario, Canada, February 2023. This project required extensive preparation and has been blessed with good fruit. Thanks be to God!
- Teaching at a Free Conference in Niagata, Japan, May 2024. I presented six sessions on Church and Ministry to a small but energetic gathering. What a privilege to join with brothers and sisters in Japan!
- Serving on Synod's Lutheran Curriculum Standards Committee, 2024-2025. This is an ongoing project.
- Serving the vacancy at Zion, Laramie, February 17-July 14, 2024. I called this my sabbatical, though it involved additional work. What a joy to serve in a congregation again! My thanks to the dear people of Zion!

Luther Classical College

Congregation members and pastors of the Wyoming District seek to teach their children under the conviction that both heavenly and earthly wisdom is obtained best from our fathers. Holy Scripture—itsself an ancient text—is God's own Word and the divine source, rule, and norm for all our doctrine and life. Our Lutheran Confessions—*The Book of Concord* of 1580—is a collection of old texts that rightly exhibit the doctrine of Scripture and serve as our common confession of this Biblical doctrine. We read and consider the writings of the fathers of the church, both ancient and Lutheran, to grow in understanding and Christian piety. We also read ancient histories and literature, examine the works of the old philosophers, mathematicians, and scientists, and study the best art of the past, all under the conviction that our fathers in home, church, and society are the best sources to help parents “bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). We do not romanticize or idolize the works of our fathers; we honor them, each according to the

measure of the truth, goodness, and beauty he teaches and displays. This is what we mean by classical Lutheran education.

Wyoming District pastors, teachers, and schools have been pioneers in the young classical education movement in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), beginning in the late 1990s. Some of the first conferences of the nascent Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE) were held in Wyoming. Presently, all five of our schools have adopted classical Lutheran education as the content of their instruction and their guiding pedagogical principle. Numerous homeschool families in the district have also pursued the high goals and standards of classical Lutheran education.

From the beginning, schools in the classical Lutheran education movement in the Wyoming District sought to find and recruit (or call) classically educated pastors, teachers, and headmasters. For the past quarter-century Lutheran schools and Lutheran parents have contemplated the need for a Lutheran classical college in which sound Christian doctrine, philosophy, history, literature, the classical languages, and the mathematical arts are thoroughly integrated and incorporated into the life of the home, church, and community. I was a part of one effort to start such a college in the early years. We discovered then that the time was not right. But that time has come.

In 2020, pastors, laymen, and congregations of the Wyoming District and across the LCMS organized a Board of Regents for a new Luther Classical College (LCC). This year, 2025, LCC will hold classes for its first cohort of students. The college has been hosted and sponsored in various ways by Mount Hope and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Casper. The college will be located permanently on property adjacent to both Mount Hope and the Wyoming District's Lutheran Ministries Center. Each of the two congregations supplies a pastor and elder to serve on the LCC Board of Regents (BOR). The pastors and elders of each congregation supply the list of Regent candidates for the BOR, thus retaining congregational sponsorship of the college. LCC's pastors receive divine calls and LCC's commissioned teachers receive teacher calls from one of the two Casper congregations. The Wyoming District President is also a member of the BOR; he advises the President, BOR, Mount Hope, and Trinity in the appointment and election of faculty; and he provides ecclesiastical oversight, encouragement, and counsel to LCC through its President and BOR.

LCC is sponsored and funded by hundreds of supporting LCMS congregations nationwide and more than a thousand individual LCMS donors. LCMS families are sending their young men and women to LCC to receive a robust classical Lutheran education, including many in the Wyoming District. All the faculty and staff are

members of our LCMS congregations. The pastors and commissioned teachers on the faculty and staff are members of the Wyoming District and are under the ecclesiastical supervision and care of the Wyoming District President.

Luther Classical College is a congregational college, that is, a college organized by, supported by, and supporting the congregations of the LCMS. In its doctrinal commitments and Lutheran culture it complements the Synod's Concordia Universities, but it is not a member or part of the Concordia University System (CUS). LCC is not governed by the LCMS and has no legal or financial connection to the Synod. From the time of its organization, however, LCC has been seeking a formal ecclesiastical relationship to Synod. Its mission fully supports and advances the divinely instituted objectives of the LCMS and the Wyoming District.

LCC is bound to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. LCC is guided by these commitments:

Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society, fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.
(LCC Mission Statement)

The college will provide a conservative, classical Lutheran education to Lutheran students. Paramount will be the promotion of Christian culture, a stress on the priority of Christian marriage, family, and piety, and a cultivation of confessional Lutheran theology, liturgy, hymnody, and identity. With courses using the "great books" of the past for the core curriculum, the college will offer Latin, history, theology, literature, logic, rhetoric, music, geometry, biology, and mathematics, all within a purposefully Christian and Lutheran framework.

Finally...

One area of ongoing discussion among our pastors has been the matter of how our congregations, members, pastors, and the district as a whole relate to civil government and society and how we might cooperate with Christians and pastors in the civil realm, among those with whom we do not have church fellowship. I asked two of our pastors, Rev. Jonathan Lange and Rev. Dr. Christian Preus, to prepare theses to aid in our discussion of these matters. I am including these two sets of theses as appendices to this report as a resource that was used in some of our circuits.

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was

kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27)

In Christ,

Pr. John E. Hill

Appendix A
Theses on unionism and syncretism

Thesis I. Everyone born into this world is thereby placed into a civic community with moral obligations to his neighbors, as set forth in the Ten Commandments.

Thesis II. Membership in the Christian Church does not dissolve a Christian's moral obligations within the civic community but upholds them.

Thesis III. A Christian's moral obligations within the civic community may never infringe on the purity of confession and exclusivity of communion fellowship Christ demands of His Church.

Thesis IV. Since Christ's Church is one, built on the pure doctrine of the apostolic and prophetic Scripture, there can be no levels or subdivisions in the Church's fellowship,¹ all false confession and practice being excluded.

Thesis V. Since Church fellowship requires the bodily gathering of the congregation in time and space, it is recognized primarily in the congregational gathering of the Divine Service. Other services of the Church, designed to be extensions of the Divine Service, are also included in the rubrics of Church fellowship (Matins, Vespers, Compline, Lauds, weddings, funerals, prayer services, etc.).

Thesis VI. Since not all bodily gatherings of people (even if they are Christians) are the congregation of the Church, every Christian - pastors in particular - must distinguish sharply between communion fellowship and community gatherings. Communion fellowship may be shared only by those who "agree with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, and also in the right use of the holy Sacraments" (FC SD X.31). Community may be shared regardless of religion.

Thesis VII. Bodily gatherings that are not in reality communion fellowship may, nonetheless, be publicly named and designated as such contrary to fact. Such a public and official designation, while remaining erroneous, nevertheless requires Christians to treat the gathering according to the rubrics of Church fellowship (#s 4 and 5 above), lest offense be given.

Thesis VIII. Gatherings that meet neither the objective definition of Church fellowship, nor are publicly designated as such, are not communion fellowship - even should an

¹ Throughout these theses "Church fellowship" is used interchangeably with "altar and pulpit fellowship" and "communion fellowship." We used various terms to describe the same thing because these are the terms in common usage among us.

individual participant cite the Bible, offer a prayer, or personally regard the event to be public worship.

Thesis IX. While Christians are free to participate in community gatherings regardless of the religion or confession of others participating (#6 above), no Christian is permitted to make false statements or engage in unchristian actions or causes within such gatherings.

Thesis X. Within such community gatherings, expressions of corporate unity with reference to the narrowly defined goals of the organization may be part of a Christian's truthful confession. Expressions of corporate unity with reference to the communion of the Church are false in such a setting.

Thesis XI. Therefore, Christians praying and using Holy Scripture within a community gathering should avoid the markers of communion fellowship that are found within the Divine Liturgy. For example, the first person plural ("Let us pray," and "Our Father") should be avoided. Prayers should instead be formulated as would be proper for settings where non-Christians are represented within the assembly. The Christian, as a priest of the one true God, is asking God's blessing on behalf of the people present.

Thesis XII. Civic organizations, documents, and other joint endeavors that are not gatherings of bodies in space and time are not governed by the rubrics of Church fellowship (#8 above). They are, however, guided by the same requirement that they may not be objectively false (#s 9, 10, and 11 above), and they should strive to state agreement in terms clear and narrow enough to avoid false impression of Church fellowship and agreement in every article of faith.

Thesis I. Everyone born into this world is thereby placed into a civic community with moral obligations to his neighbors, as set forth in the Ten Commandments.

Scriptural Foundation

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" **Genesis 4:9**

Honor your father and your mother, that your days be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's. **Exodus 20:12-17** (cf. Romans 13:9)

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. **Luke 2:51**

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" ⁸He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." **Matthew 19:3-9**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ⁵Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the lord and not to man, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him. **Ephesians 6:1-9**

Confessional Attestation

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIII.7-8: First, Gen. 1:28 teaches that men were created to be fruitful, and that one sex in a proper way should desire the other. For we are speaking not of concupiscence, which is sin, but of that appetite which was to have been in nature in its integrity [which would have existed in nature even if it had remained uncorrupted], which they call physical love. And this love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance. But since this ordinance of God cannot be removed without an extraordinary work of God, it follows that the right to contract marriage cannot be removed by statutes or vows.

The adversaries cavil at these arguments; they say that in the beginning the commandment was given to replenish the earth, but that now since the earth has been replenished, marriage is not commanded. See how wisely they judge! The nature of

men is so formed by the word of God that it is fruitful not only in the beginning of the creation, but as long as this nature of our bodies will exist; just as the earth becomes fruitful by the word Gen. 1:1: Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed. Because of this ordinance the earth not only commenced in the beginning to bring forth plants, but the fields are clothed every year as long as this natural order will exist. Therefore, just as by human laws the nature of the earth cannot be changed, so, without a special work of God the nature of a human being can be changed neither by vows nor by human law [that a woman should not dire a man, nor a man a woman].

Large Catechism I.105-107: To this estate of fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction above all estates that are beneath it that He not simply commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. For with respect to brothers, sisters, and our neighbors in general He commands nothing higher than that we love them, so that He separates and distinguishes father and mother above all other persons upon earth, and places them at His side. 106 For it is a far higher thing to honor than to love one, inasmuch as it comprehends not only love, but also modesty, humility, and deference as to a majesty there hidden, 107 and requires not only that they be addressed kindly and with reverence, but, most of all, that both in heart and with the body we so act as to show that we esteem them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For one whom we are to honor from the heart we must truly regard as high and great.

(Cf. *Small Catechism, Table of Duties; Small Catechism I passim; Large Catechism I passim*)

Thesis II. Membership in the Christian Church does not dissolve a Christian's moral obligations within the civic community but upholds them.

Scriptural Foundation

And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" **Genesis 39:7-9**

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply

there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5:17-19**

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **John 17: 15-16**

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. ¹⁸Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. ¹⁹For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. ²⁰Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. ²¹Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) ²²For he who is called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. ²³You were brought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. ²⁴So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God. **1 Corinthians 7:17-24**

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. **1 Timothy 6:1**

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. **1 Peter 2:15-17**

(Cf. Daniel 1; Esther 1-2)

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession XX.1-2: Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding Good Works. For their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like

import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what estates of life and what works in ever calling be pleasing to God.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIII.9-12: *Secondly, And because this creation or divine ordinance in man is a natural right, jurists have accordingly said wisely and correctly that the union of male and female belongs to natural right. But since natural right is immutable, the right to contract marriage must always remain. For where nature does not change, that ordinance also with which God has endowed nature does not change, and cannot be removed by human laws. Therefore it is ridiculous for the adversaries to prate that marriage was commanded in the beginning, but is not now. This is the same as if they would say: Formerly, when men were born, they brough with them sex; now they do not. Formerly, when they were born, they brough with them natural right; now they do not. No craftsman (Faber) could produce anything more crafty than these absurdities, which were devised to elude a right of nature. Therefore let his remain in the case which both Scripture teaches and the jurist says wisely, namely, that the union of male and female belongs to natural right. Moreover, a natural right is truly a divine right, because it is an ordinance divinely impressed upon nature. But inasmuch as this right cannot be changed without an extraordinary work of God, it is necessary that the right to contract marriage remains, because the natural desire of sex for sex is an ordinance of God in nature, and for this reason is a right; otherwise, why would both sexes have been created?*

Large Catechism I.141-142: *In this commandment belongs a further statement regarding all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents. For where a father is unable alone to educate his [rebellious and irritable] child, he employs a schoolmaster to instruct him; if he be too weak, he enlists the aid of his friends and neighbors; if he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. Likewise, he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under himself for the management of the household, so that all whom we call masters are in the place of parents and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also they are all called fathers in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. As also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called the maters and mistresses of the household patres- et matres- familiae, that is, housefathers and housemothers. So also they called their national rulers and overlords patres patriae, that is, fathers of the*

entire county, for a great shame to us who would be Christians that we do not likewise call them so, or, at least, do not esteem and honor them as such.

Large Catechism I.327-329: *Thus continuing through all the following commandments towards our neighbor likewise, everything is proceed by virtue of the First Commandment, to wit, that we honor father and mother, masters, and all in authority, and be subject and obedient to them, not on their own account, but for God's sake. For you are not to regard or fear father or mother, or from love of them do or omit anything. But see to that which God would have you do, and what He will quite surely demand of you; if you omit that, you have an angry Judge, but in the contrary case a gracious Father.*

Again, that you do your neighbor no harm, injury, or violence, nor in any wise encroach upon him as touching his body, wife, property, honor, or rights, as all these things are commanded in their order, even though you have opportunity and cause to do so and no man would reprove you; but that you do good to call men, help them, and promote their interest, howsoever and wherever you can, purely from love of God and in order to please Him, in the confidence that He will abundantly reward you for everything. Thus you see how the First Commandment is the chief source and fountainhead which flows into all the rest, and again, all return to that and depend upon it, so that beginning and end are fastened and bound to each other.

Formula of Concord, Epitome IV.8: *3. We believe, teach, and confess also that all men, but those especially who are born again and renewed by the Holy Ghost, are bound to do good works.*

Thesis III. A Christian's moral obligations within the civic community may never infringe on the purity of confession and exclusivity of communion fellowship Christ demands of His Church.

Scriptural Foundation

*But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. **Daniel 1:8***

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will

not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” **Daniel 3:16-18**

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. **Daniel 6:10**

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” **Acts 5:29**

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. **Revelation 2:10**

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **Revelation 20:4**

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession XXVIII.75-78: *But if it be impossible to obtain a mitigation of such observances as cannot be kept without sin, we are bound to follow the apostolic rule, Acts 5:29, which commands us to obey God rather than men.*

Peter, 1 Pet. 5:3, forbids bishops to be lords, and to rule over the churches. It is not our design now to wrest the government from the bishops, but this one thing is asked, namely, that they allow the Gospel to be purely taught, and that they relax some few observances which cannot be kept without sin. But if they make no concession, it is for them to see how they shall give account to God for furnishing, by their obstinacy, a cause for schism.

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 41: *This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7:15: Beware of false prophets. And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed, Gal. 1:8; Titus 3:10. And he says, 2 Cor. 6:14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion hath light with darkness?*

Thesis IV. Since Christ's Church is one, built on the pure doctrine of the apostolic and prophetic Scripture, there can be no levels or subdivisions in the Church's fellowship, all false confession and practice being excluded.

Scriptural Foundation

*Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD. **Isaiah 52:11***

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **Romans 16:17***

*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. **1 Corinthians 1:10***

*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. **1 Corinthians 10:21***

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement has a temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, as they shall be my people. **2 Corinthians 6:14-16***

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. **Galatians 1:8-9***

*[T]herefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call -⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **Ephesians 4:1-6***

having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women,

*burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. **2 Timothy 3:5-7***

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession VII: *Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.*

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5-6

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X.23: *It is a grave matter wanting to separate one's self from so many lands and nations, and to profess a separate doctrine; but here stands God's command, that every one should beware and not agree with those who maintain false doctrine, or who think of supporting it by means of cruelty.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XII.39: *These and like articles, one and all, with what pertains to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, and Augsburg, Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Catechisms of Luther. Oth these articles all godly Christians should and ought to beware, as much as the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.*

Thesis V. Since Church fellowship requires the bodily gathering of the congregation in time and space, it is recognized primarily in the congregational gathering of the Divine Service. Other services of the Church, designed to be extensions of the Divine Service, are also included in the rubrics of Church fellowship (Matins, Vespers, Compline, Lauds, weddings, funerals, prayer services, etc.).

Scriptural Foundation

*Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. ²²Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. **Exodus 12:21-22***

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **Acts 2:42**

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. ²⁰When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. **1 Corinthians 11:18-20**

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles, but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. **Galatians 2:11-12**

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. **Hebrews 10:23-25**

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession VIII: *Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. Matt. 23:2. Both the Sacraments and Word of effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.*

The condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII/VIII.8: *The wicked indeed are not a holy Church. And that which follows, namely, the communion of saints, seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies, namely, the congregation of saints, who have with each other the fellowship of the same Gospel or doctrine [who confess one Gospel, have the same knowledge of Christ] and of the same Holy Ghost, who renews, sanctifies, and governs their hearts.*

Thesis VI. Since not all bodily gatherings of people (even if they are Christians) are the congregation of the Church, every Christian - pastors in particular - must distinguish sharply between communion fellowship and community gatherings. Communion fellowship may be shared only by those who "agree with one

another in the doctrine and all its articles, and also in the right use of the holy Sacraments” (FC SD X.31). Community may be shared regardless of religion.

Scriptural Foundation

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵“Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:4-7

*Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities” - because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” ²¹Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. **Acts 17:16-21***

When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with the Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel. ³⁰But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. ³²Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. ³³Some of the crowd promoted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. ³⁴But when he recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! ³⁵And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? ³⁶Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷For you have brought these

men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." **Acts 19:28-40**

To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to lie with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. **1 Corinthians 7:12-13**

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**

What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. **1 Corinthians 11:22**

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession Preface.4: *that for the future one pure and true religion may be embraced and maintained by us, that as we all are under one Christ and do battle under Him, so we may be able also to live in unity and concord in the one Christian Church.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X.10,31: *We believe, teach, and confess also that at the time of confession [when a confession of the heavenly truth is required], when the enemies of God's Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire congregation of God, yea, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as leaders of the congregation of God [as those whom God has appointed to rule His Church], are bound by God's Word to confess freely and openly the [godly] doctrine, and what belongs to the whole of [pure] religion, not only in words, but also in works and with deeds; and that then, in this case, even in such [things truly and of themselves] adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries, or permit these [adiaphora] to be forced upon them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry...*

Thus [According to this doctrine] the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei; "Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith."

Thesis VII. Bodily gatherings that are not in reality communion fellowship may, nonetheless, be publicly named and designated as such contrary to fact. Such a public and official designation, while remaining erroneous, nevertheless requires Christians to treat the gathering according to the rubrics of Church fellowship (#s 4 and 5 above), lest offense be given.

Scriptural Foundation

*Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²²Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? **1 Corinthians 10:18-22***

*Then Naaman said, "If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD. ¹⁸In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes in to the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter." ¹⁹He said to him, "Go in peace." **2 Kings 5:17-19a***

(Cf. Daniel 2)

Confessional Attestation

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X.5, 8, 10, 16: *Namely, when under the title and pretext of external adiaphora such things are proposed as are in principle contrary to God's Word (although painted another color), these are not to be regarded as adiaphora, in which one is free to act as he will, but must be avoided as things prohibited by God. In like manner, too, such ceremonies should not be reckoned among the genuine free adiaphora, or matters of indifference, as make a show or feign the appearance, as though our religion and that of the Papists were not far apart,*

thus to avoid persecution, or as though the latter were not at least highly offensive to us; or when such ceremonies are designed for the purpose, and required and received in this sense, as though by and through them both contrary religions were reconciled and became one body; or when a reentering into the Papacy and a departure from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and true religion should occur or gradually follow therefrom [when there is danger lest we seem to have reentered the Papacy, and to have departed, or to be on the point of departing gradually, from the pure doctrine of the Gospel]...

But as regards genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference (as explained before), we believe, teach, and confess that such ceremonies, in and of themselves, are no worship of God, nor any part of it, but must be properly distinguished from such as are, as it is written: In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, Matt. 15:9...

We believe, teach, and confess also that at the time of confession [when a confession of the heavenly truth is required], when the enemies of God's Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire congregation of God, yea, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the leaders of the congregation of God [as those whom God has appointed to rule His Church], are bound by God's Word to confess freely and openly the [godly] doctrine, and what belongs to the whole of [pure] religion, not only in words, but also in works and with deeds; and that then, in this case, even in such [things truly and of themselves] adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries, or permit these [adiaphora] to be forced upon them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry...

Moreover, by such [untimely] yielding and conformity in external things, where there has not been previously Christian union in doctrine, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry; on the other hand, the true believers are grieved, offended, and weakened in their faith [their faith is grievously shaken, and made to totter as though by a battering-ram]; both of which every Christian for the sake of his soul's welfare and salvation is bound to avoid, as it is written: Woe unto the world because of offenses! Also: Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea [Matt. 18:6,7].

Thesis VIII. Gatherings that meet neither the objective definition of Church fellowship, nor are publicly designated as such, are not communion fellowship -

even should an individual participant cite the Bible, offer a prayer, or personally regard the event to be public worship.

Scriptural Foundation

*"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." ²⁷If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the round of conscience. ²⁸But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience - ²⁹I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? ³⁰If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. **1 Corinthians 10:23-33***

(Cf. Esther)

Thesis IX. While Christians are free to participate in community gatherings regardless of the religion or confession of other participating (#6 above), no Christian is permitted to make false statements or engage in unchristian actions or causes within such gatherings.

Scriptural Foundation

Then the Satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up...⁷Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁸Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!" ¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. ¹¹And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. ¹²There are certain Jews whom you

have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." **Daniel 3:3, 7-12**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." **Daniel 3:16-18**

Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" **Jonah 3:4**

So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there... **Acts 17:17ff**

But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater ...⁴¹And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assemble. **Acts 19:30-31, 41**

And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹servicing the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **Acts 20:18-21**

When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. **Acts 28:23**

(If the removal of the Lord's Supper from the Temple is to be regarded as a confessional division between the first Christians and the Jews, Acts 2:46 and 21:27-30 are instructive. Likewise, assuming that the Sacrament was not celebrated in synagogues of mixed confessions, Acts 13:14ff; 14:1; Acts 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 19; 19:8 and 28:23 apply.)

Confessional Attestation

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XII.40: *Since now, in the sight of God and of all Christendom [the entire Church of Christ], we wish to testify to those now living and those who shall come after us that this declaration herewith presented concerning all the controverted articles aforementioned and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine, and confession, in which we are also willing, by God's grace, to appear with intrepid hearts before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and give an account of it; and that we will neither privately nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it, but, by the help of God's grace, intend to abide thereby: therefore, after mature deliberation, we have, in God's fear and with the invocation of His name, attached our signatures with our own hands.*

Thesis X. Within such community gatherings, expressions of corporate unity with reference to the narrowly defined goals of the organization may be part of a Christian's truthful confession Expressions of corporate unity with reference to the communion of the Church are false in such a setting.

Scriptural Foundation

*After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar - though I had no charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." **Acts 28:17-20***

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession XVI: *Of Civil Affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when require by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage.*

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians.

They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but

very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

Thesis XI. Therefore, Christians praying and using Holy Scripture within a community gathering should avoid and markers of communion fellowship that are found within the Divine Liturgy. For example, the first person plural ("Let us pray," and "Our Father") should be avoided. Prayers should instead be formulated as would be proper for settings where non-Christians are represented within the assembly. The Christian, as a priest of the one true God, is asking God's blessing on behalf of the people present.

Scriptural Foundation

My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouth, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." **Daniel 6:22**

Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. ²²Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, ²⁴and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. ²⁶But we must run aground on some island." **Acts 27:21-26**

Thesis XII. Civic organizations, documents, and other joint endeavors that are not gathering of bodies in space and time are not governed by the rubrics of Church fellowship (#8 above). They are, however, guided by the same requirement that they may not be objectively false (#s9, 10, and 11 above), and they should strive to state agreement in terms clear and narrow enough to avoid false impression of Church fellowship and agreement in every article of faith.

Scriptural Foundation

Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." ¹⁶To Sarah he said,

"Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." ¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Genesis 20:14-18

Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in a letter that he sent to Solomon, "Because the LORD loves his people, he had made you king over them" ¹²Hiram also said, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, who has discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal palace for himself. ¹³"Now I have sent a skilled man, who has understanding, Hiram-abi, ¹⁴the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre. He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, and in purple, blue, and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and to do all sorts of engraving and execute any design that may be assigned to him, with your craftsmen, the craftsmen of my lord, David your father. ¹⁵Now therefore the wheat and barley, oil and wine, of which my lord has spoken, let him send to his servants. ¹⁶And we will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon and bring it to you in rads by sea to Joppa, so that you may take it up to Jerusalem." **2 Chronicles 2:11-16**

Appendix B

Theses on Christian Interaction with Civil Government and Society

Thesis I: Government is God's institution for the praise of good and the punishment of evil within human society.

Thesis II: While government officials and men in general can naturally know the difference between good and evil to some degree, their natural knowledge is deeply corrupted and in need of instruction.

Thesis III: The Christian Church is God's institution, to which God has entrusted his Word, the only certain source teaching what is good and what is evil.

Thesis IV: The Scriptures record many examples of Christians serving as advisors to temporal governments.

Thesis V: The Scriptures record many examples of Christian teachers teaching moral law and Christian doctrine to temporal rulers.

Thesis VI: The Scriptures command all Christians to love their neighbors, to uphold the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood, to help and support our neighbors in every bodily need, to uphold God's institution of marriage, to protect our neighbors' possessions and reputation, and to live at peace with all.

Thesis VII: Civil laws condoning moral evils harm our society as a whole and our neighbors in particular.

Thesis VIII: Christians should, therefore, work to encourage and support godly laws and society, each according to his ability, circumstance, and station in life.

Thesis IX: It is meet, right, and salutary for Christian pastors in particular, as public representatives of the Christian Church, to advise civil leaders on what is right and wrong, to encourage their congregation and community to support godly causes in society, and to teach them about the specific evils that threaten society, government, and family.

Thesis I: Government is God's institution for the praise of good and the punishment of evil within human society.

Scriptural Foundation

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **Romans 13:1-4**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. **1 Timothy 2:1-2**

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. **1 Peter 2:13-17**

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession XVI: Of Civil Affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage.

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians.

They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XVI.57: For the Gospel does not destroy the State or the family [buying, selling, and other civil regulations], but much rather

approves them, and bids us obey them as a divine ordinance, not only on account of punishment, but also on account of conscience.

Small Catechism, 4th Commandment and meaning: *Honor your father and your mother. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.*

Small Catechism, 4th Petition and meaning: *Give us this day our daily bread. What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.*

Large Catechism I.142: *Likewise, he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under himself for the management of the household, so that all whom we call masters are in the place of parents and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also they are all called fathers in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. As also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household patres- et matres- familiae, that is, housefathers and housemothers. So also they called their national rulers and overlords patres patriae, that is, fathers of the entire country, for a great shame to us who would be Christians that we do not likewise call them so, or, at least, do not esteem and honor them as such.*

Thesis II: While government officials and men in general can naturally know the difference between good and evil to some degree, their natural knowledge is deeply corrupted and in need of instruction.

Scriptural Foundation

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged

the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. **Romans 1:18-25**

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them. **Romans 2:14-15**

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun. **Psalms 19:1-4**

Confessional Attestation

Augsburg Confession XVIII.1, 5: *Of Free Will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. ... "Good" I call those works which spring from the good in nature, such as, willing to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry a wife, to raise cattle, to learn diverse useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life.*

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XVIII.4-5, 9: *Nor, indeed, do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls this the righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, i.e., reason, renders by itself, without the Holy Ghost. Although the power of*

concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, as Paul says, Eph. 2:2, does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offenses. These are the reasons why even civil righteousness is rare among men, as we see that not even the philosophers themselves, who seem to have aspired after this righteousness, attained it.

Therefore such a distribution is of advantage in which civil righteousness is ascribed to the free will and spiritual righteousness to the governing of the Holy Ghost in the regenerate. For thus the outward discipline is retained, because all men ought to know equally, both that God requires this civil righteousness [God will not tolerate indecent, wild, reckless conduct], and that, in a measure, we can afford it. And yet a distinction is shown between human and spiritual righteousness, between philosophical doctrine and the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and it can be understood for what there is need of the Holy Ghost.

Thesis III: The Christian Church is God's institution, to which God has entrusted his Word, the only certain source teaching what is good and what is evil.

Scriptural Foundation

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether. **Psalm 19:7-9**

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? ²Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. **Romans 3:1-2**

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Confessional Attestation

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule and Norm, 1: *We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with [all] teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Psalm 119:105: Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And St. Paul: Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. 1:8.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 3: *First [, then, we receive and embrace with our whole heart] the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged.*

Thesis IV: The Scriptures record many examples of Christians serving as advisors to temporal governments.

Scriptural Foundation

Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine." **Genesis 41:33-36**

And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers that were in all his kingdom. **Daniel 1:19-20**

I will also speak of your testimonies before kings
and shall not be put to shame. **Psalms 119:46**

And Stephen said:

*"Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran... **Acts 7:2***

*But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." **Acts 16:37***

*Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." ¹⁸ So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." **Acts 23:17-18***

Confessional Attestation

Apology of the Augsburg Confession III.140: *Thus also in the sermon of Daniel 4:24, faith is required. [The words of the prophet, which were full of faith and spirit, we must not regard as heathenish as those of Aristotle, or any other heathen. Aristotle also admonished Alexander that he should not use his power for his own wantonness, but for the improvement of countries and men. This was written correctly and well; concerning the office of king nothing better can be preached or written. But Daniel is speaking to his king, not only concerning his office as king, but concerning repentance, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and concerning sublime, great, spiritual subjects, which far transcend human thoughts and works.] For Daniel did not mean that the king should only bestow alms [which even a hypocrite can do], but embraces repentance when he says: Break off [Redeem, Vulg.] thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, i.e., break off thy sins by a change of heart and works. But here also faith is required. And Daniel proclaims to him many things concerning the worship of the only God, the God of Israel, and converts the king not only to bestow alms, but much more to faith. For we have the excellent confession of the king concerning the God of Israel: There is no other God that can deliver after this sort, Dan. 3:29. Therefore, in the sermon of Daniel there are two parts. The one part is that which gives commandment concerning the new life and the works of the new life. The other part is, that Daniel promises to the king the remission of sins. [Now, where there is a promise, faith is required. For the promise cannot be received in any other way than by the heart's relying on such word of God, and not regarding its own worthiness or unworthiness. Accordingly, Daniel also demands faith; for thus the promise reads: There will be healing for thy offenses.] And this promise of the remission of sins is not a preaching of the Law, but a truly prophetic and evangelical voice, of which Daniel certainly meant that it should be received in faith.*

(Cf. Preface to the Augsburg Confession, Preface to the Smalcald Articles, Preface to the Book of Concord.)

Thesis V: The Scriptures record many examples of Christian teachers teaching moral law and Christian doctrine to temporal rulers.

Scriptural Foundation

For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴ because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." **Matthew 14:3-4**

...and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet. **Matthew 2:4-5**

Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." **John 19:11**

But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." **Acts 4:19-20**

To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴ And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." ²⁵ But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." **Acts 26:22-27**

Confessional Attestation

Apology of the Augsburg Confession III.140 (Quoted above under Thesis IV)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Conclusion, 4 (Triglotta, 451): ...but that such estates and magistracies are pleasing to God, and to be engaged in them is a real holy work and divine service.

(Cf. Luther's Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation)

Thesis VI: The Scriptures command all Christians to love their neighbors, to uphold the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood, to help and support our neighbors in every bodily need, to uphold God's institution of marriage, to protect our neighbors' possessions and reputation, and to live at peace with all.

Scriptural Foundation

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ *"You shall not murder.*

¹⁴ *"You shall not commit adultery.*

¹⁵ *"You shall not steal.*

¹⁶ *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

¹⁷ *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." Ex. 20:12-17*

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. **Matt. 5:13-16***

*And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." **Matt. 22:37-40***

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **Romans 12:18***

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. **Gal. 6:10**

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. ¹³Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. **1 Peter 2:11-17***

Thesis VII: Civil laws condoning moral evils harm our society as a whole and our neighbors in particular.

Scriptural Foundation

*Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. **Romans 1:32***

*Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."
Genesis 18:20-21*

*Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. **1 Samuel 8:3***

*In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. **Psalms 10:2***

*When the righteous increase, the people rejoice,
but when the wicked rule, the people groan. **Proverbs 29:2***

*...and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)... **2 Peter 2:7-8***

*But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. **Jude 10***

Confessional Attestation

Small Catechism, Preface, 13: *For although we cannot and should not force any one to believe, yet we should insist and urge the people that they know what is right and wrong with those among whom they dwell and wish to make their living. For whoever desires to reside in a town must know and observe the town laws, the protection of which he wishes to enjoy, no matter whether he is a believer or at heart and in private a rogue or knave.*

Large Catechism I.137: *Whence come so many knaves that must daily be hanged, beheaded, broken upon the wheel, but from disobedience [to parents], because they will not submit to discipline in kindness, so that, by the punishment of God, they bring it about that we behold their misfortune and grief? For it seldom happens that such perverse people die a natural or timely death.*

But the godly and obedient have this blessing, that they live long in pleasant quietness, and see their children's children (as said above) to the third and fourth generation.

Augsburg Confession XXIII.18-23: *But while the commandment of God is in force, while the custom of the Church is well known, while impure celibacy causes many scandals, adulteries, and other crimes deserving the punishments of just magistrates, yet it is a marvelous thing that in nothing is more cruelty exercised than against the marriage of priests. God has given commandment to honor marriage. By the laws of all well-ordered commonwealths, even among the heathen, marriage is most highly honored. But now men, and that, priests, are cruelly put to death, contrary to the intent of the Canons, for no other cause than marriage. Paul, in 1 Tim. 4:3, calls that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage. This may now be readily understood when the law against marriage is maintained by such penalties.*

Thesis VIII: Christians should, therefore, work to encourage and support godly laws and society, each according to his ability, circumstance, and station in life.

Scriptural Foundation

*If a ruler listens to falsehood,
all his officials will be wicked. **Proverbs 29:12***

Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.

°Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy. **Proverbs 31:8-9**

Blessed is the one who considers the poor!
In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him. **Psalm 41:1**

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord
Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Col. 3:17**

Confessional Attestation

Large Catechism, Larger Preface, 17: For it needs must be that whoever knows the Ten Commandments perfectly must know all the Scriptures, so that, in all affairs and cases, he can advise, help, comfort, judge, and decide both spiritual and temporal matters, and is qualified to sit in judgment upon all doctrines, estates, spirits, laws, and whatever else is in the world. And what, indeed, is the entire Psalter but thoughts and exercises upon the First Commandment?

Large Catechism III.77: Likewise, that He give to emperors, kings, and all estates, and especially to the rulers of our country and to all counselors, magistrates, and officers, wisdom, strength, and success that they may govern well and vanquish the Turks and all enemies; to subjects and the common people, obedience, peace, and harmony in their life with one another

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XVI.9: Christian perfection consists not in the contempt of civil ordinances...

Thesis IX: It is meet, right, and salutary for Christian pastors in particular, as public representatives of the Christian Church, to advise civil leaders on what is right and wrong, to encourage their congregation and community to support godly causes in society, and to teach them about the specific evils that threaten society, government, and family.

Scriptural Foundation

Take away the wicked from the presence of the king,
and his throne will be established in righteousness. **Proverbs 25:5**

With patience a ruler may be persuaded,
and a soft tongue will break a bone. **Proverbs 25:15**

Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus. **Philemon 8-9**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **1 Timothy 2:1-4, esp. 3-4**

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. **1 Timothy 6:17**

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. **2 Timothy 2:24-26**

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. **2 Timothy 4:2**

Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. **Titus 2:15**

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. **1 Peter 2:15**

Confessional Attestation

Small Catechism, Preface, 19-20: *Especially should you here urge magistrates and parents to rule well and to send their children to school, showing them why it is their duty to do this, and what a damnable sin they are committing if they do not do it. For by such neglect they overthrow and destroy both the kingdom of God and that of the world, acting as the worst enemies both of God and of men. And make it very plain to them what an awful harm they are doing if they will not help to train children to be pastors, preachers, clerks [also for other offices, with which we cannot dispense in this life], etc., and that God will punish them terribly for it. For such preaching is needed. [Verily, I do not know of any other topic that deserves to be treated as much as this.] Parents and magistrates are now sinning unspeakably in this respect. The devil, too,*

aims at something cruel because of these things [that he may hurl Germany into the greatest distress].

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DISTRICT ROSTER CHANGES

March 2, 2021 - March 1, 2025

CONGREGATIONS

Formations of Multi-Congregation Parishes

Name	Name	Date
Salem, Gurley & St. Paul's, Potter	St. Paul's, Sidney	1/23/2022
Our Savior, Torrington	Trinity, Morrill	9/22/2024
Grace, Gordon	Our Savior's, Chadron	11/24/2024
Grace English, Pine Bluffs	Zion, Grover	1/28/2025

Dissolution of Multi-Congregation Parishes

Name	Name	Date
Grace, Greybull	Zion, Emblem	12/12/2024
Trinity, Wheatland	Zion, Grover & Grace English, Pine Bluffs	12/31/2024

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCESSIONS AND TRANSFERS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS: Pastors

Name	From	To	Date
Jacob Benson	New England District	St. John's, Lovell	3/12/2021
John Christensen	Minnesota North	Emeritus	8/15/2021
Travis Berg	Iowa East	Trinity, Cheyenne	2/28/2022
Zachary Viggers	Iowa West	Trinity, Gillette	10/31/2022
Roger Mullet	Indiana	Prince of Peace, Buffalo	6/22/2023
Albert Kasten, Sr.	Rocky Mountain	Emeritus	8/23/2023
Harold Ristau	LC-Canada	Mount Hope, Casper	4/1/2024
Daniel Harrington	Indiana	Immanuel, Powell	4/1/2024
Stephen Kieser	Texas	Trinity, Riverton	10/26/2024
Thomas Obersat	Texas	Mount Hope, Casper	1/1/2025

ACCESSIONS AND TRANSFERS FROM OUR SEMINARIES/COLLOQUY: Pastors

Name	From	To	Date
Ellery Steffensen	Fort Wayne	St. John's, Kimball & Immanuel, Burns	7/8/2023
Peter Preus	Fort Wayne	St. Paul's, Bridgeport	7/7/2024
Andrew Hill	Fort Wayne	Trinity, Rock Springs & Emmanuel, Green River	7/20/2024

CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT: Pastors

Name	From	To	Date
Peter Bertram	Our Savior's, Chadron	Emeritus	5/30/2022
Kenneth Mars	St. John's, Kimball Immanuel, Burns	Christ the King, Cody	8/28/2022
Travis Berg	Trinity, Cheyenne	Bethel, Lander	6/25/2023
Lee Wisroth	Immanuel, Powell	Emeritus	7/24/2023
Darrell Debowey	Zion, Laramie	Emeritus	2/15/2024
James Martin	Trinity, Rock Springs Emmanuel, Green River	Emeritus	5/27/2024
Mark Mumme	Trinity, Riverton	Zion, Laramie	7/14/2024
Kevin Rose	Our Savior's, Pinedale Peace, Big Piney	Emeritus	1/1/2025

CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT (Dual Parish Pastors): Pastors

Name	From	Joined	Date
Ted Bourret	St. Paul's, Potter Salem, Gurley	St. Paul's, Sidney	3/13/2022
Scott Firminhac	Our Savior, Torrington	Trinity, Morrill	9/22/2024
Travis Sherman	Grace, Gordon	Our Savior's, Chadron	11/23/2024

TRANSFERS TO OTHER DISTRICTS: Pastors

Name	From	To	Date
Jared Tucher	Trinity, Gillette	Indiana	10/1/2021
Gerald Heinecke	Prince of Peace, Buffalo	Mid-South	5/23/2022
Scott Sheilds	Chaplain, Juneau, AK	Northwest	5/26/2022
Noah Fremer	Bethel, Lander	South Wisconsin	5/30/2022
Peter Bertram	Emeritus	Kansas	6/1/2022
Paul Nus	Candidate	Ohio	9/27/2022
Lynn Christensen	Chaplain, Japan	Nebraska	11/1/2022
Kenneth Humphrey	Trinity, Morrill	Nebraska	8/28/2023
Allen Strawn	St. Paul's, Bridgeport	South Wisconsin	1/27/2024
Rene Castellero	Immanuel, Sheridan	Southern Illinois	5/20/2024
James Rockhill	Bethlehem, Crawford & Redeemer, Harrison	Iowa East	6/1/2024
Jais Tinglund	Zion, Emblem & Grace, Greybull	Pacific Southwest	6/1/2024

CALLED TO GLORY: Pastors

Name	Date
Francis O. Koessel	11/25/2022
Fred F. Schroeder	1/3/2024
Thomas C. Jacobsen	3/7/2024
Richard L. Keuck	2/27/2025

REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER: Pastors

Name	By	Date
Duane Simonson	Voluntary Resignation	2/7/2022
Shawn Kumm	Voluntary Resignation	1/10/2022

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCESSIONS AND TRANSFERS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS: Commissioned

Name	From	To	Date
Nathanael Hahn	South Wisconsin	Mount Hope, Casper	8/29/2021
Diane Christensen	Minnesota North	Candidate	12/15/2021
Jesse Moore	Rocky Mountain	Candidate	1/11/2022
Melissa Harrington	Indiana	Candidate	4/1/2024
Caleb Karges	Pacific Southwest	Mount Hope, Casper	1/26/2025

ACCESSIONS AND TRANSFERS FROM OUR CONCORDIAS: Commissioned

Name	From	To	Date
Natasha Bonine	Concordia, Seward	Trinity, Riverton	8/22/2021
Hannah Engwall	Concordia, Mequon	Mount Hope, Casper	8/29/2021
Lukas Sollberger	Concordia, Seward	Trinity, Cheyenne	9/12/2022

CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT: Commissioned

Name	From	To	Date
Tarayca Walters	Mount Hope, Casper	Candidate	9/1/2021
Jesse Moore	Candidate	Immanuel, Alliance	9/11/2022
Steve Coniglio	Trinity, Riverton	Emeritus	6/30/2023
Natasha Bonine	Trinity, Riverton	Candidate	8/15/2024
Brianna Erdman	Trinity, Riverton	Candidate	9/10/2024

TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS: Commissioned

Name	From	To	Date
Christa Doyle	Trinity, Rock Springs	Nebraska	8/10/2021
Audrey Partipilo	Trinity, Riverton	Indiana	6/8/2023
Roxanne Humphrey	Candidate	Nebraska	8/28/2023

REMOVED:

None

CALLED TO GLORY: Commissioned

Name	Date
Carol Caspersen	3/21/2021

ANNIVERSARIES

ORDAINED

In the Year of Our Lord 2022

Name	Years of Service
Richard Neugebauer	35
Mark Maas	35
Ralph Jaeger	30
Andrew Richard	10
Norman Wacker	10
Travis Sherman	10
Kevin Rose	10

In the Year of Our Lord 2023

Name	Years of Service
David Boehnke	55
John Rasmussen	55
Marvin Temme	50
Richard Boche	50
Ralph Morris	45
Donald Rieman	45
Ron Garwood	40
Lee Wisroth	40
Paul Beyer	30
Daniel Praeuner	30
Terry Wiley	30
Dan Mulholland	25
George Naylor	25
Lincoln Winter	25
Darrell Debowey	20
David Bott	20

Joshua Scheer	15
Jared Korb	10

In the Year of Our Lord 2024

Name	Years of Service
David Caspersen	55
Allan Wierschke	30
James Martin	25
Darren Pflughoeft	25
Dan Holthus	25
Gregory Sonnenschein	15
Samuel Needham	15
Jacob Benson	5
Roger Mullet	5

In the Year of Our Lord 2025

Name	Years of Service
Harold Hintzman Jr	50
Phillip Grovenstein	40
Richard Mueller	35
John Hill	35
Jonathan Lange	35
David Anderson	35
Jeffery Grams	30
Paul Cain	25
Mark Mumme	25
Kenneth Mars	20
Ryan Mills	20
Marcus Baikie	15
Mark Preus	15
Shaun Daugherty	15

COMMISSIONED

In the Year of Our Lord 2022

Name	Years of Service
Jill Mueller	35
Elizabeth Carlson	25
Steve Coniglio	25
Caleb Karges	5

In the Year of Our Lord 2023

Name	Years of Service
Garnet Dwyer	60
Cheri Pollom	30
Karen Bergquist	15
Anna Hahn	5

In the Year of Our Lord 2024

Name	Years of Service
Shirley Bundschuh	45
Jesse Moore	15
Breanna Erdman	5
Hannah Engwall	5

In the Year of Our Lord 2025

Name	Years of Service
Cecelia Postma	40
Leah Wierschke	30
Stanna Funk	25
Tarayca Walters	25
Dixie Ailts	20
Tiffany Baikie	20
Nathanael Hahn	5

CONGREGATIONS

In the Year of Our Lord 2022

Congregation	Number of Years
Trinity, Cheyenne	130
Zion, Chappell	105
Trinity, Casper	105
Zion, Douglas	75
Grace, Greybull	75
St. Paul's, Thermopolis	75
Bethel, Lander	70
Mount Hope, Casper	60
Prince of Peace, Buffalo	50
Our Redeemer, Glenrock	50
Our Saviour, Evanston	40
Shepherd of the Valley, Fort Bridger	40

In the Year of Our Lord 2023

Congregation	Number of Years
Immanuel, Sheridan	120
St. James, Scottsbluff	115
Immanuel, Burns	115
St. Paul's, Lusk	110
Trinity, Wheatland	110
St. Paul's, Potter	105
Bethlehem, Crawford	105
Trinity, Riverton	105
St. Paul's, Bridgeport	80
Christ, Rawlins	75
Our Savior, Cheyenne	65
Faith, Gering	60
St. Andrew's, Laramie	60

In the Year of Our Lord 2024

Congregation	Number of Years
St. Paul, Rushville	135
Zion, Emblem	125
Our Savior's, Chadron	100
Redeemer, Harrison	95
Zion, Hay Springs	95
Trinity, Gillette	95
St. Paul's, Kemmerer	80
Mount Calvary, Bayard	70
Redeemer, Jackson	65
Bethlehem, Moorcroft	50
King of Glory, Cheyenne	35

In the Year of Our Lord 2025

Congregation	Number of Years
Salem, Gurley	115
St. Paul's, Sidney	110
Our Savior, Torrington	90
St. Luke's, Worland	75
Trinity, Rock Springs	75
Mount Calvary, Dubois	70
Our Savior's, Pinedale	65
Peace, Marbleton	60
Emmanuel, Green River	60
Christ Our Savior, Etna	15

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. Paul Cain

My duties as Wyoming District First Vice-President included presiding over and attending Board of Directors meetings and serving as an Advisory member on the Commission on Mission Services. Both bodies convene five times annually. I served on the District Administrative Team and the Convention Committee and attended Praesidium meetings held in conjunction with Board of Directors meetings, as well as Circuit Visitor meetings twice a year.

I also conducted an official visitation of Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School (and Luther Classical College's new president) in Casper, WY.

It is an honor and joy to serve in this way.

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. Jonathan Lange

I have been honored in serving the congregations, members, and pastors of the Wyoming District for the past three years in my office as Second Vice-President and Regional Vice-President representing the Yellowstone and Headwaters Circuits. It has been a privilege to serve with President John Hill, 1st Vice-President Rev. Paul Cain and 3rd Vice-Presidents Rev Allen Strawn, Rev. James Rockhill, and Rev. Ted Bourret. Together we have assisted President Hill by advising him in meetings of the Praesidium and various emergent situations as they have arisen in his role as ecclesiastical visitor to the pastors and congregations of the Wyoming District.

I have served on the District Convention Committee and the District Administrative Team (DAT) as part of my duties as 2nd Vice-President. I also serve as an advisory member of the Commission of Congregational Services, as well as the District Board of Directors.

In 2022, district leadership recognized that increasing anti-Christian forces in public higher education and increasing costs of the same present an emerging challenge to the potential pastors who are preparing for entry into the seminaries of the LCMS. As 2nd Vice-President, I was privileged to draft a letter that was sent by the District Board of Directors to the LCMS entities who have been given the charge to form the next

generation of pastors. By our efforts, we hope that our Synod has been encouraged to give a fresh look at the higher education needs of future pastors.

We are very blessed with faithful and dedicated pastors and laity who give of their time and talent to serve the Wyoming District and have learned much through them. Thank you for entrusting this great privilege to me during the last quadrennium. As we enter into the next triennium, I am confident that God will supply both the resources and the wisdom to keep a vital Word and Sacrament ministry operating throughout the state of Wyoming and the panhandle of Nebraska.

THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. Ted Bourret

I have had the great honor and privilege to serve the Wyoming District since August 15, 2024 (completing the term of Rev. Allen Strawn and Rev. James Rockhill, both who received and accepted calls to congregations outside the Wyoming District). As Third Vice-President I chair the twice-yearly meetings of the Circuit Visitors. In these meetings, the visitors join together in study of the Word of God, Confessions of the Lutheran Church, we pray and discuss the well-being of the six circuits and congregations of the district. We also take up matters which concern our District and Synod, providing counsel to our District President, and the Boards and Commissions of District. As one of three Vice-Presidents I met with District President Rev. John Hill and my brother Vice-Presidents, Rev. Paul Cain and Rev. Jonathan Lange, to study God's Word, the Lutheran Confessions, and also provide counsel and support for District President Hill as he performs his responsibilities for the district. I serve as an advisory member of the District Board of Directors (making all the meetings either in-person or via videoconferencing). I was honored, at the request of President Hill to install Rev. Scott Firminhac as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church; Morrill, NE in September of 2024. I thank the district congregations and members, and my congregations and members for their support and trust in me as I have served the District.

CONSTITUTIONS CHAIRMAN

Rev. Jonathan Lange

The 2nd Vice-President of the Wyoming District also serves as the District Constitution Chairman. He serves as a liaison between the district congregations and parishes and

the Board of Directors of the Wyoming District. Congregations (and multi-congregation parishes) that wish to amend their constitutions, bylaws, or articles of agreement are provided guidelines and assistance in that process that it would be done decently and in good order. Consideration and guidance are also given to these amendments and their approval relative to applicable state law(s).

It has been my honor to assist the District Board of Directors, the District President, and the District Secretary in review and amendment to the District Handbook and Guidelines and changes to those, as necessary. I want to thank the Congregations and their members who in this quadrennium have worked with me and the Board on any amendments or agreements.

Within the past triennium the following congregations (or parishes) have requested and received approval from the Board of Directors for constitution and/or bylaw amendments, or for amendments to multi-point parish agreements or for the approval of those agreements:

2021

- Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Crawford, NE Constitution and Bylaw approved August 24, 2021
- Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE Constitution and Bylaws approved August 24, 2021
- Prince of Peace, Buffalo, WY received, November 8, 2021. No action
- Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cody, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved August 24, 2021

2023

- Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved January 24, 2023
- Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved May 23, 2023
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved October 10, 2023

2024

- Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cody, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved January 23, 2024

- Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY Constitution and Bylaws approved January 23, 2024
- Faith Lutheran Church, Gering, NE Constitution and Bylaws approved May 14, 2024
- Our Savior Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY and Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE Dual-parish agreement approved August 27, 2024
- Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Casper WY Constitution and Bylaws approved October 22, 2024
- Dissolution of Grace, Trinity, and Zion Tri-point parish, December 31, 2024

2025

- Grace English Lutheran Church, Pine Bluffs, WY and Zion Lutheran Church, Grover, CO Dual-parish agreement, approved January 8, 2025

EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

Rev. Andrew Richard

The schools of the Wyoming District are:

- Immanuel Lutheran School, Alliance, NE
- Martin Luther Grammar School and Immanuel Academy, Sheridan, WY
- Mount Hope Lutheran School, Casper, WY
- Trinity Lutheran School, Cheyenne, WY
- Trinity Lutheran School, Riverton, WY

Visitation

I had the opportunity to visit Martin Luther Grammar School and Immanuel Academy in Sheridan in conjunction with a CCLE re-accreditation visit in March 2023. I visited Trinity Lutheran School in Riverton in conjunction with a CCLE accreditation status visit. I've visited with administrators and teachers from other schools at the annual Fall Teachers' Conference and have provided various educational and governance resources to administrators and teachers who have requested them.

Fall Conferences

In October 2022 Dr. James Tallmon presented on Dialectic and Rhetoric. In October 2023 our topic was music; our main presenter was Kantor Steven Hoffman, and other teachers from the district provided individual sessions. In October 2024, Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Boyle presented on the fundamentals of classical Lutheran education.

Homeschool Family Retreat

The Wyoming District began hosting a Homeschool Family Retreat on Casper Mountain in the summer of 2020, and it has continued annually since. This has been a support to the homeschooling families of our LCMS congregations, and has been an excellent opportunity to foster relationships and learn together. In July 2022 Dr. Gabriel Haley from Concordia University Nebraska presented on "Educating for a Christian Life." In July 2023 various presenters covered individual topics: the Christian use of extrabiblical histories, the Christian approach to science, and the Bible in music and art. In July 2024 Dr. Ryan MacPherson presented "Ars Docendi: The Best Teaching Methods for Your Students." This year's Homeschool Family Retreat is scheduled for July 22-24, 2025.

Education Savings Accounts

The Wyoming Education Savings Act was signed into law on March 21, 2024, and the Steamboat Legacy Scholarship Act, which slightly altered the former, was signed on March 4, 2025. This legislation allows the establishment of Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) for families that do not have their children enrolled in public school. Eligible families can apply to have an account set up. Each eligible child receives \$7,000, which can be spent at certified education service providers. There are two levels of state approval involved: 1) the family must meet the income and enrollment qualifications, and 2) the service provider (school) must meet certain requirements. President Hill has formed a task force of a few Wyoming District pastors for the purpose of giving written advice and guidelines for our Wyoming District schools so that we may take advantage of this program while proceeding with proper caution.

Support from the Wyoming District LWML

The schools of the Wyoming District thank the district's LWML for their consistent support of our Lutheran schools. Between the last Wyoming District Convention and this, they have given mission grants to our district schools twice: \$10,000 for the 2022-2024 biennium, and \$10,000 for the 2024-2026 biennium (\$1,000 per school per year during each biennium).

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Rev. Mark Mumme

The Wyoming District continues their longstanding practice of offering regular opportunities for pastors to gather for continuing education, with financial support available on a first-come, first-served basis.

- In June 2021, the Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz (CTS, Fort Wayne) joined us at Fort Robinson State Park to present on the topic 'To the Point of Shedding Blood: Christian Martyrdom in the First Three Centuries,' with an emphasis on how to prepare for the coming persecution of the Church in 21st century America.
- In August 2021, Rev. Lincoln Winter offered a course at Grace, Pine Bluffs entitled 'Advanced Catechetics: Philosophy and Practice.'
- In November 2021, the Rev. Dr. Gregory Schulz (CUW) led us in a study of 'Philosophy KATA CHRISTON: Western Thinking - Here at the End of Western Culture' at St. Paul's, Thermopolis.
- In August 2022, Rev. Neil Carlson's class on 'A Biblical History of Feminism and the Church's Response' at Grace, Pine Bluffs was postponed following his accident.
- In November 2022, Rev. John Hill led us through a study entitled 'Practical Lessons from the Augsburg Confession: AC XXII-XXVIII' at St. Paul's, Thermopolis.
- In June 2023, Dr. Andrew Steinmann (CU Chicago) presented on 'Exploring the Wisdom of Solomon' at Fort Robinson State Park.'
- In August 2023, the Rev. Dr. David Petersen (Redeemer, Fort Wayne) offered a preaching workshop at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cheyenne entitled '21st Century Preaching: Gleaning Methods from Luther, Gerhard, and Walther.'
- In November 2023, Rev Roger Mullet presented a study entitled 'Drawing Water from the Wells of Salvation: A Study of the Themes in Isaiah 1-12' at St. Paul's, Thermopolis.
- In August 2024, the Rev. Dr. David Maxwell (CS, St. Louis) offered a course on 'The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria' at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cheyenne.

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- Rev. William Weedon (St. Paul, Hamel, IL) is scheduled to teach a course on 'The Fathers and the Solas' at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cheyenne in August 2025.
 - Plans are tentatively in place for Rev. Jesse Krusemark (St. Paul's & Trinity, Austin, MN) to join us in Thermopolis in November 2025 to present on his recent work with Dr. Daniel Reuning (Fort Wayne), with an emphasis on hymn translation and selection.

Congregations are urged to budget annually for the ongoing education of their pastor, since shepherds who are spiritually nourished and refreshed themselves are better able to serve the needs of the flock entrusted to their care.

This report is supplied by Mr. Jeff Snyder

St Andrew's Parsonage

In 2021, a larger home was identified that would better accommodate Pastor Mark Preus and his growing family. This new home was purchased for \$596,000, the old parsonage sold for \$315,000, and the rest was financed via an LCEF loan. Several major gifts have reduced the loan amount significantly where it should be paid off in 2031.

- \$11,000 was spent on repairs to get the old parsonage ready for sale. Numerous volunteers from around the district also helped in this endeavor.
- Less than \$3500 has been spent on the new parsonage for minor maintenance and repairs.
- Windows are good but screens need to be replaced.
- St. Andrew's is providing a property trustee to assist in regular maintenance.

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

Before 2024, St. Andrew's had been fixing and patching small leaks in the roof, causing interior ceiling damage. Roof inspection noted that the roof was past its life expectancy, especially the areas that are flat. A new roof was installed in April of 2024 costing \$132,000. The roof was paid for from the proceeds of the Wind River Lutheran Mission sale and cash reserves.

- \$1500 spent for minor roof repairs
- \$4000 spent to maintain the HVAC system and air handlers

Wind River Lutheran Mission

Since Covid, the mission was greatly impacted with little opportunity for mission work. The Board of Directors voted to suspend ministry work at the mission, and the church building was sold for \$94,000 and 2+ acres of land approximately 2 miles to the northeast of the mission on Ethete Road. This land can be used for future mission endeavors.

- Approximately \$4000 was spent on various maintenance projects.
- Many items were saved for posterity and they are in storage or being used.

Lutheran Ministries Center

Starting around 2019, an effort was made to finish the basement of the district office

to make it more usable for conferences and educational endeavors, and to enhance and update the memorial library to make it more usable. Work had slowly progressed mainly with volunteers and was finished in late 2024. Since then, Luther Classical College has also assisted in some small projects. LCC is currently renting two upstairs offices and most of the downstairs as well for faculty, staff, and their growing library.

- \$5,400 was spent on new LED lighting throughout the entire building, replacing old and failing fluorescent fixtures.
- \$14,500 was spent on new carpet and installation throughout the entire building.
- \$2,000 was spent on new boardroom chairs.

Memorial Library

As noted above, the memorial library did receive new updates with carpet and lights. Most of the basement project was funded by interest received on the Memorial Library Endowment. The current library is being cataloged into a new online system that should be ready in the near future.

- \$10,000 funded by the endowment for the new carpet.
- In total, the endowment funded approximately \$25,000 for basement renovations.

MARRIAGE, LIFE, & FAMILY

Rev. Jonathan Lange

Public attacks against God's institution of Holy Marriage (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:24; and Matthew 19) reached a fever pitch since the 2021 convention of the Wyoming District. Thus, God gave the Wyoming District many opportunities to make the good confession.

- In 2022, the Marriage, Life and Family facilitator helped to prepare a public statement on H.R. 8404 "An Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act," which was individually signed by 37 pastors of the District. (appended)
- The MLF facilitator also drafted a statement that was adopted at the 2023 Fall Pastors' Conference encouraging Lutherans to exercise their vocation as citizens to protect children from obscene literature in neighborhood libraries. (appended)

- The MLF facilitator continued to publish weekly in Wyoming’s public newspapers. These columns intend to help non-Christians understand the Biblical worldview, and to educate and encourage Christians in the public square. It is my prayer that they might be an example of how Christians can engage in public discourse in a God-pleasing way.
- The MLF facilitator continues to engage government officials and to organize the Wyoming Pastors Network to do the same. During legislative sessions he addresses state legislation pertaining to the sanctity of Holy Marriage, the sanctity of life, and God’s design for the family.

We should thank God not only for the many opportunities that he gives to help our neighbors by advocating for their marriages, their lives, and their families. We should also thank God for the miraculous victories that he provides to encourage us.

In particular, we rejoice that on the annual feast of St. John the Baptist’s birthday (June 24, 2022) God moved the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn both *Roe v. Wade* and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*. After nearly 50 years of the federal courts blocking local governments from carrying out their God-given vocation, God returned that responsibility to us. This gives all of us the vocation to defend our smallest neighbor and to “speak well of him” (Small Catechism, 8th commandment). God also calls us to exercise the power of the sword to “help and protect him in every bodily need” (Small Catechism, 5th commandment).

Appendix 1:

A Statement from the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod [For Her Pastors and Congregations](#) (December 5, 2022)

God created man as male and female and instituted marriage as the lifelong conjugal union of one man and one woman. By this design for mankind God continues to create the fruit of children, gives companionship in marriage and family, and provides help against lustful desires. God gave marriage to be the fountainhead of goods that He intends for all children and adults, for all communities, and for all churches.

These truths about marriage are not private religious opinions. The Biblical teachings on marriage are taught by nature itself. They have no particular traditional, national, ethnic, or cultural character to them. They are universal truths. They apply to all people of all places and all times. They are the foundation and source of all just civil laws for marriage and family. Every legitimate government is bound by God to promote and defend them.

H.R. 8404, "An Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act," rejects this foundation for just and good laws. It proposes to repeal "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," to replace God with government and His laws with unnatural laws. It requires that lies about man's nature and about marriage be established with favored legal status.

All legislators who voted for H.R. 8404 have publicly repudiated the works and will of the one true God. By this legislative action they have established a favored, secular religion which is openly set against the Holy Triune God. They have rejected God as the only source of just laws, that is, of justice, goodness, beauty, and every civil good. Legislators who claim that Christian doctrine permits or even requires the passage of H.R. 8404 have compounded a sinful vote with a false confession.

The governmental establishment of an unnatural, unbiblical definition of marriage does not obligate Christians to give it any faith or credence. Christian love does not permit us to live a lie. All Christians are called to confess the truth of marriage even if this law brings down civil and financial penalties on them. "We must obey God rather than men." By upholding the lifelong, conjugal union of one man and one woman we defend God's plan for protecting people from the loneliness, pain, and other evils that follow from the destruction of the family.

God the Father sent His Son to be born of a woman within a marriage, to be born under His eternal law. By His crucifixion and resurrection He obtained eternal redemption and life for all. The Church rejoices with every Christian that Jesus offers this redemption and this healing as an answer to all evil, loneliness, and pain. We bring the good news to every sinner that Jesus invites you into the true family of God through faith in Him.

We acknowledge that the passage of H.R. 8404 will give the enemies of Christ the legal means to afflict faithful Christians and churches with many evils. Yet by God's grace in Christ we will continue to proclaim God's truth, live according to God's Word, love all our neighbors as God teaches, and bear the malice of others with fortitude. For we have a never-ending source of comfort and hope in God our Savior. God teaches us to strengthen one another's hearts to have hope "through the endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures" (Romans 15:5). Jesus Himself bids us "rejoice and be exceeding glad" when we are persecuted for the truth of Christ (Matthew 5:12). And He says, "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). God grant us peaceful hearts, cheerful minds, and bold courage to speak and live according to His Word.

In Christ's name,

Pastors of the Wyoming District of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

Rev. John E. Hill, President, Wyoming District LCMS

Rev. Paul Cain, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY, 1st Vice-President

Rev. Jonathan Lange, Our Saviour and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches, Evanston and Kemmerer, WY, 2nd Vice-President

Rev. Allen Strawn, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, NE, 3rd Vice President

Rev. John Preus, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Travis Berg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Kevin Rose, Peace and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches, Marbleton and Pinedale, WY

Rev. Travis Sherman, Grace Lutheran Church, Gordon, NE

Rev. Mark Maas, King of Glory Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Rene Castellero, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY

Rev. Norman Wacker, Bethlehem and Mount Calvary Lutheran Churches, Moorcroft and Sundance, WY

Rev. Paul Beyer, Emeritus, Casper, WY

Rev. Jais Tinglund, Zion and Grace Lutheran Churches, Emblem and Greybull, WY

Rev. Zachary Viggers, Trinity Lutheran Church, Gillette, WY

Rev. Jared Korb, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Worland, WY

Rev. Mark Preus, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center, Laramie, WY

Rev. Darrell Debowey, Zion Lutheran Church, Laramie, WY

Rev. Ted Bourret, Salem and St. Paul's and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches, Gurley, Potter, and Sidney, NE

Rev. Kenneth Humphrey, Trinity Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE

Rev. Jon Olson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper, WY

Rev. Christian Preus, Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY

Rev. Daniel Mulholland, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Fort Bridger, WY

Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cody, WY

Rev. Ron Garwood, Christ the King Lutheran Church and District President Emeritus, Cody, WY

Rev. Samuel Needham, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Thermopolis, WY

Rev. Scott Firminhac, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY

Rev. Richard Boche, District President Emeritus, Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Jacob Benson, St. John's Lutheran Church, Lovell, WY

Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lusk, WY

Rev. Mark Mumme, Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton, WY

Rev. Richard Mueller, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alliance, NE
Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Christ Lutheran Church, Rawlins, WY
Rev. John Christensen, Emeritus, Thermopolis, WY
Rev. James Rockhill, Bethlehem and Redeemer Lutheran Churches, Crawford and Harrison, NE
Rev. Ralph Morris, Emeritus, Gering, NE
Rev. Daniel Holthus, Emeritus, Casper, WY
Rev. David Bott, Redeemer and Christ Our Savior, Jackson and Star Valley, WY

Appendix 2:

A statement from the pastors of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (October 4, 2023)

We thank God for the vigilance and diligence of parents, educators, library-workers and citizens throughout Wyoming who have taken action to protect children. Through the faithful exercise of their vocation, inappropriate books and events have been revealed and challenged in libraries throughout Wyoming. We refer to press accounts of library book controversies in Campbell County, Laramie County School District, Sheridan County School District, Natrona County School District, Lincoln County Library, and Kelly Walsh High School, and to a “drag story hour” (DSH) event at the Albany County Public library (June 2022).

Our Lord Jesus Christ especially blessed little children during His earthly ministry (Mark 10:13-16). He commanded all human beings to “become like children” precisely because of their dependence on God (Matthew 18:3-4). Since childlike dependence is, at one and the same time, highly valued and exploitable by those who would do harm, Jesus followed His blessing with a vivid warning to those who would endanger children: “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Children are harmed when they are exposed to truths of adulthood for which bodies and minds are not yet ready. They are doubly harmed when exposed to role models who teach falsehoods by word and deed (Deuteronomy 22:5). God gives parents special and direct charge over each child that He entrusts into their care (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4). It is their duty to shield children from all harm, including those caused by inappropriate images, words, and actions. Just governments recognize and respect this authority by creating institutions and laws that help and do not hinder parents to maintain the innocence of children while

raising them “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Because all fathers and mothers have this divine command, all children have this protection as their God-given right.

Wyoming criminal law recognizes the responsibility of the entire community to join in protecting the innocence and vulnerability of children. Title 6, chapter 4 of Wyoming statute enumerates crimes against the family from public indecency to the distribution of obscene literature (Articles 2 & 3). There can be no legitimate reason to exempt either public libraries or school libraries from these protections. Moreover, Article 4 “Offenses against the family” explicitly prohibits anyone—most especially government actors— from endangering children by exposing them to indecent, obscene and pornographic acts and images— either directly or by hampering parental supervision.

Therefore, when the Albany County Library hosted a “Drag Story Hour,” in June 2022, those officials responsible abused their public office. The DSH organization explicitly admits, on its website, that such events are intend to “capture[] the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and give[] kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like [libraries], kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions. . .” This is plainly intended to sexualize children and to fill their minds with lies about the nature of male and female, men and women. This is grooming by any standard.

State, county, or municipal officials who are incapable of discerning how these evils harm children should not be entrusted with the public care and teaching of children. Not only is the DSH organization designed to subvert God’s institution of Holy Marriage, its deliberate appeal to prurient interests of children also engages in behaviors clearly prohibited by Wyoming statute: public indecency and promoting obscenities to minors (W.S. 6-4-201(a)(iii)), 6-4-301(a)(iii), 6-4-302, etc.) Based on the Word of God, we encourage our members to support and uphold the godly intent of Wyoming’s indecency and obscenity laws both in private conversation and in public action. Additionally, we, here, publicly correct three common misunderstandings that are maliciously fostered by opponents of good and just laws.

1. We point out the standards of Wyoming law not as a substitute for the standards of God’s Word, but to refute a misguided interpretation of the First Amendment. While our bodies and souls are given by God, and common-sense laws reflect this common origin, it is a perversion of reason to consider such laws as the state establishment of religion.

2. Likewise, it is a perversion of the First Amendment to set it at odds with the parental right and responsibility to direct the education of their children. The American Library Association has ensconced this ungodly and unconstitutional perversion in its Library Bill of Rights, (Arts. V & VII); and Guidelines for library policies (esp. #8). Accordingly, the ALA refuses to abide by state laws that make a distinction between adults and minors and specially guards children more than adults from indecent literature and activities. No state or county library should subscribe to the ALA Library Bill of Rights or adopt library policies based on its lies.
3. Finally, it is an abuse of the public trust when anyone—especially an office-holder—deliberately misleads the public. Specifically, when requests to move books inappropriate for minors out of the children’s section are wantonly mislabeled as “book burning,” “censorship,” “book banning,” and other incendiary rhetoric, the public is denied its right to have a truthful and informed debate, while citizens are unjustly slandered by government officials. Organizations that employ such rhetoric should be shunned. And public officials who repeat these lies in the course of their duties should be censured.

We pastors strive to make our churches places of refuge from a world gone mad. We preach the God who loves His creation as He has made it. We preach the God who became man to redeem mankind. We preach the God who forgives all sins and dwells in all who repent their rebellion against the Creator and trust in Him in the person of Jesus.

Since there can be no repenting of rebellion without acknowledging the authority of the Creator, (Whom the Declaration of Independence calls ‘Nature’s God’), ministers of God are duty-bound to name this Creator as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to give witness that the public crimes against Wyoming families and children are sins against Him. We invite all to embrace this truth in repentance and faith, and to join us in praying God to forgive us our sins and restore sanity and peace to our state.

CHIMNEY ROCK CIRCUIT

Rev. Richard Neugebauer

These are the churches and pastors of the Chimney Rock Circuit.

Rev. Neil Carlson is pastor of a dual parish: Trinity south of Sidney, NE and Zion in Chappell, NE

Rev. Ted Bourret (who announced his retirement January of 2025) is pastor of a tri-point parish: St. Paul's north of Potter, NE, Salem in Gurley, NE, and St. Paul's in Sidney, NE.

Rev. Peter Preus was ordained and installed in July of 2024 as pastor of St. Paul's in Bridgeport, NE.

Rev. George Naylor is pastor of a dual parish: Mount Calvary in Bayard, NE and St. James in Scottsbluff, NE.

Rev. Jeffery Grams is pastor of St. John's in Scottsbluff, NE.

Rev. Richard Neugebauer is pastor of Faith in Gering, NE.

Rev. Ralph Morris (Faith, Gering) and Rev. Phil Found (St. John's, Scottsbluff) are the retired pastors in the area.

Given the demographic loss of population in the panhandle, a major change in the circuit over the last four years has been the need for vacant congregations to pursue multi-parish agreements, which has allowed for Word and Sacrament ministry to continue.

Each congregation has been visited within the last four years, some of whom by way of their vacancy.

PINE RIDGE CIRCUIT

Rev. Scott Firminhac

The congregations of the Pine Ridge Circuit continue to serve the Triune God by carrying out the mission God has given each of these congregations and to each of us, by proclaiming the Word truthfully and administering the Sacraments rightly. Since our last convention there have been several changes in our circuit pastorally. Two pastors received Divine Calls to serve in other congregations and accepted those Divine Calls. Pastor James Rockhill who served Bethlehem, Crawford, Nebraska and Redeemer, Harrison, Nebraska accepted a call to Iowa. Pastor Ken Humphrey who was serving Trinity, Morrill, Nebraska accepted a call to a dual parish in eastern Nebraska. Pastor Peter Bertram who served Our Savior's, Chadron, Nebraska for over twenty years also retired since our last convention and is now residing in Kansas. Because of the vacancies in the circuit and financial challenges within several congregations, some of the congregations have now been converted to dual parishes.

Our Savior's, Chadron, Nebraska and Grace, Gordon, Nebraska have now become a dual parish and are being served by Pastor Travis Sherman. Pastor Sherman also continues to serve a vacancy in the Nebraska District at Grace, Merriman. Our Savior Lutheran Church in Torrington, Wyoming also became a dual parish with Trinity in Morrill Nebraska. Pastor Scott Firminhac is serving these two congregations.

The dual parish of Redeemer, Harrison, Nebraska and Bethlehem, Crawford, Nebraska is currently vacant and is pursuing a candidate from one of our seminaries. The Wyoming District is extremely grateful for Pastor Darren Pflughoeft and Pastor Richard Mueller's willingness to serve these vacancies over the last year.

Pastor Wierschke continues his faithful service to the dual parish at Zion, Hay Springs, Nebraska and St. Paul, Rushville, Nebraska. Pastor Darren Pflughoeft also continues to faithfully serve St. Paul's in Lusk, Wyoming.

There are a couple of activities going on in the Pine Ridge circuit that I rejoice in reporting. Pastor Allan Wierschke continues to spearhead monthly circuit youth and family gatherings which are usually held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Alliance, Nebraska. Pastor Darren Pflughoeft continues doing Bible Studies every Sunday afternoon at the Wyoming Department of Corrections Women's Prison in Lusk, Wyoming.

In terms of education, Grace in Gordon, Nebraska continues to operate a preschool and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Alliance, Nebraska continues to operate a day school and has experienced some exciting growth over the last few years. Pastor Shaun Daugherty (Headmaster) and Jill Mueller (Principal) work tirelessly to faithfully bring a Christ-centered education option to the members of Immanuel and the Alliance community.

The pastors of the Pine Ridge and Chimney Rock Circuits continue to meet regularly for Winkel conferences. The meetings begin with the Divine Service which is followed by an exegetical study on the Pastoral Epistles. These are led by the pastor whose congregation hosted the previous month's Winkel. After lunch we get into casuistry issues along with updating the pastors on district and Synodical information. We then spend the remainder of the time studying a particular book chosen by the group and we conclude with a study on the Lutheran Confessions. Currently the book we are studying is *Faith that Engages the Culture* by Alfonso Espinosa and in our Lutheran Confessions study we are looking at *The Formula of Concord*.

Last October at a Circuit Forum I was reelected to another three-year term as Circuit Visitor. I would like to thank the pastors and members of the Pine Ridge Circuits for

their faithfulness and exemplifying a spirit of Christ-like humility and care for me, for one another, and for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

POWDER RIVER CIRCUIT

Rev. Jon C. Olson

The Powder River Circuit pastors meet monthly for Winkel consisting of the Divine Service or Matins, an exegetical study, lunch and conversation, doctrinal study, business, and pastoral casuistry.

Luther Classical College will begin its first school year in August 2025.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Buffalo

Rev. Roger Mullet, Adjunct Lecturer at Luther Classical College (July 2023)

Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School, Casper

Rev. Dr. Christian Preus, Senior Pastor (July 2016)

Rev. Andrew Richard, Assistant Pastor/Headmaster, Upper level Humanities (May 2019)

Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, Assistant Pastor, President at Luther Classical College (April 2024)

Ms. Anna Hahn, Commissioned Teacher, 3rd-5th (September 2018)

Ms. Hannah Engwall, Commissioned Director of Parish Music, K-2nd (August 2021)

Mr. Nathanael Hahn, Commissioned Teacher, Upper Level Quadrivium (August 2021)

Dr. Caleb Karges, Commissioned Teacher, Dean of Students and Associate Professor of Humanities at Luther Classical College (January 2025)

2024 School Enrollment: 85

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Casper

Rev. Jon C. Olson, Senior Pastor (November 2016)

Rev. Joshua Hayes, Assistant Pastor, Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Classical Languages and Theology at Luther Classical College (June 2025)

Zion Lutheran Church, Douglas/Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Glenrock Dual Parish

Rev. Jonathan Durkopp (October 2020)

Trinity Lutheran Church and Preschool, Gillette

Rev. Zachary Viggers (November 2022)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Moorcroft/Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Sundance Dual Parish

Rev. Norman Wacker (July 2012)

Immanuel Lutheran Church and Martin Lutheran Grammar School, Sheridan

Rev. Paul Cain, Senior-Administrative Pastor and Headmaster (April 2009)

2024 School Enrollment: 27

YELLOWSTONE CIRCUIT

Rev. Jared Korb

The Yellowstone Circuit is a Visitation Circuit and consists of:

- Christ the King Lutheran Church in Cody (Rev. Kenneth Mars, Emeritus Rev. Ron Garwood).
- Zion Lutheran Church in Emblem (Vacant. Dual parish with Greybull is dissolved. Currently served First and Third Sundays by Rev. Mars and Rev. Harrington until March 2025).
- Grace Lutheran Church in Greybull (Vacant. Served by Rev. Korb. Currently seeking dual parish with Worland).
- Saint John's Lutheran Church in Lovell (Rev. Jacob Benson).
- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Powell (Rev. Daniel Harrington).
- Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in Thermopolis (Rev. Samuel Needham).
- Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Worland (Rev. Jared Korb).

The pastors of the circuit meet on the second Tuesday of each month for a Winkel unless other District events supersede.

For Synodical representation, the Yellowstone Circuit is joined with the Headwaters Circuit as "the Western Circuit of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod."

At the Circuit Forum, Rev. Jared Korb of St. Luke's in Worland was elected Circuit Visitor.

The most recent visitation was to St. Paul's in Thermopolis and having completed this visitation all congregations of the circuit are as of now considered visited.

HEADWATERS CIRCUIT

Rev. Dan Mulholland

The Headwaters Circuit has seen some changes since the last convention. To our sorrow, the Fort Washakie Mission was closed and decommissioned on October 4, 2023. This was due to Covid restrictions and a change of mind on the part of the Reservation Council. Our former missionary, Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein is currently a worker priest at Mount Calvary, Dubois. Other changes include Rev. Mark Mumme taking a call to Zion, Laramie in July 2024. New pastors into our circuit are Rev. Travis Berg installed on June 23, 2023 at Bethel, Lander; Rev. Andrew Hill ordained and installed on July 20, 2024 at Emmanuel, Green River and Trinity, Rock Springs; and Rev. Stephen Kieser installed October 26, 2024 at Trinity, Riverton.

The Headwaters Circuit has hosted a family retreat for the past several years. It is held at the Uinta County Youth Camp south of Roberston, WY. The purpose of the retreat is three-fold. First, to connect people from spread out congregations and help them develop relationships with other Lutherans; Second, to allow for some time of instruction and worship together; and third, to have some family time in a setting well designed for families of all ages. The family retreat is open to anyone in any portion of the Wyoming District, not only the folks of the Headwaters Circuit. This year our family retreat is on June 12-14. Our theme this year is "Daniel in the Midst of an Evil World."

HIGH PLAINS CIRCUIT

Rev. Joshua Scheer

**This report was prepared by Rev. Andrew Dimit, who stepped down as Circuit Visitor effective February 1, 2025.*

St. John's, Kimball/Immanuel, Burns: Pr. Kenneth Mars accepted a call to Christ the King, Cody. Following a one-year vacancy, Pr. Ellery Steffensen was placed via first call.

Trinity, Cheyenne: Pr. Travis Berg accepted call as Headmaster/Asst. Pastor. Pr. Berg accepted a call to Bethel, Lander.

St. Andrew's, Laramie: New parsonage was purchased and is occupied. Day school education was initiated.

Zion, Laramie: Pr. Darrell Debowey entered Emeritus status; Pr. Mark Mumme accepted call to Zion.

Trinity, Wheatland: Tri-point parish arrangement was dissolved; Pr. Lincoln Winter remains as sole pastor of Trinity.

Zion, Grover/Grace, Pine Bluffs: Dissolved Tri-point arrangement with Trinity, Wheatland; entered Dual parish arrangement in December 2024. Will be served by pastor deployed from Our Savior, Cheyenne.

Our Savior, Cheyenne: Discharged mortgage debt. Entered shared-pastor arrangement with Zion, Grover/Grace, Pine Bluffs. Will deploy called third pastor to Zion and Grace.

King of Glory, Cheyenne: Pr. Mark Maas marked 25 years as pastor at King of Glory.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The duties of the Board of Directors are stated under Paragraph 3.2: District Organization: Officers and Board of Directors, pages 10ff in the 2021 Wyoming District Handbook.

Since the Convention Workbook publication of the 2021 Wyoming District Board of Directors' Report, the Board of Directors met in regular session 20 times on the following dates:

March 23, 2021	May 25, 2021	August 24, 2021
October 26, 2021	January 25, 2022	March 22, 2022
May 24, 2022	August 30, 2022	October 25, 2022
January 24, 2023	March 28, 2023	May 23, 2023
August 21, 2023	October 24, 2023	January 23, 2024
March 19, 2024	May 14, 2024	August 27, 2024
October 22, 2024	January 28, 2025	

In addition to the above regularly scheduled meetings, special meetings were scheduled and held in person or via Zoom on May 8, 2021; January 30, 2024; May 3, 2024; and July 9, 2024.

As of the date of this report, the following individuals serve on the various Boards, Offices, Commissions, and Committees of the Wyoming District:

Board of Directors (BOD)

Rev. Paul Cain	Chairman/First Vice-president, Region #2 (Central)
Rev. President John Hill	District President
Rev. Jonathan Lange	Second Vice-president, Region #3, (West)
Rev. Ted Bourret	Third Vice-president, Region #1 (East)
Rev. Darrell Debowey	Secretary
Rev. Kenneth Mars	Pastor-at-Large
Mr. John Schmall	Treasurer

Mr. Steven Coniglio Commissioned Minister
Mr. Blake Pieper Lay Member

Circuit Visitors (CV)

Rev. Neugebauer, Richard Chimney Rock Circuit (1)
Rev. Scott Firminhac Pine Ridge Circuit (2)
Rev. Jon Olson Powder River Circuit (3)
Rev. Jared Korb Yellowstone Circuit (4)
Rev. Dan Mulholland Headwaters Circuit (5)
Rev. Joshua Scheer High Plains Circuit (6)

Commission on Mission Services (CMS)

Rev. Rev. Travis Sherman Chairman
Rev. Patrick Baldwin Chairman-Elect/Secretary/Missions Support
Mr. Chuck Hall Campus Missions
Mr. Larry Rice Ethnic Missions
Rev. Paul Cain CMS Advisor

Commission on Congregational Services (CCS)

Rev. David Bott Chairman
Vacant Chairman-elect
Mr. Josh Witkop Adult Ministry/Leadership
Rev. Jon Olson Evangelism
Rev. Jonathan Lange Marriage, Life & Family; CCS Advisor
Mr. Jeffrey Snyder LCEF
Rev. Zachery Viggers Youth/Outdoor Ministry
Rev. Joshua Scheer Stewardship
Rev. Richard Mueller Student Aid & Recruitment
Mrs. Terrilyn Denniston LWML District President

Commission on Ecclesiastical Services (CES)

Mr. Ken Temme Memorial Library
Mrs. Tera Rice Archivist
Rev. Jonathan Lange Constitutions Chairman
Rev. Mark Mumme Ministerial Growth and Support
Rev. Andrew Richard Education Chairman
Rev. John Hill Worship

Wyoming District Reconcilers

Rev. Kenneth Mars
Mr. Ronald Mischnick

Rev. Jon Olson
Mr. Kyle Rice

Wyoming District Pastor Conference Committee (2021-2024)

Rev. Marcus Baikie
Rev. Dr. Christian Preus
Rev. Mark Mumme
Rev. David Bott

Chairman
Secretary
Program Committee
Program Committee

Tell the Good News about Jesus Convocation Committee

Rev. Jon Olson (Facilitator)

Summary of Board of Director Meetings

During the regularly scheduled Board of Directors (hereafter BOD) meetings, reports were received from committee chairmen, board members, the district treasurer, the president of Luther Classical College (hereafter LCC), and minutes from the district secretary. The following is a summary of major board decisions and actions since the publication of the 2021 Wyoming District Board of Directors Report. All regularly scheduled meetings were held at the Lutheran Ministries Center in Casper, Wyoming, or via Zoom.

March 23, 2021

Rev. Jon Olson reported that this year's attendance (166) at the Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation was down from previous years, likely due to concerns over Covid.

Rev. Paul Cain was invited to be part of the NLSA (National Lutheran School Accreditation) Fees Task Force. He agreed.

The St. Andrews furnace fan motor was replaced and an outlet for the antifreeze tank was installed. The congregation paid for these items.

May 8, 2021

The BOD held a special meeting after the conclusion of the District Convention.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the purchase of the house at 4611 Oriole Lane in Laramie as a parsonage for St. Andrew's. To facilitate this purchase, the BOD adopted a motion to approve the granting of authority to the District President and

District Business Manager to sell the current parsonage in a manner that is advantageous to the District, and the granting of authority to the District President and District Business Manager to purchase the 4611 Oriole Lane house and borrow up to \$600,000.

May 25, 2021

Current and newly elected members of the BOD were in attendance.

The BOD approved the appointment of Mr. Philip Scheel as District Trustee.

The BOD approved the nomination of Rev. Craig Meissner as a regent for Concordia University, Chicago.

The BOD approved motions to retain the same three members of the Two Kingdoms, One Lord advisory board and to add a Two Kingdoms, One Lord website using district resources.

The BOD appointed Mr. Josh Witkop as the CCS Adult Ministry/Leadership Facilitator.

The BOD adopted a motion to accept the minutes as corrected for the 2021 Wyoming District Convention. The BOD acts in this manner on behalf of the Convention.

The BOD appointed Mr. Andrew Beyeler as Treasurer *pro tempore*.

The BOD took up the following Convention Resolution Action Items:

- Resolution 1-01: the District President to appoint a Wyoming District theologian to write a paper on the soul, and to invite a Synodical Theologian to defend the Anthropology section (referencing the soul) of Nafzger's *Confessing the Gospel*.
- Resolution 1-02: the District President to appoint committees to write theological overtures on Feminism, Communism, Marxism, Critical theory, and Transgenderism.
- Resolution 1-03: The District Secretary to send as overture to 2023 LCMS Convention.
- Resolution 1-04: the District President and District Education Executive to appoint task force to "research, fund, develop, and publish sound Lutheran Curriculum in all liberal arts subjects."
- Resolution 1-05: the District President to distribute Christian Preus's essay to LCMS Praesidium and to encourage the Synod President to facilitate reading of the essay.

- Resolution 2-01: the District Secretary to submit changes to the CCM. Also, the District Secretary, District President, and Board of Directors reorganize, edit, and publish the District Bylaws and Supplement, as well as the Board of Directors Manual.
- Resolution 2-02: the District Secretary to submit Bylaw change to the CCM.
- Resolution 2-03: the District Secretary to incorporate change into the Supplement.
- Resolution 2-04: the District President reviews resolution with Circuit Visitors.

August 24, 2021

Several members of the BOD met on Monday, August 23, for a District Administration Team meeting. Included in this meeting was a review of the role and responsibilities of the Wyoming District BOD and its officers, including a review of the BOD Manual and District Properties. Pres. John Hill discussed future work for the District, including the need to address financial issues (income declining, expenses going up), and regarding WRLM, to consider an offer by the grocery store owner to swap WRLM property for property elsewhere.

Rev Jonathan Lange addressed a program called *Them Before Us*: Every child has a right to an intact family with mother and father. Other issues that will need to be addressed: rates of divorce; surrogacy; sperm donation; LGBT issues, etc. He noted that above all, addressing the divorce situation should be an important part of our preaching and practice.

Rev. Paul Cain noted two things for pastors/congregations to think about: home schooling encouragement; and supporting congregations interested in starting schools.

Rev. Gerald Heinecke stated that CMS needs to visit the district missions and address how we can help campus ministry throughout the district

At the Tuesday August 24 meeting, BOD elected Rev. Paul Cain as its chairman. Due to Rev. Paul Cain's departure, Rev. Jonathan Lange was elected chairman *pro tem* for the meeting.

Under CMS actions, the BOD adopted Student Financial Aid amendments and Youth Camp Guidelines amendments in the BOD Manual.

The BOD passed a motion to approve changes to the constitution of Bethlehem, Crawford; to the constitution and bylaws of Christ the King, Cody; and to the constitution and bylaws of Trinity, Morrill.

During the CMS report, Rev. Gerald Heinecke reported on the difficulty for Rev. Sonnenschein to do his work at the WRLM due to COVID issues and restrictions.

Mr. Snyder reported that the old St. Andrew's parsonage was sold for \$335,000. Regarding the new parsonage, Rev. Hill suggested a walk-through twice a year. It was also noted that the care of the septic system needs to be a priority.

The BOD adopted a motion to destroy convention ballots.

The BOD appointed Mark Christensen as District Treasurer.

The BOD ratified the following CES, CMS, and CCS appointments:

- CES Appointments: Reconciliation Chairman: Rev. Darren Pflughoeft; Archivist: Mrs. Tara Rice; Communications: Rev. Kenneth Humphrey; Constitutions: Rev. Jonathan Lange; Education: Rev. Andrew Richard; Ministerial Growth: Rev. Mark Mumme; Worship: Rev. John Hill; Library: Mr. Ken Temme.
- CMS Appointments: Mission Support: Rev. Patrick Baldwin; Mission Development: vacant; Ethnic Missions: Mr. Larry Rice; Campus Missions: Mr. Chuck Hall.
- CCS Appointments: Adult Ministry/Leadership: Mr. Joshua Witkop; Evangelism: Rev. Jon Olson; Foundation/LCEF: Mr. Jeffrey Snyder; Marriage, Life, and Family: Rev. Jonathan Lange; Youth/Outdoor Ministries: Rev. Rene Castellero; Stewardship: Rev. Joshua Scheer; Student Aid/Recruitment: Rev. Richard Mueller.

The BOD nominated Rev. Mark Maas as regent to the CTSFW Board of Regents.

The BOD adopted a 4% church worker salary increase in the 2022 District Compensation Guidelines.

The BOD adopted a motion to allow the District to receive funds for donations to Luther Classical College temporarily until LCC has obtained its 501c3 Status.

October 26, 2021

Since Rev. Cain attended the meeting via Zoom, the BOD elected Pres. John Hill as chairman *pro tem*.

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the District transitioned accounts to Platte Valley Bank from Wells Fargo.

The BOD adopted a motion to apply the funds from the sale of the district president residence (\$36,441.53) to the St. Andrew's parsonage mortgage.

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the proceeds from the sale of the Banock Drive parsonage in Laramie were transferred to LCEF. He and Mr. Matt Huckfeldt did a walkthrough of the new parsonage and noted issues that need attention.

Rev. Gerald Heinecke reported that he and Mr. Snyder will work together on a basketball court expansion at WRLM.

Mr. Snyder reported on the District's receipt of an "enhanced distribution" from LCEF of \$36,988. The following were suggested as areas to apply the distribution: Luther Classical College; Wyoming District School Grant Fund; a development position for the District.

The BOD adopted a motion to designate the LCEF distribution as follows: \$20,000 for a Development position for the District; \$8494 for Luther Classical College; and, \$8494 for the District School Grant Fund.

January 25, 2022

The Secretary received correspondence from LCMS Secretary Dr. John Sias, dated December 13, 2021, regarding the Wyoming District's proposed bylaw change (WY Bylaw 5.2.1) submitted for review by the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). The CCM met in December of 2021 and submitted the following opinion, in summary:

By an email of July 1, 2021, the Wyoming District Secretary forwarded a bylaw amendment for the commission's review, consisting of the addition of language, as previously suggested by the commission, to WY Bylaw section V (as renumbered, WY Bylaw 5.2.1), to allow the district board of directors to make amendments to the district bylaws as "necessitated by amendments to the Synod Constitution or Bylaws, or otherwise directed by a resolution of the Synod in convention." The change is approved as adopted by the district convention, having already taken place....

The commission notes with regard to WY Bylaw 5.1.1, as renumbered, that planned changes to the bylaws need to be reviewed and approved in advance by the Synod Commission on Constitutional Matters (Bylaws 3.9.2.2.3 [a] and 4.1.1.2 [b]). This is not evident in the district bylaw and should be addressed in the next revision.

Commission on Constitutional Matters

December 3-4, 2021

Since the constitution and bylaws of the Synod are the Constitution and bylaws of the District, and since the CCM said “should” and not “must”, the BOD adopted the bylaw change as originally submitted to the CCM.

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that 2021 congregational pledge receipts were \$21,816.84 above what the congregations pledged.

The BOD reviewed the audit report from the CPA firm of Grooms & Harkins for the year ending December 31, 2020. In the opinion of the firm, “the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod as of December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

Rev. Patrick Baldwin reported to the CMS that both subsidized congregations presented new requests: Evanston requested \$13,000; a firm request was not submitted by Saratoga.

Mr. Larry Rice reported to the CMS that Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein was still limited in his work by COVID mandates on the reservation. There was a specific request from Rev. Sonnenschein for a more flexible sign so service times could be easily adjusted.

The BOD adopted an amendment to the LCEF “enhanced distribution” motion approved at the October 2021, BOD meeting. The amendment was to use the LCEF “enhanced distribution” of \$36,988 entirely for the District Development Position.

The BOD approved the 2022 Wyoming District Budget after adopting a motion to release the BOD Designation WRLM Land acquisition from its restricted status and apply it to cash.

The BOD adopted a motion to nominate Dr. Michael Lange to CUC Board of Directors, pending his approval (approval was granted).

March 22, 2022

Mr. Mark Christensen announced his resignation as the BOD treasurer as of March 21, 2022. The BOD adopted a motion to place Rev. Paul Cain as signatory on District financial instruments.

The BOD agreed to have Tiffany Hoff help with secretarial work for Two Kingdoms, One Lord, with Pres. Hill's suggestion of paying her from Two Kingdoms, One Lord funds.

The BOD adopted a motion to request the Synod Office of the President to allow the Wyoming District to combine the Chimney Rock and High Plains circuits as one electoral circuit and ask for exemptions for the Yellowstone/Headwaters circuit (too many congregations), and for Pine Ridge Circuit (too few communicant members).

Due to Rev. Peter Bertram's retirement and departure from the District, the BOD appointed Rev. Ken Mars to fill Rev. Bertram's Pastor-at-large position on the BOD.

May 22, 2022

When possible, the BOD prays Matins at Mount Hope with the children of Mount Hope Lutheran School.

With the resignation of Mr. Mark Christensen, the BOD appointed Mr. John Schmall as District Treasurer and vacated his position as Lay member of the Board of Directors.

Rev. James Rockhill (CCS chairman) reviewed for the BOD revisions to the Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp documents: Camp Purpose; Screening for Staff; and Sexual Misconduct policies. He reported on changes to the Responsibilities for Director and Responsibilities for Deans, and changes to the Responsibilities for Camp Counselors, with the addition of "Junior Counselor," along with changes to staff responsibilities. The BOD adopted a motion to approve these changes to the Lutheran Camp guidelines in the BOD Manual.

Rev. Patrick Baldwin reported to CMS on the two subsidized congregations: Saratoga is ahead of their budget at the moment, but Evanston is a couple thousand dollars behind in its budget.

The BOD discussed Doxology attendance for Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein. The BOD adopted a motion to use district funds to send Rev. Sonnenschein to Doxology.

From time to time, the District President and Secretary receive nomination requests from Synod Secretary Dr. John Sias. We were informed that there was one layperson needed for an open position on the Board for International Mission representing the Central Region, and one individual member (ordained or commissioned minister) for an open position on the Board for International Mission representing the Great Plains Region. The BOD adopted a motion to nominate Rev. Mark Maas to the vacant

position (ordained or commissioned minister) on the Board for International Mission, Great Lakes Region.

Mr. John Schmall was elected as the District's representative on the Synod's Convention Nominations Committee

August 30, 2022

The District Secretary reported on correspondence received from Synod First Vice-president Peter K. Lange in regard to the Wyoming District's circuit exceptions request: the requests were approved by the Office of the Synod President. The District Secretary also reported that the editing and revising of the BOD Manual is nearly complete.

Mr. John Schmall (Treasurer) reviewed some options for grants to help with District and pastoral interests, such as the Eli Lilly foundation for funding pastoral sabbaticals. He also reported that the balance on the Laramie parsonage mortgage was just over \$185,000.

Three CCS items of note: Rev. Rene Castellero reported on the 2022 Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp and noted that there is need for a better system for inventory and organization of items that belong to the Camp; Rev. Jonathan Lange (Marriage, Life, and Family) planned to create a Fact Sheet regarding the overturning of Roe v. Wade and its implications; and Rev. Joshua Scheer (Stewardship) reported on the false teaching (and false teachers) of the 1517 Project.

Mr. Larry Rice reported to the CMS on WRLM. He stated that COVID restrictions continue to hamper Rev. Sonnenschein's efforts. The possibility was discussed of adding Bethel, Lander to the shared ministry agreement with WRLM, and maintaining WRLM as a preaching station. The CMS adopted a motion to formally recommend that the congregations in Lander and Dubois have a discussion about a multi-point parish agreement with the District to maintain a long-term preaching station at WRLM. The BOD adopted a motion to encourage Pres. Hill to work with Lander and Dubois to enter into a shared ministry agreement.

Under Constitutions, Rev. Jonathan Lange brought to the BOD updates to the three-point parish agreement of Trinity, Wheatland, Grace, Pine Bluffs, and Zion, Grover. The updates provide for a more even sharing of responsibilities between the three congregations. The BOD adopted a motion to approve the change to the tri-parish agreement of Trinity, Wheatland, Grace, Pine Bluffs, and Zion, Grover.

Mr. Jeff Snyder distributed a handout for the BOD to review: Guidelines for St. Andrew's Seminary Scholarship Endowment, revised and dated August 30, 2022. Major changes to note: the document makes it easier to modify student aid amounts; scholarships will not be awarded during vicarage year; the Student Aid Facilitator will work with the District Business Manager to determine the amount of scholarship to be rewarded. The BOD adopted a motion to approve the amended St. Andrew's Seminary Scholarship Guidelines.

During New Business, the BOD adopted the following motions:

- to appoint Rev. Patrick Baldwin as Chairman-elect of CMS;
- to approve the appointment of Mr. John Schmall to the Two Kingdoms, One Lord oversight committee;
- to appoint Rev. Paul Cain to represent the Wyoming District BOD as our advisory delegate to the 2023 Synodical Convention;
- to amend the Wyoming District Pastor Compensation Guidelines to change the compensation for multipoint parishes to \$3000 for pastors who serve a dual parish and \$4000 for pastors who serve a three-point parish. The BOD approved the Wyoming District Pastor Compensation Guidelines for 2023 as amended;
- to approve \$3,857.90 from District funds for Christ Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary (CELTS) for use this year.

October 25, 2022

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Blake Pieper as lay member of the Wyoming District Board of Directors (to fill the position vacated by Mr. John Schmall when he was appointed District Treasurer).

The District Secretary reported on the status of Wyoming District delegate registrations (voting, alternate, advisory) for the 2023 synodical convention:

District President: Rev. John Hill

BOD Advisory: Rev. Paul Cain

Commissioned Minister Advisory: Nathanael Hahn

Commissioned Minister Alternate: Lukas Sollberger

Chimney Rock/High Plains Electoral Circuit:

Voting Pastoral: Rev. Allen Strawn

Voting Lay: Mr. John Schmall

Alternate Pastoral: Rev. Joshua Scheer
Alternate Lay: Mr. Jeff Roll

Yellowstone/Headwaters Electoral Circuit:
Voting Pastoral: Rev. Jacob Benson
Voting Lay: Mr. Al List
Alternate Pastoral: Rev. Randolph Schnack
Alternate Lay: Mr. Thomas Garcia

Pine Ridge Circuit:
Voting Pastoral: Rev. James Rockhill
Voting Lay: Mr. Blake Pieper
Alternate Pastoral: Rev. Richard Mueller
Alternate Lay: Mr. Nevin Lorent

Powder River Circuit
Voting Pastoral: Rev. Christian Preus
Voting Lay: Mr. Scott Van Dorsten
Alternate Pastoral: Rev. Jon Olson
Alternate Lay: Mr. Sean Dugan

The Secretary also reported on the Synod BOD decision regarding the convention budget and the amount districts would have to pay for the convention: "That the total district levy of \$2,449,286 be used to calculate each district's portion of the convention expense."

Under the CCS report, there was a discussion about the seminary accreditation issue (the seminaries are allowed to accept only so many students who do not have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution). Rev. James Rockhill (CCS Chairman) distributed a letter to the BOD addressed to President Lawrence Rast. Pres. Hill suggested sending the letter also to Kevin Robson, and James Baneck. Rev. Rockhill stated that the letter will also be addressed to the St. Louis Seminary President, and to the Chairmen of each Seminary Board of Regents.

The BOD adopted a motion to encourage the CCS to distribute the letter regarding seminary accreditation to the parties as indicated above.

Regarding WRLM, Pres. Hill recommended to the BOD that the District continue to support Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein at the same level in the 2023 budget, but use 2023 to consider alternative structures for funding WRLM, such as making it a

preaching station, along with considering some kind of ministry agreement with Riverton.

Pres. John Hill reported that the BOD received a letter from LCEF indicating that our earnings distribution will be \$38,475. The BOD also received a letter from Luther Classical College with an update on fundraising. Mr. Samuel Preus reported that over \$700,000 has been raised toward the goal of \$2,000,000.

District Library project. Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that sheetrock is almost done (bathroom is all that is left). He also noted that decisions will need to be made on the District library and how it will relate to the LCC's library since the two will be very close together physically.

Pres. Hill approved the use of space at the District office for LCC employees for the foreseeable future.

Pres. Hill distributed assignments to various District individuals and entities to complete work on Resolution 2-01-2021, the revision and updating of the BOD Manual.

A job description for the District's development director was reviewed by the BOD and a motion to approve the job description was adopted with amendments.

Pres. Hill reported that our congregations are finding it very difficult to fund health care insurance for church workers. Congregations are having to choose between paying their pastors better or paying for insurance. Pres. Hill shared materials with the BOD from Dr. Ryan McPherson covering alternate health care options.

January 24, 2023

Items of note under the District Secretary's report:

The following Wyoming District Overtures were ready to send to the 2023 synodical convention:

- To Confess and Defend Church's Daughters;
- To Confess the Authority God Gave to Fathers and Mothers;
- To Recognize the Organization 1517 to be a Heterodox Tract and Mission Society;

- To Reject Online Communion Practices.

And one overture to the Wyoming District from the Fall 2022 Pastor's Conference:

- To Affirm the Church's Essential Nature.

The Secretary also reported on the Synod BOD analysis of the National Youth Gathering: It proved logistically very successful; however, Synod CMO Kevin Robson was "disappointed with several steps backward in the integrity of our confession of the faith." Content and presenters "will face a far more rigorous vetting going forward."

There was a change in the Convention Advisory Delegate-Ordained Minister from Rev. Dan Holthus to Rev. Harold Hintzman, Jr.

Rev. Paul Cain reported that, in order to help the District legally transfer property to Christ Our Savior, Star Valley, he provided copies of the minutes of the BOD meeting to Rev. David Bott and Mr. Jeff Snyder delineating Mr. John Schmall as Treasurer of the District and an excerpt from the District Convention Proceedings delineating Rev. Hill's election as District President.

Mr. John Schmall (Treasurer) reported that an audit of District finances was completed and distributed to the BOD.

Rev. James Rockhill (CCS Chairman) reported that the CCS passed a motion to reduce congregational pledges for student aid from 6% to 5%. Pres. Hill stated that for 2025 the CCS should consider LCC students for financial aid from the district.

The BOD adopted a motion to reduce the congregational pledges for student aid from 6% to 5% of congregational receipts.

The CSS received one response from Dr. Dan Gard to their letter regarding seminary accreditation (see October 25, 2022 BOD meeting). Dr. Gard stated that he looks forward to discussing this matter further.

Rev. Travis Sherman (CMS Chairman) reported that Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein will move to Dubois and transition WRLM into more of a preaching station. Pres. Hill proposed to the BOD that the Board fully fund the mission through 2023 and then make other arrangements to serve WRLM. Pres. Hill noted that the District needs to make changes in the ministry agreement with Dubois. Mr. Schmall estimated that in

the future, WRLM could be funded at 75% of its current budget, and that one of the WRLM vans could be sold since it is no longer needed.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve a change to the bylaws of Our Savior, Cheyenne.

Pres. Hill reported on CPS Health Plans and cost concerns. He suggested putting a small committee together to advise him regarding his work with congregations and health care costs. Rev. Lange noted that one of his congregation's reserve funds is running out which puts his medical coverage under the Concordia Plans in jeopardy.

The BOD adopted an amended motion to allow Rev. Lange's parish, since it is a District subsidized parish and must follow District guidelines, to explore other health insurance options.

LCC put forward to the BOD a formal Building Use Agreement to cover its use of the Lutheran Ministries Center building.

The BOD adopted an amended (to remove any conflict of interest) motion to agree to the LCC proposal in principle, which is to allow LCC to use the Lutheran Ministry Center as outlined in the proposal. Pres. Hill noted that there will be a formal agreement for all parties to sign. It was agreed that Mr. Scheel will be involved in the process of formalizing this agreement, including insurance coverage for users of the District Office and access (i.e., keys and locations).

Mr. Jeff Snyder and Mr. John Schmall reviewed the 2023 budget proposal for the BOD.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve a balanced District budget with the following items: that the BOD release the Board designated fund for WRLM General Support of \$44,000; that the BOD release the Board designated fund for future missions of \$13,000; that the BOD sell the older WRLM van with an estimated value of no less than \$20,000; and that the BOD release the temporarily restricted WRLM fund in the amount needed to balance the 2023 budget.

March 28, 2023

The District Secretary reported on the status of nominations for Synodical president, first vice-president and regional vice-president. Matthew C. Harrison received the most nominations for synodical president; Peter K. Lange received the most nominations for first vice-president; and Nabil S. Nour received the most nominations for regional vice-president.

Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein joined the BOD meeting via Zoom, at which time Pres. Hill read a resolution to the BOD titled: Resolution regarding the Wind River Lutheran Mission. A summary of the *resolves* is as follows:

that the Wyoming District BOD officially close [or suspend] the Wind River Lutheran Mission on September 30, 2023, and that the District's divine call of Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein to the Mission accordingly end on that date;

that the pastoral care of any remaining tribal members or associates of the mission be returned to Bethel, Lander, or if desired and by arrangement with the pastors, to Trinity, Riverton or Mount Calvary, Dubois; and that Bethel be urged to obtain assistance from Pastor Sonnenschein in the care of the remaining shut-ins;

that Rev. Sonnenschein receive:

- full salary from the district through (September 30, 2023);
- full benefits (health insurance, retirement, disability) through December 31, 2023;
- full home ownership allowance through the month in which he closes on the sale of his present home, or December 31, 2023, whichever comes first;

that the BOD authorize the District Business Manager (Jeff Snyder), with the concurrence of the District Treasurer (John Schmall) and the District President (Rev. John Hill) to sell the two vans and the trailer;

that CMS work with the District Trustee and the District Business Manager in the disposition of the contents of the garage and the church building, and if needed or desired, the playground equipment;

that Jeff Snyder be authorized to withdraw the funds and dissolve the WRLM Endowment (current value approximately \$45,000);

that Jeff Snyder be authorized, in consultation with Rev. Hill, John Schmall, and Phillip Scheel, to sell the real estate as is (two buildings plus the land), giving first consideration to the Hines, for a reasonable price.

The BOD adopted a motion to begin a conversation with the Hines to divest the property at the WRLM and discuss other options. This was the only action on this resolution at this meeting. Pres. Hill suggested postponing action on the resolution until a later date and to change the wording of "close" to "suspend" the mission.

Pres. Hill reported that he, Jeff Snyder, and Jack Hildner met in February to discuss the state of health insurance for church workers. A committee will be formed to more thoroughly explore options for health care coverage for our workers.

May 23, 2023

The Secretary reported on correspondence from Synod Secretary, Dr. John Sias, who informed the BOD that it is time to update our roster of District Reconcilers (this must be done within six months following a Synodical convention). The current reconcilers up for reappointment are Rev. Kenneth Mars, Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, and Mr. Ronald Mishnick.

Rev. James Rockhill (CCS Chairman) reported that CCS will use the Synod's recommendation for sexual misconduct training (MinistrySafe). The CCS will open a MinistrySafe account for all congregations, schools, and staff in the District. MinistrySafe will be used for background checks on new and colloquized workers, camp staff, etc.

The CMS addressed changes to the BOD Handbook; in particular, "Procedure/Communication Guidelines for District and Assisted Congregations and Mission Stations." The CMS also recommended the removal of page 107 from the BOD Manual, "Remunerated and Un-Remunerated Extra-Curricular Activities of Workers in Assisted Ministries."

The BOD adopted the following two motions: to remove page 107 (Remunerated and Un-Remunerated Extra-Curricular Activities of Workers in Assisted Ministries) from the 2018 Wyoming District LCMS Handbook: Guidelines Policies, and Strategies; and

to approve the updates to the "Procedure/Communication Guidelines for District and Assisted Congregations and Mission Stations" from the 2018 Wyoming District LCMS Handbook: Guidelines, Policies, and Strategies as amended with the strikeout of the phrase "(see policy)" in paragraph V.2. After discussion, the BOD adopted a motion to refer this item back to the CMS.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve changes to Mount Hope Lutheran Church's Bylaws.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the professional installation of carpeting in the Lutheran Ministries Center and Library using funds from the temporarily restricted Library fund and general funds.

Under Old Business, Rev. James Rockhill reported on his work on the BOD Manual, covering: Wyoming District Data Policy; Wyoming District Office - Office Personnel Electronic Communications Systems Policy; and District Guidelines for District Website. He did not consider it necessary to change or update the Wyoming District Image, Likeness, Picture, Release Form, or the Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp.

Mr. John Schmall reported that District Office employee evaluations are completed and that there are no concerns. He noted that Tiffany Hoff (District administrative assistant) is also doing work for LCC.

The BOD returned to its study of the resolution regarding the Wind River Lutheran Mission (see March 28, 2023 meeting). The BOD adopted a motion to approve this resolution with the language change in the first resolved to "officially suspend." The District's divine call of Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein and the ministry agreement between the Wyoming District and Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Dubois, WY will end September 30, 2023. Rev. Paul Cain concluded this matter of business with a prayer of thanksgiving for WRLM and her pastors.

Pastors who have served WRLM:

Rev. Donald Bren (1977)

Rev. Travis S. Grubs (July 12, 1981)

Rev. Clark M. Davis (December 12, 1982)

Rev. Lawrence C. Richmond (August 18, 1985)

Rev. Donald J. Brown (September 27, 1987)

Rev. Eric M. Christianson (1991)

Rev. Ronald Abresch (November 15, 1992)

Rev. Vernon C. Boehlke (September 13, 1998)

Rev. Donald Nemecek (May, 2006)

Rev. James N. Judson (June 15, 2014)

Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein (October 11, 2015)

August 21, 2023

The BOD concluded its in-depth study of the Augsburg Confession. At the next meeting, it began its study of *The Magdeburg Confession*.

Mr. John Schmall reported that one of the WRLM vans was sold to Rev. Andrew Richard and the other is being used by the Rev. Dr. Christian Preus family until the District sells it.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the updated Guidelines for Awarding Student Financial Aid & Debt Reduction in the BOD Manual.

Rev. Rene Castellero reported to the CCS that the 2023 Lutheran Youth Camp had about 80 youth and 20 volunteers. Rev. Kenneth Mars noted that three-fourths of the campers are parochial or home school students.

Rev. Jonathan Lange reported to the CCS that wokeism and its influence on our Concordias may also influence the incoming seminarians who must have a bachelor's degree to enter seminary studies.

In his Campus Ministry report, Mr. Chuck Hall reported that Rev. Mark Preus is on sabbatical from August 20, 2023 until mid-January 2024. Rev. Mark Maas is serving as the sabbatical pastor for St. Andrew's. The District will cover the Preus's moving expenses, and the District and St. Andrew's will provide funds for salary and living expenses. Pres. Hill used monies from the District President discretionary fund and emergency fund to cover a portion of the sabbatical expenses. During the sabbatical, the parsonage in Laramie had house-sitters approved by St. Andrew's congregation.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the housing situation and house sitter responsibilities at St. Andrew's during the sabbatical.

Mr. Larry Rice reported to the CMS on his inventory of the contents of the WRLM, and his efforts to either move items into storage at Glenrock or dispose of them in the Lander landfill. He also received the historical records from Rev. Sonnenschein. The funds from the sale of one of the vans is going toward Rev. Sonnenschein's continuing benefits. The CMS discussed the possibility of a decommissioning service during the Fall Pastors Conference. Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that he doesn't yet have an assessed value on the property.

The District Secretary received nomination requests for positions on the CCM and COH (Commission on Handbook) from the Synod Secretary. The BOD adopted a motion to nominate Rev. Philip Zielinski to the COH.

Mr. Jeff Snyder distributed to the BOD proposed 2024 Compensation Guidelines. He suggested a 3.5% salary increase “across the board.” Pres. Hill asked that health care savings plan suggestions (HSA vs HRA) be incorporated into district salary guidelines.

The BOD adopted an amended motion to approve a 4% salary increase for the 2023 Salary Guidelines.

October 24, 2023

Pres. Hill began a study of *The Magdeburg Confession*, with an introduction by Dr. Ryan McPherson of LCC.

Mr. John Schmall reported that congregational pledges were running short, but that is not unusual. He noted that about 60% of the District budget is provided by congregational pledges; likely to drop to 55% in 2024. District revenue was not keeping up with District expenditures. He noted that even with the suspension of the WRLM, there will likely not be increased funds available for other District projects.

In the interim between the August and October BOD meetings, the BOD, via email, adopted a motion to approve changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton.

The BOD adopted a motion to empower the District Trustee and District Business Manager to select the contractor, and the Treasurer and Business Manager to acquire the loan, for replacing the roof on St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus Center.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve a resolution put forward by the Chair: “To Address a Conflict of Interest,” regarding Rev. John Hill and his son, Michael, who is the headmaster at St. Andrew’s school. President Hill was not present for the vote. Upon returning to the meeting he commented that in the ministry it’s very common for family members to work together in church work. “It’s important to keep ‘air and light’ on these situations to avoid any perception of impropriety.”

One of the duties of the BOD is to appoint District Reconcilers after each synodical convention. Rev. Kenneth Mars and Mr. Ron Mischnick allowed their names to stand for reappointment. The BOD adopted the following motions:

- to reappointed Rev. Kenneth Mars and Mr. Ron Mischnick to the list of District Reconcilers;
- to nominate Mr. Kyle Rice and Rev. Jon Olson to the list of District Reconcilers.

January 23, 2024

With the departure of Rev. Allen Strawn from the District, the BOD adopted a motion to appoint Rev. James Rockhill to the position of 3rd Vice-president for the remainder of this term. (Rev. Rockhill was the chairman of the CCS; Rev. Pastor David Bott assumed this position.)

Mr. John Schmall reported that the final Congregational Pledge Report for 2023 showed that congregational receipts came in approximately \$23,000 over the amount pledged. The pledged amount for 2024 was less than the pledged amount for 2023 by approximately \$20,000.

Rev. Travis Sherman (CMS) reported that Rev. Mark Preus is back from sabbatical. CMS thanked Rev. Mark Maas for filling in for Rev. Preus. He also reported that the St. Andrew's roof replacement project has been delayed and that several prominent families from St. Andrew's will be moving, which may impact congregational giving. Under Mission Support, he reported that two congregations requested subsidy: Our Saviour, Evanston (\$13,000); and Platte Valley, Saratoga (\$9,000). The commission recommended continuing the subsidies.

The BOD adopted two constitution-related motions: to approve changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of Christ the King, Cody; and to approve changes to the bylaws of Our Savior, Cheyenne.

Pres. Hill asked the BOD how he should report information on LCC (LCC is a school of Mount Hope Lutheran Church, under the ecclesiastical supervision of the District President.) Rev. Cain suggested that LCC information be part of the District President's report to the BOD.

The District Trustee (Mr. Philip Scheel) reported that the roof at St. Andrew's needed to be torn down to the deck, then reengineered to provide better drainage and a pitch, with a new membrane installed. The contractor selected was Fergusson Roofing out of Powell. Part of the bid includes replacement of the skylight above the garden. The total project cost is \$126,000. Mr. Jeff Snyder and Mr. John Schmall will try to secure a loan for \$100,000 from LCEF.

Under "2021 Convention Resolutions Tracking," Rev. Jonathan Lange reported on the progress of 1-01-2021: "Immortality of the Soul". The resolution was assigned to floor committee number two and may be adopted at the February meeting.

The Secretary reported on Resolution 2-01-2021: "Wyoming District Bylaws and Supplement, BOD Manual." The following assignments were noted by date revised or approved, and added to the BOD Manual:

- 1) Replaced the mission and vision statements for the CMS
- 2) No change to the Wyoming District Data Policy
- 3) District Office Personnel Electronic Communications Systems Policy
- 4) Guidelines for District Website
- 5) Wyoming District LCMS Image, Likeness, Picture Release Form

The BOD adopted a motion to authorize Mr. Jeff Snyder to complete the building use agreement with LCC.

Pres. Hill reported that the Convention Planning Committee (made up of the District President and Vice-presidents, the District Secretary, and Mr. Snyder) had set the date and place for the 2025 District Convection: May 1-3, 2025, at the Casper Ramkota.

The BOD adopted a motion to allow Pres. John Hill to serve the vacancy at Zion, Laramie.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the District's 2024 balanced budget.

January 30, 2024

The BOD held a special meeting via Zoom with the purpose of selling the WRLM property.

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that he received an assessment on the value of the WRLM property from Mr. Jim Hirsh of \$155,000. Dave and Ben Hines offered \$95,000 for the property (with the knowledge that there is work that needs to be done on the property and the very poor state of the septic system), plus two acres of land.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the sale of the WRLM property to Dave and Ben Hines for \$95,000 plus two acres of land, and since we already budgeted \$25,000 for the sale, set aside the remainder in restricted funds.

March 19, 2024

Mr. John Schmall reported that work on St. Andrew's roof began and that the contractor needed to be paid soon. Mr. Schmall moved that the District pay the

contractor, and he also suggested that when the sale of the WRLM property is complete, the income from that sale could be used toward the loan.

The BOD adopted a motion to move \$10,000 from the Memorial Library Endowment and \$20,000 from the St. Andrew's Operating Endowment to the general fund for the St. Andrew's roof replacement project. Pres. Hill noted that these funds are being used to reimburse the District for money we've already spent on these projects from the general fund.

Pres. Hill asked the BOD if the District should obligate District congregations and pastors to have insurance. Mr. Jeff Snyder said, "No, the BOD cannot obligate congregations to have insurance." Rev. Jonathan Lange reported that Our Saviour, Evanston, has been dropped by their insurance company because the church's physical location on the edge of town makes it susceptible to wildfires.

Pres. Hill reported on his meetings with the congregations along Highway 20 in Nebraska. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the possibility of multipoint parishes.

Pres. Hill reported that Dr. Harold Ristau has been called as LCC President and will be installed on April 28 at Mount Hope Lutheran Church.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve changes to the BOD Manual, as grammatically edited where necessary. The changes approved were: Replace the mission and vision statements for the Commission on Mission Services; Wyoming District Data Policy (no change); District Office Personnel Electronic Communications Systems Policy; Guidelines for District Website; Wyoming District LCMS Image, Likeness, Picture Release Form; and deletion of the Wind River Reservation Mission Strategy.

Under "Disposition of WRLM property," Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the District has a verbal agreement with the Hines to purchase the property. Mr. Larry Harrington has drafted a purchase agreement. First American Title of Lander will handle the closing. The BOD adopted a motion to authorize Pres. Hill and/or Mr. Snyder to handle all closing matters regarding the District's property at the Wind River Reservation.

May 3, 2024

The BOD held a special Zoom meeting to act on the acquisition of a loan on behalf of LCC. The agenda included: Background information to the LCC request; the relationship between the Wyoming District (through its BOD) and LCC; the specific request for a \$240,000 loan from LCEF through the Wyoming District.

Pres. Hill noted that Synod Pres. Matthew Harrison has given his support for LCC, and that Dr. Dean Wenthe has given his qualified support; however, since there is no real relationship between LCC and the Synod at this time, LCC cannot get a loan from LCEF. LCEF stated that it is easier to get a loan for LCC through the Wyoming District.

Dr. Harold Ristau, President of LCC, reported on student enrollment, the status of giving to LCC, and the need for student housing (LCC wants to purchase a 16-unit apartment complex). Mrs. Rebekah Bennick (LCC CFO) reported on the financial strength and solvency of LCC. Mr. Jeff Snyder noted that LCC's cashflow can handle a loan of \$1.8 million on a 20-year basis.

The BOD adopted a motion that the Wyoming District BOD support the work of LCC as a mission effort of the District in all aspects possible: theologically, materially, and with encouragement coupled with due diligence, in order to ensure faithfulness in all areas.

Pres. Hill read a resolution to the BOD regarding the loan for LCC, with the following *resolved*:

that Board of Directors of the Wyoming District, meeting May 3, 2024 by Zoom, approve to borrow \$240,000 from LCEF (at interest rate 6.375% for a five year fixed rate or 6.75% for a ten year fixed rate, amortized over 20 years at the college's choosing) on behalf of Luther Classical College, whereas the college will assume all interest and principal payments on behalf of the Wyoming District for the loan.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the resolution and secure a \$240,000 loan for LCC.

May 14, 2024

Mr. John Schmall reported that there was an approximately \$3000 surplus from TTGNAJ Convocation. He also reported that insurance had increased by \$2000 over budget. In addition, there was \$150,000 remaining on the Laramie parsonage mortgage. He also noted that the District's indebtedness ceiling is \$2,000,000.

Pres. Hill reported that the District received the proceeds for the WRLM sale, and that Mr. Snyder had applied these proceeds to the St. Andrew's roof loan and the loan is paid off.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the recommendation of the CCS regarding financial support for married students during vicarage until the Scholarship Guidelines can be revised.

Dr. Harold Ristau reported on LCC. The college has 170 supporting congregations and 250 monthly givers. There are nearly a thousand donors. 1.5 million dollars has been raised for construction. The apartment building was purchased for \$480,000 (\$240,000 plus \$240,000 via an LCEF loan through the District). Regarding site development, LCC has 1.4 to 1.5 million dollars to give to the contractor for site development, but approximately 3 million dollars is needed.

On March 28 via email, the BOD adopted a motion to approve changes to the constitution and bylaws of Faith, Gering.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the appointment of Rev. Zachery Viggers as facilitator for Youth and Camp.

July 9, 2024

The BOD held a special meeting to discuss the acquisition of a \$1.5 million loan through LCEF on behalf of Luther Classical College.

Pres. Hill read a resolution to the BOD giving rationale for the loan and requesting the above amount, as summarized in the first *resolved*: "that, subject to LCEF approval and accepting LCC's commitment to pay off the loan in a timely way, the District serve as the borrower and conduit of funds in the amount of \$1,500,000 from LCEF on LCC's behalf for LCC's capital expenditures."

Mrs. Rebekah Bennick (LCC CFO) and Mr. Jeff Snyder reported on LCC's financial state and ability to repay the loan. Mr. Jeff Snyder stated that the District must act as the conduit for this loan because LCC has no current enrollment or predictable investment interest upon which to quantify loan risk. The District has collateral, through District properties, to secure the loan.

The BOD adopted an amended motion to approve the acquisition of a \$1.5 million loan for LCC from LCEF.

The BOD adopted a motion to remove Mr. Mark Christensen as treasurer for the Wyoming District LCMS and add Mr. John Schmall as duly appointed treasurer and as an authorized signer on all District accounts.

August 27, 2024

Mr. John Schmall reviewed several financial reports for the BOD, which is normal practice.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the Parish Agreement between Our Savior Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY. And Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE.

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the district parking lot will be changed and expanded to accommodate the construction and additional personnel of LCC. He also noted the need to improve internet upload speeds in the District office to accommodate the expanding internet demands of the District and LCC. And regarding the loan to LCC, he stated that the appraisal of the St. Andrew's property came in at \$1.14 million. The result of this appraisal means that the District can meet the collateral requirements in our request for a \$1.5 million loan for LCC.

With the departure of Rev. James Rockhill from the District, the BOD approved the appointment of Rev. Ted Bourret as the third vice-president of the District.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the 2025 District Compensation Guidelines with a four percent increase.

On August 26, 2024, Pres. Hill received correspondence from Mr. Felix Loc, LCMS Chief Administrative Officer. This letter was in regard to the \$1.5 million loan the District requested on behalf of LCC. In the letter, Mr. Loc stated that the Synod BOD was concerned about the District's encumbering District properties for this loan, and if such action was consistent with the "ordinary course of performing the functions which the district carries on for the Synod" (Synod bylaw 3.3.4.7). Mr. Loc stated in his letter, "Before the Synod Board of Directors can consider providing such delegation to encumber the Encumbered Properties, the Wyoming District will need to provide necessary information regarding the contemplated loan."

After a brief discussion, the BOD decided that Pres. Hill should pen a fraternal letter to Mr. Loc and the LCMS Board of Directors to address their concerns regarding the Wyoming District acting as a conduit for a loan to LCC. In this letter, Pres. Hill will also reiterate the great benefit LCC will be for the District and the Synod. The BOD adopted the following motion:

that the Wyoming District Board of Directors acknowledge the memo dated August 26, 2024 from Mr. Felix Loc, and that the Wyoming District BOD ask Pres. Hill to write a letter on behalf of the BOD to Mr. Loc and the LCMS Board of Directors, and to all the recipients listed in the memo.

October 22, 2024

Rev. Paul Cain was not available for the meeting, therefore the BOD decided by common consent of the members present to elect Rev. Kenneth Mars as Chairman *pro tem*.

During the Treasurer's Report, Mr. John Schmall reported that the District received a \$32,000 unrestricted gift. He reported that there is nothing of concern in the District's finances. Both Pres. Hill and Mr. Schmall stated that the District needs to increase its financial reserves in the next year. Mr. Snyder reported that the 2024 congregational pledges are behind by roughly \$38,000.

Rev. David Bott reported that Rev. Joshua Scheer (Stewardship) introduced a proposal to the CCS to establish a fund named, "Fredrick the Wise Fund," to help congregations with pastoral support, and to help pastors who are paid below district scale to afford to take a vacation, to attend continuing education, or to take sabbaticals. CMS joined in on the discussion. He also reported that Rev. Pflughoeft gave permission to the CMS to use his letter on prison ministry as a resource for others who might contact the CMS concerning prison ministry.

The BOD approved the revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church in Casper, WY.

As part of the Trustee Report, Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the LCC apartment loan was moved from a limited secured loan to an unsecured loan, which means the District properties are no longer encumbered for this loan.

Pres. Hill reported that the Synod BOD did not approve the District's request for the \$1.5 million loan on behalf of LCC. The BOD adopted a motion to suspend the Wyoming District BOD's request for a 1.5 million dollar loan from LCEF on behalf of LCC.

Pres. Hill provided an update from the Convention Planning Committee: the Convention theme will be Spiritual Warfare, the Convention speaker will be Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau (LCC President), and the parliamentarian will be Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy (CUS President).

Mr. Jeff Snyder reported that the LCEF earnings distribution was \$31,856.

Pres. Hill listed possible overtures to the District Convention:

- To define and affirm relationship of District and LCC;

- To appeal to Synod Convention for formal relationship of LCC and Synod;
- To formalize Three Electoral Circuits in the District.

There is also the possibility for overtures regarding marriage, antinomianism, order of creation (women lectors, women teaching men), and eschatology and the soul.

Pres. Hill reported that Mr. Larry Harrington has asked to step down as District legal counsel.

The BOD adopted a motion to request Pres. Matthew Harrison to help find a way to establish formal relations between Luther Classical College and The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. The District Secretary was tasked with composing and sending this letter to Pres. Harrison on behalf of the BOD.

January 28, 2025

In the Congregational Pledge Report, Mr. John Schmall reported that the District congregations gave more than they pledged by approximately \$10,000.

Mr. Jeff Snyder provided the BOD with a 10-year financial analysis of District income. Congregational pledges have had an average annual decrease of 0.3% over the last ten years, while other income has had an average annual increase of 4.28%. Mr. Snyder also provided the BOD with a pie chart demonstrating that in 2024, congregational pledges were 56% of District budgeted income.

In the CCS report, Rev. David Bott reported that four applications have been received for Debt Reduction Relief, totaling \$11,000.00. The kitchen staff for the Lutheran Youth Camp are going to provide a meal plan for campers with food sensitivities. There is also an effort to provide campers with archery and .22 rimfire shooting activities. CCS and CMS held a joint meeting to discuss the Frederick the Wise Fund.

In the CMS report, Rev. Travis Sherman reported that Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evanston, requested a subsidy of \$13,000, and Platte Valley Lutheran Church, Saratoga, requested a subsidy of \$10,000.

The BOD received two handouts from Pr. Sherman regarding the Frederick the Wise Fund: *Guidelines for The Frederick the Wise Fund* and *Application for Frederick the Wise Fund*. Pr. Sherman read the contents of the Guidelines to the BOD and asked for the BOD's approval.

The BOD adopted a motion to approve the *Guidelines* and *Application* documents for the Frederick the Wise Fund (for details, see the October 22, 2024 meeting).

Under Constitutions, Rev. Jonathan Lange reported that the Pine Bluffs/Grover/Wheatland Tri-point Parish Agreement had been dissolved as of Dec. 31st, 2024. Grace, Pine Bluffs and Zion, Grover, agreed to form a dual parish.

Via email vote, the BOD adopted a motion to approve the Dual Parish Agreement between the congregations of Grace, Pines Bluffs, WY., and Zion, Grover, CO. (January 8, 2025)

Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau reported that Trinity, Casper, is now a sponsoring congregation of LCC and will issue calls to faculty. Site preparation and construction continues for the college and is about \$1.7 million away from being completed. LCC secured a bank loan for \$1.5 million for construction.

The BOD will receive a Synod Visitation at the March meeting. Synod First Vice-President Rev. Peter Lange and Regional Vice-President Rev. Nabil Nour will attend the visitation.

The BOD approved the following overtures to the District Convention:

- Relation of LCC and the Wyoming District
- Appeal for a Recognized Ecclesiastical Relationship between LCC and the LCMS
- To thank the CTCR for its clear response to Wyoming District Res. 2021-1-01 and to forward its response to appropriate publishing arms of the LCMS.
- To Uphold the Scriptural Teaching of 'Generations/Lineages'; To Reject the Modernistic Teaching of 'Races'.

The BOD adopted the following motion: That the BOD designate three electoral circuits, each comprised of two visitation circuits corresponding to the three regions of the District (East, Central, West).

The BOD adopted a motion to provide \$3000 as a separate line item in the District budget to support CELTS (Christ Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary of Sierra Leone).

The BOD approved the revised 2025 District balanced budget.

Summarized and condensed by Rev. Darrell Debowey, Secretary, Wyoming District Board of Directors

Archives of the District are part of the Wyoming District Memorial Library. Records are kept for each congregation of the district, and it is important that booklets and bulletins of anniversaries, dedications, ordinations and installations, or any special occasion be sent to the archives. Newspaper clippings and pictures also help to preserve the history of a congregation, pastor, and auxiliary.

When sending clippings, it is important to have the name of the newspaper and date on the article. Copies of historical items are also sent to the Historical Institute in St. Louis. Send all the items to the district office marked "Archives."

I thank all of you for your help in keeping your congregations records up to date for our Wyoming District History. I have filed materials according to the guidelines I have been given.

WYOMING DISTRICT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Mr. Ken Temme

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To Him be Glory now and forever." 2 Peter 3:18*

As we review our last District Convention report for the Wyoming District Library, we continue to be reminded that the purpose of the WY District Library is to make available to pastors, teachers, congregations, and lay people of the Wyoming District such as books, materials, articles, archives, translations, and audio-visual materials in order to assist, support, and enhance the particular call of the Office of the Ministry and the Office of Teachers; as well as the general call of all Christians to serve God.

Our specific function and areas of focus continue to be as follows:

1. To house and maintain the WY District Archives
2. To house the WY District Audio-visual Library
3. To maintain access to digital materials pertinent to the needs of WY District pastors, teachers, and congregations; and
4. To house books and materials suitable for use by LCMS pastors, teachers, lay leaders, and congregational members.

In coordination with Luther Classical College (LCC) library development, the Wyoming

District Library is working with respect to locations of the libraries and materials within the Wyoming District office building, and most importantly a common electronic cataloging system.

As noted in our previous report, our biggest challenge continues to be our ability to communicate to the pastors, teachers, and member congregations of the WY District about what materials are available for use from the library. This will expand with the availability for use of the WY District Library materials by faculty and students of Luther Classical College.

With respect to the use of the WY District office basement for both libraries, the following items have been completed:

- Remodeling of the basement has been completed to allow the area to house both libraries. At this time, the remodeling of the basement bathrooms remains to be completed. The remodeling was partially funded by the Memorial Library Endowment interest and LCC.
- The WY District Library will continue to be physically separated from the LCC library and will occupy the small room located in the NE corner of the basement.
- The LCC library will occupy the large area on the northern side of the basement and the room located in the SE corner of the basement.
- Because the basement has a structural floor, a floor loading plan prepared by a qualified structural engineer was requested and has been received. It notes the required permissible floor loading requirements to meet code for library use.
- The construction of LCC library bookshelves is in progress. When installed, the bookshelves will meet the necessary codes for structural loading on the basement floor.
- At this time, it is our understanding LCC has completed cataloging approximately 4,000 publications and is approximately 60% completed with their inventory of publications.
- It is estimated the Wyoming District Library has on the order of 2,000+ publications which have been cataloged. These will need to be reviewed and updated to be compatible with the proposed LCC cataloging system. In addition, the Wyoming District Library continues to review current inventory for inclusion in their library cataloging.
- LCC Library will have an electronic cataloging system which will include a separate filing system for the Wyoming District Library materials.
- The LCC online cataloging system is already functional and searchable through the LCC website. LCC will be opening the library to begin lending books to patrons in June 2025.
- Current LCC Library plans are to complete cataloging of all current publications by the spring of 2026.

- Once the electronic cataloging system is operational, LCC leadership and Wyoming District BOD will meet with the WY District Library committee to review the Library operational use and procedures prior to the system being opened to district pastors, teachers, and member congregations for access and use.
- The Wyoming District Archives will continue to be stored in the Wyoming District office building.

We thank Shawn Kumm for his recent donation and all of our pastors, teachers, layman, and individuals that have donated books to the WY District Library in the last quadrennium. In addition, we thank those that helped with the basement remodeling including the following:

Rev. James Rockhill
 Matt and Linda Huckfeldt
 Gabriel White
 Angela Hill
 Paul Sorenson
 Deborrah Hoff
 Christine Preus

Rev. Andrew Richard
 Samuel Snyder
 Rev. Chris Curry
 Jan Klassen
 Joseph Cook
 Lyezabeth Hoff
 Jeff Snyder; and

Rev. Jon Olson
 Jonah Synder
 Rev. Paul Beyer
 Bob Doctor
 Tim & Tiffany Hoff
 Hannah Cordova
 MHLS Upper Class

BUDGET SUMMARY REPORTS

Mr. John Schmall

Three Year Summarized Budget Comparison				
	Actual Expenses			Projected Expenses
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
<u>Synodical Budget Pledge</u>				
Higher Education, World Missions, Congregational Services & Administration, etc.	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00
<u>District Mission Projects</u>				
Program Administration, District Mission Work, Campus Ministry, Subsidized Congregations, & Institutional Ministries	\$255,629.00	\$231,907.00	\$148,930.00	\$156,233.00
<u>Student Assistance</u>				
Student Aid & Recruitment, Schwieger & Fern Preis Scholarship, LWML Scholarship, Jensen & Splittgerber Scholarships	\$39,939.00	\$23,500.00	\$45,851.00	\$39,292.00
<u>Congregational Services</u>				
Program Administration, Adult Education, Outdoor & Youth Ministry, Evangelism, Stewardship, Human Care & Family Ministries	\$31,717.00	\$25,478.00	\$31,840.00	\$30,375.00
<u>Ecclesiastical Administration</u>				
President's Office, Vice Presidents and Circuit Counselors, Reconcilers, District Board of Education, DP Discretionary Fund	\$181,370.00	\$182,806.00	\$194,925.00	\$225,626.00
<u>District Administration</u>				
Financial & General Office, Board of Directors, Properties, Synod/District Conventions, Workshops, Pastors Conferences, Continuing Education, LCEF, Memorial Library, etc.	\$211,503.00	\$295,243.00	\$229,106.00	\$284,363.00
<u>Debt Servicing</u>	\$22,053.00	\$18,408.00	\$17,615.00	\$20,063.00
Total Expenditures (minus depreciation)	<u>\$892,211.00</u>	<u>\$927,342.00</u>	<u>\$818,267.00</u>	<u>\$905,952.00</u>
Total Income - (Actual & Projected)	<u>\$863,429.00</u>	<u>\$824,276.00</u>	<u>\$878,106.00</u>	<u>\$831,735.00</u>
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(\$28,782.00)</u>	<u>(\$103,066.00)</u>	<u>\$59,839.00</u>	<u>(\$74,217.00)</u>
Assets/Investments for Expenditure Offset	<u>\$55,402.00</u>	<u>\$107,572.00</u>	<u>-\$4,470.00</u>	<u>\$76,143.00</u>
District Capital Surplus (cumulative)	<u>\$26,620.00</u>	<u>\$4,506.00</u>	<u>\$55,369.00</u>	<u>\$1,926.00</u>

Congregational Budget Receipt January - December 2021

	2021 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining		2021 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining
CHIMNEY ROCK CIRCUIT		Totals	Pledge		YELLOWSTONE CIRCUIT		Totals
Bayard	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00		Cody	\$24,868.74	\$32,537.00
Bridgeport**	\$12,000.00	\$13,577.00	\$1,577.00		Emblem	\$1,100.00	\$2,530.00
Chappell**	\$5,961.51	\$6,196.00	\$234.49		Greybull**	\$5,000.00	\$7,200.00
Gering**	\$22,385.00	\$22,536.22	\$151.22		Lovell	\$2,000.00	\$2,407.26
Gurley	\$10,000.00	\$10,946.00	\$946.00		Powell	\$26,000.00	\$25,999.26
Potter	\$12,000.00	\$11,450.28	(\$549.72)		Thermopolis**	\$13,400.00	\$15,000.73
Scottsbluff, St. James	\$2,500.00	\$3,150.00	\$650.00		Worland	\$22,150.00	\$22,149.96
Scottsbluff, St. John**	\$18,000.00	\$19,711.90	\$1,711.90			\$94,336.74	
Sidney, St. Paul	\$4,006.00	\$5,242.02	\$1,236.02				
Sidney, Trinity	\$13,500.00	\$13,561.00	\$61.00		HEADWATERS CIRCUIT		
	\$106,352.51				Dubois	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00
					Evanston	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
PINE RIDGE CIRCUIT					Fort Bridger	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Alliance	\$11,666.67	\$16,205.00	\$4,538.33		Green River	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Chadron	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00		Jackson	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Crawford**	\$10,000.00	\$10,003.00	\$3.00		Kemmerer	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gordon	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00		Lander**	\$13,800.00	\$20,342.38
Harrison	\$1,500.00	\$1,121.05	(\$378.95)		Marbleton/Big Piney	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Hay Springs	\$2,000.00	\$1,820.00	(\$180.00)		Pinedale	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Lusk, WY	\$10,000.00	\$9,167.40	(\$832.60)		Rawlins**	\$12,696.00	\$13,079.78
Morrill	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00		Riverton	\$33,000.00	\$33,000.00
Torrington, WY**	\$29,000.00	\$29,289.65	\$289.65		Rock Springs**	\$14,000.00	\$14,596.45
Rushville	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00		Saratoga	\$5,684.00	\$5,537.25
	\$76,366.67				Thayne/Etna/SV	\$3,918.00	\$4,238.00
						\$115,598.00	
POWDER RIVER CIRCUIT					HIGH PLAINS CIRCUIT		
Buffalo	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.08	\$0.08		Burns**	\$2,500.00	\$5,253.71
Casper, Mt. Hope	\$6,000.00	\$7,800.00	\$1,800.00		Cheyenne, King of Glo	\$6,000.00	\$6,417.00
Casper, Trinity	\$46,000.00	\$46,000.08	\$0.08		Cheyenne, Our Savior**	\$35,000.00	\$36,780.51
Douglas	\$11,520.00	\$11,520.00	\$0.00		Cheyenne, Trinity	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Gillette	\$10,000.00	\$9,999.96	(\$0.04)		Kimball**	\$5,000.00	\$6,412.14
Glenrock	\$2,400.00	\$2,400.00	\$0.00		Laramie, St. Andrew's	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00
Moorcroft	\$1,200.00	\$1,100.00	(\$100.00)		Laramie, Zion**	\$28,800.00	\$25,529.27
Sheridan	\$12,500.00	\$12,504.00	\$4.00		Pine Bluffs	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sundance	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00		Wheatland	\$500.00	\$270.00
	\$98,620.00				Grover, CO**	\$2,500.00	\$2,688.80
CURRENT YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS						\$91,800.00	
YTD Received 2021		\$618,970.14			TOTAL 2021 PLEDGED AMOUNT		
Pledged Amt YTD 2021		\$583,073.88			\$ 583,073.92		
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2021		\$35,896.26					
PREVIOUS YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS							
YTD Received 2020	✓	\$641,082.05			**First fruits contributions		
Pledged Amount YTD 2020	✓	\$582,937.56			*highlighted denotes congregations that have not submitted their		
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2020	✓	\$58,144.49			pledge form for 2021.		

Congregational Budget Receipt January - December 2022

	2022 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining		2022 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining	
		Totals	Pledge			Totals	Pledge	
CHIMNEY ROCK CIRCUIT					YELLOWSTONE CIRCUIT			
Bayard	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	Cody	\$26,800.00	\$33,500.00	\$6,700.00	
Bridgeport**	\$12,000.00	\$13,888.55	\$1,888.55	Emblem	\$1,100.00	\$2,130.00	\$1,030.00	
Chappell**	\$5,250.00	\$6,580.16	\$1,330.16	Greybull**	\$5,000.00	\$6,970.00	\$1,970.00	
Gering**	\$28,170.00	\$29,565.88	\$1,395.88	Lovell	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	
Gurley	\$10,000.00	\$10,473.00	\$473.00	Powell**	\$26,000.00	\$25,999.86	(\$0.14)	
Potter	\$12,000.00	\$13,949.84	\$1,949.84	Thermopolis**	\$14,500.00	\$20,519.81	\$6,019.81	
Scottsbluff, St. James	\$2,500.00	\$2,550.00	\$50.00	Worland	\$22,150.00	\$22,149.96	(\$0.04)	
Scottsbluff, St. John**	\$21,000.00	\$20,605.30	(\$394.70)		\$97,550.00			
Sidney, St. Paul	\$5,100.00	\$7,415.17	\$2,315.17					
Sidney, Trinity	\$14,500.00	\$14,743.00	\$243.00	HEADWATERS CIRCUIT				
	\$118,231.51			Dubois	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00	\$0.00	
PINE RIDGE CIRCUIT				Evanston	\$2,000.00	\$502.00	(\$1,498.00)	
Alliance	\$11,667.00	\$11,895.00	\$228.00	Fort Bridger	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
Chadron	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	Green River	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	
Crawford**	\$10,000.00	\$10,295.00	\$295.00	Jackson	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	
Gordon	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	Kemmerer	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Harrison	\$1,000.00	\$1,641.90	\$641.90	Lander**	\$13,800.00	\$13,800.00	\$0.00	
Hay Springs	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	Marbleton/Big Piney	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	
Lusk, WY	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.80	\$0.80	Pinedale	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	
Morrill	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Rawlins**	\$12,850.00	\$12,053.21	(\$796.79)	
Torrington, WY**	\$28,500.00	\$30,970.65	\$2,470.65	Riverton	\$30,000.00	\$31,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Rushville	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	Rock Springs**	\$14,500.00	\$15,513.68	\$1,013.68	
	\$75,867.00			Saratoga**	\$5,684.00	\$4,429.00	(\$1,255.00)	
				Thayne/Etna/SV**	\$3,800.00	\$3,920.00	\$120.00	
					\$115,034.00			
POWDER RIVER CIRCUIT				HIGH PLAINS CIRCUIT				
Buffalo	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$0.00	Burns**	\$2,500.00	\$5,140.24	\$2,640.24	
Casper, Mt. Hope	\$9,600.00	\$10,050.00	\$450.00	Cheyenne, King of Glo	\$6,600.00	\$6,600.00	\$0.00	
Casper, Trinity	\$46,000.00	\$46,000.08	\$0.08	Cheyenne, Our Savior**	\$30,000.00	\$30,234.76	\$234.76	
Douglas	\$11,520.00	\$11,520.00	\$0.00	Cheyenne, Trinity	\$6,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$500.00	
Gillette	\$10,000.00	\$9,999.96	(\$0.04)	Kimball**	\$5,000.00	\$5,691.98	\$691.98	
Glenrock	\$3,750.00	\$3,750.00	\$0.00	Laramie, St. Andrew's	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	
Moorcroft	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Laramie, Zion**	\$25,500.00	\$26,421.10	\$921.10	
Sheridan	\$12,500.00	\$12,504.00	\$4.00	Pine Bluffs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Sundance	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	Wheatland	\$500.00	\$240.00	(\$260.00)	
	\$105,570.00			Grover, CO**	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
CURRENT YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS								
YTD Received 2022		\$629,013.89			\$84,100.00			
Pledged Amt YTD 2022		596,825.52						
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2022		\$32,188.37						
PREVIOUS YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS				TOTAL 2022 PLEDGED AMOUNT				
YTD Received 2021	\$595,858.11			\$ 596,852.51				
Pledged Amount YTD 2021	\$583,073.88			**First fruits contributions				
				*highlighted denotes congregations that have not submitted their				

Congregational Budget Receipt January - December 2023

	2023 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining		2023 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining	
		Totals	Pledge			Totals	Pledge	
CHIMNEY ROCK CIRCUIT					YELLOWSTONE CIRCUIT			
Bayard	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	Cody	\$22,442.00	\$22,442.37	\$0.37	
Bridgeport**	\$12,000.00	\$15,412.60	\$3,412.60	Emblem	\$1,100.00	\$1,210.00	\$110.00	
Chappell**	\$6,200.00	\$5,221.00	(\$979.00)	Greybull**	\$5,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Gering**	\$28,170.00	\$30,300.94	\$2,130.94	Lovell	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	
Gurley	\$10,000.00	\$8,772.00	(\$1,228.00)	Powell**	\$26,001.00	\$25,999.92	(\$1.08)	
Potter	\$12,000.00	\$14,957.98	\$2,957.98	Thermopolis**	\$14,500.00	\$17,506.80	\$3,006.80	
Scottsbluff, St. James	\$2,500.00	\$1,875.00	(\$625.00)	Worland	\$22,150.00	\$22,149.96	(\$0.04)	
Scottsbluff, St. John**	\$20,700.00	\$21,901.00	\$1,201.00		\$93,193.00			
Sidney, St. Paul	\$5,100.00	\$3,621.08	(\$1,478.92)					
Sidney, Trinity	\$14,500.00	\$14,800.00	\$300.00	HEADWATERS CIRCUIT				
	\$118,670.00			Dubois**	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$0.00	
				Evanston	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	(\$2,000.00)	
PINE RIDGE CIRCUIT				Fort Bridger	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
Alliance	\$11,667.00	\$32,217.00	\$20,550.00	Green River	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	
Chadron	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	Jackson	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	
Crawford**	\$10,000.00	\$10,186.00	\$186.00	Kemmerer	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Gordon	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	Lander	\$13,800.00	\$13,800.00	\$0.00	
Harrison**	\$1,250.00	\$1,248.81	(\$1.19)	Marbleton/Big Piney	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$0.00	
Hay Springs	\$2,000.00	\$2,950.00	\$950.00	Pinedale	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	
Lusk, WY	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.80	\$0.80	Rawlins**	\$13,656.00	\$10,798.20	(\$2,857.80)	
Morrill	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Riverton	\$33,000.00	\$31,500.00	(\$1,500.00)	
Torrington, WY**	\$27,600.00	\$32,498.10	\$4,898.10	Rock Springs**	\$15,000.00	\$15,373.14	\$373.14	
Rushville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Saratoga	\$5,684.00	\$5,272.93	(\$411.07)	
	\$74,717.00			Thayne/Etna/SV**	\$3,800.00	\$2,797.10	(\$1,002.90)	
					\$121,140.00			
POWDER RIVER CIRCUIT				HIGH PLAINS CIRCUIT				
Buffalo	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	Burns**	\$2,500.00	\$4,596.60	\$2,096.60	
Casper, Mt. Hope	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$0.00	Cheyenne, King of Glo	\$7,000.00	\$6,999.96	(\$0.04)	
Casper, Trinity	\$46,000.00	\$46,000.08	\$0.08	Cheyenne, Our Savior**	\$22,000.00	\$28,522.42	\$6,522.42	
Douglas	\$11,520.00	\$11,520.00	\$0.00	Cheyenne, Trinity	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	
Gillette	\$10,000.00	\$9,999.96	(\$0.04)	Kimball**	\$5,000.00	\$5,879.13	\$879.13	
Glenrock	\$5,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$500.00	Laramie, St. Andrew's	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	
Moorcroft	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Laramie, Zion**	\$24,750.00	\$26,903.74	\$2,153.74	
Sheridan	\$12,500.00	\$12,504.00	\$4.00	Pine Bluffs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Sundance	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	(\$2,000.00)	Wheatland	\$500.00	\$240.00	(\$260.00)	
	\$107,720.00			Grover, CO**	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
CURRENT YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS				TOTAL 2023 PLEDGED AMOUNT				
YTD Received 2023		\$625,578.62		\$ 591,190.00				
Pledged Amt YTD 2023		591,192.00						
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2023		\$34,386.62						
PREVIOUS YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS								
YTD Received 2022	✓	\$624,013.89		**First fruits contributions				
Pledged Amount YTD 2022	✓	\$596,825.52		*highlighted denotes congregations that have not submitted their				
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2022	✓	\$27,188.37		pledge form for 2023.				

Congregational Budget January - December 2024

	2024 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining		2024 Pledge	Year to Date	Remaining
CHIMNEY ROCK CIRCUIT		Totals	Pledge		YELLOWSTONE CIRCUIT		Totals
Bayard	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$0.00		Cody	\$31,387.40	\$31,387.40
Bridgeport**	\$12,000.00	\$15,033.31	\$3,033.31		Emblem	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chappell**	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	(\$4,500.00)		Greybull**	\$6,000.00	\$5,487.00
Gering**	\$29,372.00	\$29,372.00	\$0.00		Lovell	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Gurley	\$10,000.00	\$7,683.00	(\$2,317.00)		Powell**	\$26,000.00	\$26,000.00
Potter	\$12,000.00	\$15,147.20	\$3,147.20		Thermopolis**	\$14,500.00	\$17,144.52
Scottsbluff, St. James	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00		Worland	\$22,150.00	\$22,149.96
Scottsbluff, St. John**	\$21,000.00	\$21,000.00	\$0.00			\$103,037.40	
Sidney, St. Paul	\$7,400.00	\$4,244.98	(\$3,155.02)		HEADWATERS CIRCUIT		
Sidney, Trinity	\$14,500.00	\$12,831.00	(\$1,669.00)		Dubois	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
	\$120,772.00				Evanston	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
PINE RIDGE CIRCUIT					Fort Bridger	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Alliance	\$11,666.67	\$20,328.00	\$8,661.33		Green River	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Chadron	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00		Jackson	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Crawford**	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00		Kemmerer	\$0.00	\$1,540.00
Gordon	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00		Lander	\$7,600.00	\$7,630.00
Harrison**	\$1,500.00	\$1,433.44	(\$66.56)		Marbleton/Big Piney	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Hay Springs	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00		Pinedale	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Lusk, WY	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00		Rawlins**	\$0.00	\$1,080.00
Morrill	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00		Riverton	\$34,000.00	\$34,000.00
Torrington, WY**	\$28,800.00	\$29,934.76	\$1,134.76		Rock Springs**	\$14,000.00	\$16,179.43
Rushville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		Saratoga	\$5,684.00	\$5,007.67
	\$74,166.67				Thayne/Etna/SV**	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
POWDER RIVER CIRCUIT						\$98,984.00	
Buffalo	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00		HIGH PLAINS CIRCUIT		
Casper, Mt. Hope	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$0.00		Burns**	\$2,500.00	\$4,366.63
Casper, Trinity	\$46,000.00	\$46,000.08	\$0.08		Cheyenne, King of Glo	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Douglas	\$11,520.00	\$11,520.00	\$0.00		Cheyenne, Our Savior**	\$11,000.00	\$13,171.92
Gillette	\$10,000.00	\$9,999.96	(\$0.04)		Cheyenne, Trinity	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Glenrock	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00		Kimball**	\$5,000.00	\$6,281.84
Moorcroft	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00		Laramie, St. Andrew's	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00
Sheridan	\$13,000.00	\$13,000.44	\$0.44		Laramie, Zion**	\$28,000.00	\$26,292.79
Sundance	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00		Pine Bluffs	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$100,220.00				Wheatland	\$500.00	\$250.00
CURRENT YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS					Grover, CO**	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
YTD Received 2024		\$580,097.33				\$70,000.00	
Pledged Amt YTD 2024		567,180.00			TOTAL 2024 PLEDGED AMOUNT		
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2024		12,917.33			\$ 567,680.07		
PREVIOUS YEAR DISTRICT TOTALS					**First fruits contributions		
YTD Received 2023	✓	\$614,512.13			*highlighted denotes congregations that have not submitted their		
Pledged Amount YTD 2023	✓	\$591,192.00			pledge form for 2024.		
(Short)/Long Pledge YTD 2023	✓	\$23,320.13					

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MISSION AND MINISTRY REPORTS

COMMISSION OF MISSION SERVICES

Rev. Travis Sherman

The Commission of Mission Services is served by the following members:

Chairman: Rev. Travis Sherman
Chairman Elect: Rev. Patrick Baldwin
Campus Ministry Facilitator: Mr. Chuck Hall
Ethnic Ministry Facilitator: Mr. Larry Rice
Missions Development Facilitator: Vacant
Mission Support Facilitator: Rev. Patrick Baldwin
LWML District President: Mrs. Terri Denniston
CMS Advisor: Rev. Paul Cain

The CMS has oversight of the assisted congregations and mission outreach efforts on behalf of all the congregations of the Wyoming District. Currently, the CMS provides assistance and supervision for 1) St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center, Laramie, WY; 2) Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evanston, WY; and 3) Platte Valley Lutheran Church, Saratoga, WY.

This past triennium has seen challenges as well as growth in our congregations.

St. Andrew's has experienced a shift in congregational make-up as more young families have stayed in the area after college. The congregation has seen the beginnings of a Lutheran school and has also worked with the district to support Pr. Preus and his family with the purchase of a larger parsonage and providing a sabbatical.

We also mourned the closing of the Wind River Lutheran Mission. A focal point of District Missions for many years, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a presence on the reservation. The fear instilled through the pandemic restrictions prevented much of the in-person work that happened on the reservation, the continuing dissolution of structures that would promote the first use of the law in citizen's lives, and the return of pagan idolatry were all contributing factors. We give thanks for Pr. Sonnenschein and his wife, Rachel, and their faithful work, as well as all who have served in the past, both as called missionaries and their families and to the countless people who gave of time, talents, and treasure to bring the Gospel to the people there. We give thanks to God for those who heard the saving Word of Christ and received salvation through faith in Jesus through this Mission. We also pray that God would open a door to further work in the future.

District funds continue to be tight, and the amount of funds available for financially assisting congregations is limited. Nevertheless, we give thanks for the tireless work of Pastors Lange and Schnack as they serve the people of Evanston and Saratoga and pray the Lord would continue to bless their proclamation of His Word and give the congregations continued zeal.

Pastors and congregations of the district have realized the need for the support of pastors and their families. The CMS has begun working on a fund that would provide financial support for pastors in special times of need as well as providing resources for times of physical and spiritual renewal in the form of things like vacations and sabbaticals.

The CMS appreciates the leadership of the LWML and the willingness to work more closely with the Commission in the common causes we have.

We give thanks for First Vice-President Paul Cain, and his wonderful help and guidance as CMS Advisor. We also give thanks for Pr. Hill and his faithful leadership, Jeff Snyder for his attention to detail and ability to make things happen; to Tiffany Hoff and her work for us; and the ladies of Mount Hope for feeding us through the years. I give thanks to God and to the district for the opportunity to serve these past years, and pray that God's true and saving Word, the good news of Jesus crucified for our sins and risen to give us new life here in time and there in eternity, would continue to be proclaimed to the people of Wyoming and Western Nebraska.

ST. ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & CAMPUS CENTER

Laramie, WY

Rev. Mark Preus

No Report

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evanston, WY

Rev. Jonathan Lange

Our Saviour Lutheran Church anchors the southwest corner of the Wyoming District and is part of a dual parish with St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Kemmerer.

The membership of the congregation is a mix of life-long Lutheran transfers from other LCMS congregations and converts from Mormonism to Christianity from the local population. Such ministry is extremely challenging since there are severe familial, economic, and social consequences for leaving the Mormon religion.

The formerly Mormon people of Our Saviour are extremely grateful to the Wyoming District for bringing them from the darkness to the light by planting the true Church in their midst. And all members are thankful that the Wyoming District has made it possible to bring their children to baptism and their neighbors to Bible class and the Divine Service. They are keenly aware that without your support, the congregation's mission could not continue.

During the last quadrennium, Our Saviour Lutheran Church initiated a new community outreach. Seeing the breakdown of community and neighborliness across our culture, Our Saviour recognizes that the Church is the true community - restored by the forgiveness of sins. She understands that in the gifts of God's Word, New Birth, and the forgiveness of sins she can show the community of Evanston how true community is possible.

This initiative is bearing fruit. We have both received new members and increased in community reputation. Please pray for us that the darkness of our times might make Our Saviour's light shine ever brighter in the new triennium.

PLATTE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Saratoga, WY

Rev. Randolph Schnack

Platte Valley Lutheran Church continues to provide Word and Sacrament Ministry in Saratoga and the surrounding areas. With ranching, education, tourism, forestry, national fish hatchery, and other businesses the economics and population of the area is stable.

Two years ago, we had to replace both our roof and our furnace. We managed, with strong stewardship support, to pay for both, although it did leave our church and parsonage upkeep memorial savings account fairly depleted. We are currently working on building those back up should we need any major repairs in the future.

Covid also hit us fairly hard, and some members' regularity in attendance has suffered.

One of the challenges we face is a lack of population growth in our area and aging membership. We are active in our community taking an important role in the Saratoga food pantry, transient assistance, utility and rent assistance and other community programs. We contribute regular articles to our local paper and have taken part in community parades and other events. We thank the district for their ongoing support, enabling us to continue to serve both our community and our members.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

Mr. Chuck Hall

Campus Ministry is a very important mission program of the Wyoming District. Although the main focus of campus ministry is at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Laramie, individual parishes make efforts to reach students at Chadron State University and several community colleges across our district.

Pr. Preus has been at St. Andrew's for approximately 10 years and is doing a wonderful job. He currently provides many opportunities to receive God's gifts. In addition to regular Sunday services, Sunday morning Bible class is held, as well as various other Bible classes, midweek Matins and Vespers and adult catechesis. Fellowship activities are also a priority at St. Andrew's. Ski trips, choir, movie nights, and community help projects help build bonds amongst members and create opportunities for outreach. Typical Sunday worship attendance is around 90 and around 30 for Bible class. There are generally several people going through adult confirmation as well as pre-marital counseling at any given time. God's work is certainly being done at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Wyoming District in this capacity.

CASPER COLLEGE

Casper, WY

Rev. Dr. Christian Preus/Rev. Jon C. Olson

No Report

CENTRAL WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Riverton, WY

Rev. Stephen Kieser

No Report

CHADRON STATE COLLEGE

Chadron, NE

Rev. Travis Sherman

No Report

EASTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Torrington, WY

Rev. Scott Firminhac

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY seeks to serve Lutheran and other interested students from Eastern Wyoming College. While many students travel home for the weekend, we typically have several EWC students attending worship services on a consistent basis. Member families are encouraged to be alert to these students and reach out to them with love and compassion. In 2024 I had the opportunity and privilege to take one of these students through adult catechesis and he is now a member of another church in our district. I occasionally attend EWC sporting events to have a presence on campus. We continue to look for additional ways to be of service to students and appreciate the efforts of those individuals that take the time to inform us of students that are attending EWC from other areas of our district.

LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Marcus Baikie

Our Savior Lutheran Church is blessed to have several members who attend or work at Laramie County Community College (LCCC). Each year we also receive visitors who are students at LCCC and live away from home. In Fall 2022, Our Savior participated in LCCC's Community Resource Fair, sharing information about our congregation and Lutheranism. If you have any students attending LCCC, please let us know. Our services are held on Sundays at 8:00am and 10:45am and on Mondays at 7:00pm.

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Powell, WY

Rev. Daniel Harrington

Many of the students who attend NWCC are commuters who go home for the weekend. If parents and/or pastors send us the names of their students from their membership, we will make every effort to contact them and invite them to worship with us on weekends where they remain in Powell.

SHERIDAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Sheridan, WY

Rev. Paul Cain

Immanuel Lutheran, Sheridan, WY is a congregational "home away from home" for students attending Sheridan College. Services at 10:30am on Sundays (9:00am June-August) and every Wednesday at 7:00pm are opportunities to receive the Lord's gifts

in Word and Sacrament. We were blessed to serve students from the Wyoming District and Montana District since the last Wyoming District Convention.

Former Immanuel Associate Pastor Castellero and former Prince of Peace Pastor Heinecke conducted special activities for students during the previous quadrennium.

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Scottsbluff, NE

Rev. Richard Neugebauer

There are several local options for college students to receive Word and Sacrament ministry, including but not limited to, St. James and St. John's in Scottsbluff and Faith in Gering. Faith Lutheran Church does not specifically have an outreach program for the college, although some LCMS students do regularly attend the weekly worship service. St. John's and Faith have a joint young adult study that the college students have been invited to attend.

WESTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Rock Springs, WY

Rev. Andrew Hill

WWCC is located less than one mile from Trinity Lutheran Church. We have had Lutheran students attend off and on through the years, but to my knowledge we have never had an active campus outreach. One of my goals within the next year is to begin such a program. In the meantime, if you have young men who don't know what they want to do with their lives yet, consider suggesting WWCC for its certifications. Rock Springs and Green River have some of the best mining opportunities in the country and WWCC provides certification to fill some of those needs. If you have students at WWCC, please let me know so that I can reach out to them.

LWML PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Terri Denniston

The LWML is the official women's auxiliary of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The LWML Wyoming District is proud to be a part of this great organization. There are six zones in the Wyoming District. These zones host rallies, workshops, retreats, and conventions, all offering Christ-centered events for all the women of the district.

As Lutheran Women in Mission we joyfully proclaim Christ first. Jesus Christ is to be the focus in all we do. We encourage all women in our district congregations to be in Bible Study regularly. The *Lutheran Women's Quarterly* - our official publication - contains three Bible studies reviewed by the Synodical Doctrinal Team. Mission, reports, missionary stories, ideas to benefit our neighbor round out this magazine.

We support missions! Coins are collected in Mite boxes at each event. 25% of the offerings gathered are sent to the national LWML to meet the biennial goal selected by delegates from forty LWML districts at convention in the odd years. That mission goal is well over \$2,500,000.

With the remaining 75%, LWML Wyoming District delegates meet in convention to select more missions to support. Since 2022, Lutheran women have supported \$75,600 in various mission grants. At the 2024 LWML Wyoming District Convention, delegates approved another \$32,000 to fund more grants. Many of the grants support our Lutheran Classical schools and district preschools.

In addition, we award five to six district students' scholarships to attend The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Wyoming District approved colleges and seminaries. Each scholarship is \$1,000 per academic year.

All these projects are funded with mites (small coins) from the women and men throughout the district.

Many members serve at various levels in this auxiliary from their congregational group to the circuit/zone group, district level, or national level. Rev. Mark Maas from King of Glory Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, WY is our pastoral counselor until 2027. We are blessed to have these dedicated servants to work alongside us.

The next LWML Convention will be held June 26-29, 2025, in Omaha, Nebraska under the theme "Growing in God's Grace" from 2 Peter 3:18.

As the district president, I am invited to be part of the LCMS Wyoming District Commissions on Congregational Services and Missions Services. The district pastors that serve on these commissions encourage the Lutheran Women in Mission, LWML, and pray for us as we **joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.**

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CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES REPORTS

COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

Rev. David Bott

The Commission on Congregational Services (CCS) serves the congregations of the Wyoming District in several areas. During the last triennium, there have been several changes in the makeup of those serving on the commission. Presently, those serving are:

Chairman: Rev. David Bott

Chairman Elect: Vacant

Adult Ministry/Leadership: Mr. Josh Witkop

Evangelism/TTGNAJ: Rev. Jon Olson

Lutheran Church Extension Fund: Mr. Jeffrey Snyder

Stewardship: Rev. Joshua Scheer

Student Aid & Recruitment: Rev. Richard Mueller

Youth/Outdoor Ministry: Rev. Zachary Viggers

Marriage, Life, & Family: Rev. Jonathan Lange

It is the work of the CCS to assist in sponsoring, planning, encouraging, and conducting workshops, convocations, and camps. The commission reports and makes recommendations to the Wyoming District Board of Directors in the areas under its purview. Facilitators have represented our District at various Synodical meetings, gatherings, and workshops, as well as bringing information back from Synod to the District and its congregations.

With the exception of the Chairman and Chairman-elect, the facilitators are appointed by the Chairman in consultation with the District President and approved by the Board of Directors. The Chairman and Chairman-elect are elected by the Wyoming District in convention and serve for six years (three years as Chairman-elect and then three years as Chairman). The Wyoming District's 2nd Vice-President, Rev. Jonathan Lange, serves as advisor to the CCS and the Wyoming District's president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (Mrs. Terri Denniston) serves in an advisory capacity.

Please read through the individual reports from the CCS members for specifics as to the work performed over the last triennium. There have been some changes since the last convention in terms of duties and those serving. One change is in the position of Youth and Outdoor Ministries facilitator. Rev. Rene Castellero (former Youth and Outdoor Ministries facilitator) accepted a call outside of the district. The Rev. Zachary Viggers graciously agreed to fill that vacancy and is working faithfully and ably to fulfill those duties. Another change is the vacancy in the position of chairman-elect. This vacancy occurred when the CCS chairman accepted a call out of the district roughly midway through 2024. Rather than appoint a new chairman, the chairman-elect was placed into the chairmanship. Given the relatively short duration of time until the district convention, it was decided that the position of chairman-elect would remain vacant and allow the District in Convention to vote on and fill that position. The work of the commission continues to be successfully completed by all those involved, and their work is greatly appreciated by the chairman.

MARRIAGE, LIFE & FAMILY

Rev. Jonathan Lange

Public attacks against God's institution of Holy Marriage (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:24; and Matthew 19) reached a fever pitch in since the 2021 convention of the Wyoming District. Thus, God gave the Wyoming District many opportunities to make the good confession.

- In 2022, the Marriage, Life and Family facilitator helped to prepare a public statement on H.R. 8404 "An Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act," which was individually signed by 37 pastors of the district. (appended)
- The MLF facilitator also drafted a statement that was adopted at the 2023 Fall Pastors' conference encouraging Lutherans to exercise their vocation as citizens to protect children from obscene literature in neighborhood libraries. (appended)
- The MLF facilitator continued to publish weekly in Wyoming's public newspapers. These columns intend to help non-Christians understand the Biblical worldview, and to educate and encourage Christians in the public square. It is my prayer that they might be an example of how Christians can engage in public discourse in a God-pleasing way.
- The MLF facilitator continues to engage government officials and to organize the Wyoming Pastors Network to do the same. During legislative sessions he addresses state legislation pertaining to the sanctity of Holy Marriage, the sanctity of life, and God's design for the family.

We should thank God not only for the many opportunities that he gives to help our neighbors by advocating for their marriages, their lives, and their families. We should also thank God for the miraculous victories that he provides to encourage us.

In particular, we rejoice that on the annual feast of St. John the Baptist's birthday (June 24, 2022) God moved the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn both *Roe v. Wade* and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*. After nearly 50 years of the federal courts blocking local governments from carrying out their God-given vocation, God returned that responsibility to us. This gives all of us the vocation to defend our smallest neighbor and to speak well of them" (Small Catechism, 8th commandment). God also call us to exercise the power of the sword to "help and protect him in every bodily need" (Small Catechism, 5th commandment).

Appendix 1:

A Statement from the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod [For Her Pastors and Congregations](#) (December 5, 2022)

God created man as male and female and instituted marriage as the lifelong conjugal union of one man and one woman. By this design for mankind God continues to create the fruit of children, gives companionship in marriage and family, and provides help against lustful desires. God gave marriage to be the fountainhead of goods that He intends for all children and adults, for all communities, and for all churches.

These truths about marriage are not private religious opinions. The Biblical teachings on marriage are taught by nature itself. They have no particular traditional, national, ethnic, or cultural character to them. They are universal truths. They apply to all people of all places and all times. They are the foundation and source of all just civil laws for marriage and family. Every legitimate government is bound by God to promote and defend them.

H.R. 8404, "An Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act," rejects this foundation for just and good laws. It proposes to repeal "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," to replace God with government and His laws with unnatural laws. It requires that lies about man's nature and about marriage be established with favored legal status.

All legislators who voted for H.R. 8404 have publicly repudiated the works and will of the one true God. By this legislative action they have established a favored, secular religion which is openly set against the Holy Triune God. They have rejected God as the only source of just laws, that is, of justice, goodness, beauty, and every civil good.

Legislators who claim that Christian doctrine permits or even requires the passage of H.R. 8404 have compounded a sinful vote with a false confession.

The governmental establishment of an unnatural, unbiblical definition of marriage does not obligate Christians to give it any faith or credence. Christian love does not permit us to live a lie. All Christians are called to confess the truth of marriage even if this law brings down civil and financial penalties on them. "We must obey God rather than men." By upholding the lifelong, conjugal union of one man and one woman we defend God's plan for protecting people from the loneliness, pain, and other evils that follow from the destruction of the family.

God the Father sent His Son to be born of a woman within a marriage, to be born under His eternal law. By His crucifixion and resurrection He obtained eternal redemption and life for all. The Church rejoices with every Christian that Jesus offers this redemption and this healing as an answer to all evil, loneliness, and pain. We bring the good news to every sinner that Jesus invites you into the true family of God through faith in Him.

We acknowledge that the passage of H.R. 8404 will give the enemies of Christ the legal means to afflict faithful Christians and churches with many evils. Yet by God's grace in Christ we will continue to proclaim God's truth, live according to God's Word, love all our neighbors as God teaches, and bear the malice of others with fortitude. For we have a never-ending source of comfort and hope in God our Savior. God teaches us to strengthen one another's hearts to have hope "through the endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures" (Romans 15:5). Jesus Himself bids us "rejoice and be exceeding glad" when we are persecuted for the truth of Christ (Matthew 5:12). And He says, "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). God grant us peaceful hearts, cheerful minds, and bold courage to speak and live according to His Word.

In Christ's name,

Pastors of the Wyoming District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Rev. John E. Hill, President, Wyoming District LCMS

Rev. Paul Cain, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY, 1st Vice-President

Rev. Jonathan Lange, Our Saviour and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches, Evanston and Kemmerer, WY, 2nd Vice-President

Rev. Allen Strawn, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, NE, 3rd Vice President

Rev. John Preus, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY

Rev. Travis Berg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY
Rev. Kevin Rose, Peace and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches, Marbleton and Pinedale, WY
Rev. Travis Sherman, Grace Lutheran Church, Gordon, NE
Rev. Mark Maas, King of Glory Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, WY
Rev. Rene Castellero, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY
Rev. Norman Wacker, Bethlehem and Mount Calvary Lutheran Churches, Moorcroft and Sundance, WY
Rev. Paul Beyer, Emeritus, Casper, WY
Rev. Jais Tinglund, Zion and Grace Lutheran Churches, Emblem and Greybull, WY
Rev. Zachary Viggers, Trinity Lutheran Church, Gillette, WY
Rev. Jared Korb, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Worland, WY
Rev. Mark Preus, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center, Laramie, WY
Rev. Darrell Debowey, Zion Lutheran Church, Laramie, WY
Rev. Ted Bourret, Salem and St. Paul's and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches, Gurley, Potter, and Sidney, NE
Rev. Kenneth Humphrey, Trinity Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE
Rev. Jon Olson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper, WY
Rev. Christian Preus, Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY
Rev. Daniel Mulholland, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Fort Bridger, WY
Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cody, WY
Rev. Ron Garwood, Christ the King Lutheran Church and District President Emeritus, Cody, WY
Rev. Samuel Needham, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Thermopolis, WY
Rev. Scott Firminhac, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Torrington, WY
Rev. Richard Boche, District President Emeritus, Cheyenne, WY
Rev. Jacob Benson, St. John's Lutheran Church, Lovell, WY
Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lusk, WY
Rev. Mark Mumme, Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton, WY
Rev. Richard Mueller, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alliance, NE
Rev. Patrick Baldwin, Christ Lutheran Church, Rawlins, WY
Rev. John Christensen, Emeritus, Thermopolis, WY
Rev. James Rockhill, Bethlehem and Redeemer Lutheran Churches, Crawford and Harrison, NE
Rev. Ralph Morris, Emeritus, Gering, NE
Rev. Daniel Holthus, Emeritus, Casper, WY
Rev. David Bott, Redeemer and Christ Our Savior, Jackson and Star Valley, WY

Appendix 2:

A statement from the pastors of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (October 4, 2023)

We thank God for the vigilance and diligence of parents, educators, library-workers and citizens throughout Wyoming who have taken action to protect children. Through the faithful exercise of their vocation, inappropriate books and events have been revealed and challenged in libraries throughout Wyoming. We refer to press accounts of library book controversies in Campbell County, Laramie County school district, Sheridan County School District, Natrona County School District, Lincoln County Library, and Kelly Walsh High School, and to a “drag story hour” (DSH) event at the Albany County Public library (June 2022).

Our Lord Jesus Christ especially blessed little children during His earthly ministry (Mark 10:13-16). He commanded all human beings to “become like children” precisely because of their dependence on God (Matthew 18:3-4). Since childlike dependence is, at one and the same time, highly valued and exploitable by those who would do harm, Jesus followed His blessing with a vivid warning to those who would endanger children: “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Children are harmed when they are exposed to truths of adulthood for which bodies and minds are not yet ready. They are doubly harmed when exposed to role models who teach falsehoods by word and deed (Deuteronomy 22:5). God gives parents special and direct charge over each child that He entrusts into their care (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4). It is their duty to shield children from all harm, including those caused by inappropriate images, words, and actions. Just governments recognize and respect this authority by creating institutions and laws that help and do not hinder parents to maintain the innocence of children while raising them “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Because all fathers and mothers have this divine command, all children have this protection as their God-given right.

Wyoming criminal law recognizes the responsibility of the entire community to join in protecting the innocence and vulnerability of children. Title 6, chapter 4 of Wyoming statute enumerates crimes against the family from public indecency to the distribution of obscene literature (Articles 2 & 3). There can be no legitimate reason to exempt either public libraries or school libraries from these protections. Moreover, Article 4 “Offenses against the family” explicitly prohibits anyone—most especially government actors— from endangering children by exposing them to indecent,

obscene and pornographic acts and images— either directly or by hampering parental supervision.

Therefore, when the Albany County Library hosted a “Drag Story Hour,” in June 2022, those officials responsible abused their public office. The DSH organization explicitly admits, on its website, that such events are intend to “capture[] the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and give[] kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like [libraries], kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions. . .” This is plainly intended to sexualize children and to fill their minds with lies about the nature of male and female, men and women. This is grooming by any standard.

State, county, or municipal officials who are incapable of discerning how these evils harm children should not be entrusted with the public care and teaching of children. Not only is the DSH organization designed to subvert God’s institution of Holy Marriage, its deliberate appeal to prurient interests of children also engages in behaviors clearly prohibited by Wyoming statute: public indecency and promoting obscenities to minors (W.S. 6-4-201(a)(iii)), 6-4-301(a)(iii), 6-4-302, etc.) Based on the Word of God, we encourage our members to support and uphold the godly intent of Wyoming’s indecency and obscenity laws both in private conversation and in public action. Additionally, we, here, publicly correct three common misunderstandings that are maliciously fostered by opponents of good and just laws.

1. We point out the standards of Wyoming law not as a substitute for the standards of God’s Word, but to refute a misguided interpretation of the First Amendment. While our bodies and souls are given by God, and common-sense laws reflect this common origin, it is a perversion of reason to consider such laws as the state establishment of religion.
2. Likewise, it is a perversion of the First Amendment to set it at odds with the parental right and responsibility to direct the education of their children. The American Library Association has ensconced this ungodly and unconstitutional perversion in its Library Bill of Rights, (Arts. V & VII); and Guidelines for library policies (esp. #8). Accordingly, the ALA refuses to abide by state laws that make a distinction between adults and minors and specially guards children more than adults from indecent literature and activities. No state or county library should subscribe to the ALA Library Bill of Rights or adopt library policies based on its lies.
3. Finally, it is an abuse of the public trust when anyone—especially an office-holder—deliberately misleads the public. Specifically, when requests to move books inappropriate for minors out of the children’s section are wantonly

mislabeled as “book burning,” “censorship,” “book banning,” and other incendiary rhetoric, the public is denied its right to have a truthful and informed debate, while citizens are unjustly slandered by government officials. Organizations that employ such rhetoric should be shunned. And public officials who repeat these lies in the course of their duties should be censured.

We pastors strive to make our churches places of refuge from a world gone mad. We preach the God who loves His creation as He has made it. We preach the God who became man to redeem mankind. We preach the God who forgives all sins and dwells in all who repent their rebellion against the Creator and trust in Him in the person of Jesus.

Since there can be no repenting of rebellion without acknowledging the authority of the Creator, (Whom the Declaration of Independence calls ‘Nature’s God’), ministers of God are duty-bound to name this Creator as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to give witness that the public crimes against Wyoming families and children are sins against Him. We invite all to embrace this truth in repentance and faith, and to join us in praying God to forgive us our sins and restore sanity and peace to our state.

ADULT MINISTRY/LEADERSHIP

Mr. Josh Witkop

The CCS through adult ministry/leadership has supported the annual Pastor’s Wives retreat since the past convention although the pastor’s wives and others have planned and conducted the retreats. They were held in Casper and another retreat is planned for June 5-7, 2025.

Working together with the evangelism facilitator, two elder/treasurer workshops were held: one in Cheyenne in May 2024 and one in Rock Springs in May 2023. Further workshops are planned throughout the district.

A district-wide Fathers and Sons retreat has been held every summer most recently at the Mills Spring Ranch on Casper Mountain. Our speakers and their topics have encouraged the men of our congregations in their leadership in the home, church, and community. Many pastors have supported and attended this retreat. Further encouragement from pastors/congregations is needed to continue raising up Christian leaders.

This year’s Fathers and Sons retreat will be held at the Mills Spring Ranch on Casper Mountain June 27-29. Rev. Dr. Gary Zieroth will be presenting portraits of Biblical

Fatherhood and Sonship.

EVANGELISM

Rev. Jon C. Olson

Since 2018, I have served as chairman of the Board of Evangelism and the facilitator for the Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation. The convocation serves as the primary evangelism teaching program sponsored by the WY District. The convocation is normally held during the second weekend of February. The following were the topics and speakers for the last four convocations:

2022 Identity & Creation: 21st Century Problems, 1st Century Solutions, Rev. Adam Koontz

2023 The Peter Option: Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land, Rev. Peter Bender

2024 They Walked Away: Seminex History, Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe

2025 Saving the Sons of Missouri, Rev. David P. Ramirez

As always, if you have any suggestions for topics or presenters for the convocation, please feel free to pass that information along to a member of the CCS.

YOUTH/OUTDOOR MINISTRY

Rev. Zachary Viggers

The Youth and Outdoor Ministry Facilitator position, to which I was appointed in the Spring of 2024, continues to focus on supporting and growing youth ministry efforts across the Wyoming District, with a primary emphasis on fostering faith formation and community.

Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp (Lander Camp)

As noted in the previous reports of my predecessors, the Lander Camp remains a cornerstone of our youth ministry efforts, with record attendance and highly positive review. In the last few months, we've deepened our collaboration with the camp's kitchen staff and members of Bethel Lutheran Church in Lander. The kitchen staff are taking proactive steps to better accommodate youth with food allergies, ensuring that all participants feel welcome and cared for. Additionally, members of Bethel Lutheran Church are partnering with the district to establish a more effective system for storing, recording, and transporting camp supplies during the off-season, a vital step in preserving and improving our resources for future camps.

National Youth Gathering (NYG)

The LCMS Youth Gathering, held every three years, is scheduled for July 19-23, 2025 in New Orleans, LA. The Gathering's theme is "Endure" with reference to Hebrews 12:1-3. Per the promotional materials:

"The LCMS Youth Gathering provides thousands of youths and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God's people to be encouraged in their walk with Jesus Christ and learn about the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity.

"The Gathering is more than the five days of the event. The preparation process for the Gathering brings together young people and supportive adults to encourage each other in their baptismal identity. The Gathering provides young people a vision for the vastness of Christ's Church and equips them for vocational service as they continue their walk with Jesus."

While this event has many positive aspects, there are ongoing reservations among some Wyoming District pastors regarding the instruction and spiritual care of students, as well as the nature of the worship services that take place during the event. These concerns reflect our commitment to providing robust Lutheran teaching and practices for our youth. As such, discussions about the district's participation and approach to the NYG are ongoing. More information about the Gathering can be found at www.lcms.org/youth.

Higher Things Conference

Higher Things continues to offer youth conferences aimed at teaching the Gospel and strengthening Lutheran faith through worship, catechesis, and fellowship. The 2025 conference themed "All Things New" (Revelation 21:5), will take place at the following locations:

- June 24-27: University of Massachusetts - Amherst, Amherst, MA
- July 8-11: Concordia University Nebraska, Seward, NE
- July 29-August 1: Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI

While many youth have found Higher Things conferences to be engaging and beneficial, some pastors in the Wyoming District have expressed reservations about sending youth to these events. These concerns are centered on ensuring that all programming aligns closely with the theological standards and practices of our District. As such, careful consideration and discussion remain part of our approach to these conferences.

LCMS Youth Ministry Update

The LCMS received a \$250,000 grant from Lily Endowment Inc. to fund opportunities for youth ministry practitioners and congregations to learn from each other, build a network for mutual sharing and support, and provide resources to congregations to

help them make lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. If you or your congregation is interested in being involved in the “Practicing Healthy Youth Ministry” program, please sign up via the LCMS Youth Ministry website www.lcms.org/youth. This initiative provides an opportunity to strengthen youth ministry efforts and collaborate with other congregations to share insights and support.

Looking Ahead

In addition to ongoing youth events, we welcome input from congregations and leaders as we continue to provide faithful youth ministry opportunities throughout the Wyoming District.

STUDENT AID/RECRUITMENT

Rev. Richard Mueller

The Wyoming District has made a commitment to support students from the Wyoming District going into full-time Church Work in the LCMS. Financial aid is available to all men and women attending a Synod operated seminary, university, college or attending Luther Classical College for the purpose of preparing for full-time service in the LCMS. 5% of the pledges given to the Wyoming District by the District congregations go for Financial Aid.

Since the last Wyoming District Convention, 23 scholarships were awarded: 2021-2022 - 7 scholarships; 2022-2023 - 8 scholarships; 2023-2024 - 5 scholarships; 2024-2025 - 3 scholarships. The financial aid is given based on unmet needs. All eligible students receive a minimum amount of \$1,000 in student aid per academic year.

The Wyoming District is also helping to make the repayment of student loans less of a burden for new workers in their congregations and ministries. Students from the Wyoming District receive funds wherever they are placed and pastors and teachers coming into the Wyoming District can apply for debt reduction funds. In 2021 - 8; 2022 - 6; 2023 - 2; and 2024 - 4 pastors and teachers were helped with their school debt. What a blessing that we can help them out this way.

Application forms and information concerning district financial aid and debt reduction can be found on the WY District website: wylcms.org in the form library under the resources tab. If you do not have internet access, information and forms may be requested from Rev. Richard C. Mueller, Immanuel Lutheran Church, PO Box 715, Alliance, NE 69301 or by calling his office at 308-762-4663 or cell phone 308-760-7213. These applications are then forwarded by the applicant as directed in the

information and guidelines (by May 1 for student aid and October 1 for debt reduction) and are required each year from the applicant. Funds are made available to the respective applications in September and January, and after October for debt reduction.

There is a great need for workers in God’s Church on earth. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Encouraging someone to go into Church work begins with you. Please take time to encourage the young people and others in your congregation to pursue a career in the work of the Lord.

May God continue to bless the work of the Wyoming District as we support our students, pastors, and teachers.

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

Mr. Jeff Snyder, Montana and Wyoming District Vice-President

Mission

The mission of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is to support The Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod (LCMS) by ensuring that financial resources and related services are available now and, in the future, empowering ministry and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Organization Overview

Since 1847, The LCMS has steadfastly pursued its mission “to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world.”

Established in 1978, LCEF plays a crucial role in this mission.

- Purpose: To empower ministry by providing loans, investments and support services designed to serve the financial needs of congregations, school, and other ministry organizations within the LCMS.
- Growth: From humble beginnings with \$100 million in assets to a current portfolio exceeding \$2.0 billion – demonstrating our commitment to financial stability, trustworthiness and advancing Christ’s kingdom.

Historical Context

LCEF’s primary function has been to provide loans funded by investments and gifts from dedicated church members and supporters. Over the years, our services have broadened to include strategic advisory services, such as:

- Ministry Solutions: Offering mission clarity and guidance through ministry clarity processes and capital campaigns.
- Real Estate Solutions: Providing expert consultation and execution in property development, repurposing and expansion.

Financial Strength

LCEF's strong financial foundation plays a crucial role in supporting the LCMS today and securing its future. Our investment programs empower LCMS individuals and organizations, funding projects such as home loans, sanctuary renovations, senior living communities and Lutheran schools.

Leadership

Our leadership is committed to guiding the organization with vision, expertise and a dedication to our mission. Here's a snapshot of our leadership team and workforce:

- President and CEO: Bart Day, MBA Mdiv., reports to a 12-member Board of Directors.
- Workforce: LCEF employs over 150 people across the United States, including our headquarters in St. Louis and representatives in 31 LCMS districts.

Connection to Ministries

LCMS ministries connect with LCEF through their district vice-presidents (DVPs), who act as vital links to ensure our services meet each district's unique needs.

For over 45 years, LCEF has been committed to providing the financial resources and services that support the church's mission. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to serving the LCMS and strengthening ministries through trusted financial and strategic partnerships.

Economic Overview

A period of complex and evolving economic challenges:

2022:

- Continued recovery from the initial shock of the pandemic.
- Significant inflation, with the Consumer Price Index peaking at 9.1% in June.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 2.1%.
- Unemployment was around 3.6% by year's end.
- The Federal Reserve initiated a series of interest rate hikes to control inflation.

2023:

- Ongoing efforts by the Federal Reserve to combat inflation.
- Interest rates reached levels not seen since before the Great Recession.
- Inflation cooled to 3% by December.
- Tepid GDP growth of 1.8%.
- The housing market experienced a significant slowdown due to higher borrowing costs.
- Unemployment remained low at 3.5%.

2024

- Continued economic challenges but signs of stabilization.
- Inflation moderated to 2.5% year-over-year.
- GDP growth is projected to remain sluggish at 1.5%.
- Unemployment slightly increased to 3.8%.
- The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) paused rate hikes to monitor economic data closely.

LCEF's Response

LCEF navigated volatile markets with prudence, strengthening our capital and positioning for sustained growth. Despite economic challenges, we ended FY 2024 with over \$17.5M in gains, reinforcing our commitment to financial stability and ministry support.

COMMUNICATIONS

Vacant

**This report is provided by the District Office Staff*

The Wyoming District Communications Chairman is an appointed position serving the district through oversight of the district website and social media accounts and serves as a contact person for those reaching out to the district. Additionally, the Chairman reports convention proceedings to the Synod and serves as requested by the District President to disseminate information.

Since the last triennium, the district website has not seen any major changes. We have added the Treasurer's Manual under the "Resources" tab and added "Call Updates" and "Convention" as new tabs on the homepage. The website has been maintained by Mrs. Tiffany Hoff. Rev. James Rockhill (now serving the Iowa East District) still provides support and help to Mrs. Hoff when needed. We have recently

started sending out the District Roundup and events within the district via MailChimp. Mrs. Hoff has been largely involved in getting this off the ground and designing the layout of electronic communications. The district maintains a presence on Facebook. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Rev. Rockhill and Mrs. Hoff for their continued work on the website and our social media page.

STEWARDSHIP

Rev. Joshua Scheer

The following is a report of my work as Stewardship Chairman since our last convention:

Stewardship Presentations

As part of my duties, I go to speak on Stewardship topics to congregations around the district. I have repeatedly made myself available to our pastoral conferences to be invited to come and speak to congregations, circuits, or other gatherings on the topic of Stewardship.

October 2021 - St. Andrew's, Laramie

August 2024 - Trinity, Wheatland

Stewardship Conversations

I have regularly had discussions with pastors of the district about stewardship matters and especially regarding offerings and even finding helpful other supports for congregations to support their pastors. As part of this I have been working on multi-parish considerations for Stewardship. I have also given advice regarding capital campaigns. I would strongly encourage members of congregations to attend the treasurer workshops that go on around the district.

Commission on Congregational Services

As stewardship chairman I attended meetings of the Commission on Congregational Services and participated in budgeting, discussion, and decision-making in that commission. As a matter of special request, I prepared information about the unionistic tract and mission society known as 1517 (August 2022). I have also worked a small amount on reviewing other materials ("stewardship" by Heath Curtis and Nathan Meador, Lexham Press; and also, Financial Peace University by Dave Ramsey). These projects have not been completed as I had hoped. I have also been working on resources concerning the rise of gambling within the State of Wyoming. To help a growing need within our congregations, I helped present the need and some

thoughts to help meet the need in what will be called the Frederick the Wise Fund (named after the German prince who supported Luther with his earthly support) which will hopefully help pastors and congregations in the district to support each other. That project was taken up by the CCS and CMS and hopefully will be a part of the Convention.

Thank you to the district leadership and CCS Chairmen Rev. James Rockhill and Rev. David Bott for allowing me to serve the District congregations these past years.

NOMINATIONS REPORT

FOR PRESIDENT AND FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The Secretary of the Wyoming District is responsible for receiving and tabulating nominations for President and First Vice-President from the congregations of the district. The congregations of the Wyoming District had the opportunity to nominate pastors for the two positions (*Wyoming District Supplement to the LCMS Handbook, District Organization, 3.5 President and First Vice President under Nominations and Elections*).

The tally of nominations received is as follows:

President		First Vice-President	
Rev. John Hill, Casper	19	Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan	15
Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan	1	Rev. Jeffrey Grams, Scottsbluff	1
Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper	1	Rev. Ted Bourret, Potter	1
Rev. Kenneth Mars, Cody	1	Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper	2
		Rev. Marcus Baikie, Cheyenne	1
		Rev. Richard Neugebauer, Gering	1
		Rev. Kenneth Mars, Cody	1
		Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston	1

The following individuals have given their consent to serve, if elected, and therefore constitute the official slates, in alphabetical order by last name, for District President and First Vice-President:

President	First Vice-President
Rev. John Hill, Casper	Rev. Paul Cain, Sheridan
	Rev. Jeffrey Grams, Scottsbluff
	Rev. Jonathan Lange, Evanston
	Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper

The above slates will be submitted to the Convention for adoption as presented or as amended by the Convention. The amendment procedure is governed by the following bylaws:

3.5.1.9 The convention retains the right to alter each slate at the proper time by amendment. Any delegate making a nomination from the floor will do so with a simple motion, a second, and a vote on the

amendment. Prior consent shall have been obtained from the nominee and the proper written information concerning the nominee as described in paragraph 'h' above, will immediately be submitted to the district secretary.

3.5.1.10 After any such amendments have been voted on, the convention shall ratify the slate of candidates.

PRESIDENTAL NOMINEE

Rev. John E. Hill

Casper, WY

Age: 61

Year Ordained: 1990

Years in WY District: 29

Home Congregation: Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY

Present Position: President, Wyoming District - LCMS

Experience

Wyoming District Education Chairman

Wyoming District First Vice-President

Wyoming District Board of Directors Chairman

North Dakota Circuit Visitor

Synodical Convention Pastoral Delegate and Advisory Delegate

Powder River Circuit Visitor

LCMS Committee for Convention Nominations

Wyoming District Second Vice-President

Wyoming District Constitutions Chairman

Former Pastorates

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Forbes, ND (1990-1995)

Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, WY (1996-2015)

Other Specific Experience

Papers presented at District Pastor's Conferences (ND and WY Districts)

CCLE Board of Directors, Conference Presenter

STM From CTS (2009)

FIRST-VICE PRESIDENT NOMINEES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Rev. Paul Cain

Sheridan, WY

Age: 51

Year Ordained: 2000

Years in WY District: 24

Home Congregation: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan, WY

Present Position: Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Sheridan
First Vice-President, Wyoming District

Other Present Positions

Headmaster, Martin Luther Grammar School/Immanuel Academy, Sheridan

Rhetoric Instructor, Whittenberg Academy

Sheridan County Jail Ministry

Editor, *Lutheran Book Review* (formerly *Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review*)

LCMS Doctrinal Reviewer

Board of Directors, CCLE (permanent director; secretary; webmaster)

Board of Directors, Steadfast Lutherans

School Accreditation Visitor and Educator Certification Reader, CCLE

Narrator for Steadfast Lutheran devotions (audio podcast)

Occasional Guest on KFYO Radio

Chairman, Wyoming District Board of Directors

Regent, Luther Classical College

Past Experience

Wyoming District Worship Chairman

Pastoral Conference Planning Committee

TTGNAJ Conference Committee, WY District Evangelism Chairman

Inter-District Resource Committee on Mormonism, Chairman

Green River Advisory Council for Sweetwater Co. Family Resource Center

LWML Zone Counselor

Circuit Visitor, Yellowstone Circuit

LCMS Convention Pastoral Delegate (2004, 2007, 2010, 2013)

LCMS Convention Advisory Rep. (WY District BOD, 2019, 2023)

LCMS Convention Floor Committee (2019, Secretary; 2023)

Contributor to Lutheran Hymnal Project/*Lutheran Service Book*

Lutheran Service Book Introductory Session Presenter

Contributor to *LSB Hymnal Companion* volumes and *LSB Devotional Edition*

Liturgist, Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music (2014, 2017)
Contributor to *Concordia Pulpit Resources*
Contributor to *Lutheranism 101*
Author, *5 Things You Can Do to Make Your Congregation a Caring Church*
Author, *Lutheran Witness* article on Stewardship
Wyoming District Secretary, Board of Directors
Wyoming District Education Chairman and NLSA Commissioner

Former Pastorates

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Green River, WY
Trinity Lutheran Church, Morrill, NE

Other Specific Experience

Director, Views on Learning
Vicar, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD
Congressional Intern, Washington D.C
Summer Staff for Nebraska State 4-H Camp, Halsey, NE
KNLV Radio, Ord, NE

Rev. Jeffery W. Grams

Scottsbluff, NE

Age: 55

Year Ordained: 1995

Years in WY District: 24

Home Congregation: St. John Lutheran Church, Scottsbluff

Present Position: Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Scottsbluff

Past Experience

Minnesota South District Elections Committee
Secretary, Pastors' Conference Committee
Chairman, CCS Youth Ministry
Chimney Rock Circuit Visitor
Wyoming District Third/Second Vice-President

Former Pastorates

St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School, Fulda, MN

Other Specific Experience

Floor Committee CTCR (2005)

Floor Committee Synod Structure (2012)
Synodical Doctrinal Review

Rev. Jonathan Lange

Evanston, WY

Age: 61 Year Ordained: 1990 Years in WY District: 30

Home Congregation: Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evanston

Present Position: Pastor, Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evanston/St. Paul Lutheran Church, Kemmerer

Other Present Positions

Second Vice-President, Board of Directors WY District
Wyoming District Marriage, Life, & Family Facilitator
Chair, LCMS District Life Coordinators
Constitutions Chairman, Wyoming District

Past Experience

Rawlins Circuit Visitor
Wyoming District Life Chair
LWML Zone Counselor
Synodical Convention Pastoral Delegate
Concordia Theological Seminary Alumni Board
Delegate to Pittsburgh Convention
Concordia Institute for Christian Studies Instructor, Sierra Leone
Third Vice-President, Wyoming District
Editor, *LCMS Free to Be Faithful Newsletter*

Former Pastorates

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Spencer & Christ Lutheran Church, Lynch, NE

Other Specific Experience

Chairman, Niobrara Valley Hospital Board, Lynch, NE
Evanston Civic Chorus, 2008-present
Clergy Discussion Group, 2008-2015

Founding leader of Wyoming Pastor's Network, 2014-present
Weekly Columnist, Uinta County Herald and Kemmerer Gazette, 2016-2020
Weekly Columnist, Wyoming Tribune Eagle, 2018-present
Contributor, The Federalist and Cowboy State Daily, 2016-present
Uinta County Committeeman, Delegate to State GOP Convention, 2016, 2020

Rev. Jon C. Olson

Casper, WY

Age: 53 Year Ordained: 2006 Years in WY District: 8

Home Congregation: Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Casper

Present Position: Pastor, Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Casper

Other Present Positions

Circuit Visitor, Powder River Circuit

Chairman, WY District Evangelism Committee (TTGNAJ Convocation)

WY District Reconciler

Past Experience

Pipestone Circuit Forum Secretary/Treasurer

Koinonia Project Facilitator

Floor Committee, 2015 District Convention

2013 LCMS Convention Pastoral Delegate, Pipestone Circuit

LWML Minnesota South District Pastoral Counselor

LWML Pipestone Zone Pastoral Counselor

Former Pastorates

Trinity Lutheran Church, Jasper, MN (2013-2016)

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Pipestone, MN (2006-2016)

Other Specific Experience

Chaplain, Good Samaritan Society

Chaplain, Pipestone Hospice Center

Pipestone Area Friends of the Library

Kiwanis

Counselor/Lecturer, New Life Treatment Center

Blandin Community Leadership

Minnesota Concerned Citizens for Life
SW MN Chapter BOD
Contributor, *Lutheran Witness*
Guest, *Issues, Etc.*
Contributor, Commission on Worship - Let Us Pray

REPORT OF CIRCUIT VISITOR ELECTIONS

The Secretary of the Wyoming District is responsible for receiving and reporting the election of Circuit Visitors from duly assembled Circuit Forums. The election of Circuit Visitors was conducted according to bylaw 5.5.2(a). The results of the Circuit Visitor elections are as follows:

Chimney Rock Circuit	Rev. Richard Neugebauer, Gering
Pine Ridge Circuit	Rev. Scott Firminhac, Torrington
Powder River Circuit	Rev. Jon C. Olson, Casper
Yellowstone Circuit	Rev. Jared Korb, Worland
Headwaters Circuit	Rev. Travis Berg, Lander
High Plains Circuit	Rev. Joshua Scheer, Cheyenne

The above slate will be submitted "o th' Convention for adoption as presented or as amended by the Convention. The amendment procedure is governed by the following Synod bylaws:

5.2.2(g): The convention shall have the right to alter the slate by amendment.

5.2.2(h); The convention shall then ratify the slate of circuit visitors, which ratification shall constitute election.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES

District Secretary	Rev. Jeffery Grams, Scottsbluff Rev. Zachary Viggers, Gillette
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Rev. Jeffery Grams was ordained in 1995 and has served the members of St. John Lutheran Church in Scottsbluff, Nebraska since 2001. He has served the Wyoming District previously as Circuit Visitor for the Chimney Rock Circuit, Second and Third Vice-President, CCS Youth Ministry Chair, and as the secretary of the Pastors Conference Committee. To see his full biography, please see page 105 of the Convention Workbook.

Rev. Zachary Viggers, ordained in 2018, has served at Trinity Lutheran Church in Gillette, Wyoming since 2022. He is currently serving the Wyoming District as the Youth/Outdoor Ministry Administrator for the CCS. In January 2025, he served as a Pastoral Representative and Group Secretary on the Concordia University System's CUS Formal Visitation Team for Concordia University Irvine, CA.

Pastor-at-Large

Rev. David Bott, Jackson

Rev. Kenneth Mars, Cody

Rev. Allan Wierschke, Rushville

Rev. David Bott, was ordained in 2003 and received his first call to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson, Wyoming and Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Star Valley, Wyoming where he has joyfully served as Pastor for 22 years this June. He has served on the Wyoming District Evangelism Committee, the District Nominations Committee, and as a Circuit Visitor for the Headwaters Circuit. Pastor Bott serves on the Board of Directors for the Jackson Hole Gun Club, is a Hunter Education Instruction, and provides midweek and special worship services to the St. John's Living Center, a nursing home in Jackson. He is currently serving as Chairman of the Commission on Congregational Services for the Wyoming District.

Rev. Kenneth Mars is the Pastor-at-Large for the Wyoming District Board of Directors, serves at the district PALS Facilitator and Synod Reconciler. Ordained in 2005, Pastor Mars took his first call to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Burns, Wyoming and St. John's Lutheran Church in Kimball, Nebraska where he served faithfully until taking the call to serve the people of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Cody, Wyoming. Pastor Mars is a member of the Sierra Leone Mission Society, where he has been a theological instructor for short courses in West Africa on three separate occasions. He has also presented various theological papers at Pastoral Conferences, District Convention and, most recently, presented on the Means of Grace at a

conference hosted by Kobari Lutheran Church in Niigata, Japan. He and his wife, Vickie, reside in Cody, Wyoming and have eight children and two grandchildren.

Rev. Allan Wierschke was ordained in 1994 and serves as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Hay Springs, Nebraska and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rushville, Nebraska. Pastor Wierschke served in the Minnesota North District as a Circuit Counselor, Youth Advisor, and Secretary/Treasurer for the Fall Pastors Conference. He and his wife, Leah, reside in Rushville, Nebraska.

Layman

Mr. Landis Benson, Worland

Mr. Benjamin Craig, Casper

Mr. Blake Pieper, Hay Springs

Mr. Landis Benson, a life-long resident of Wyoming, is the former President of Hake Realty, a northern Wyoming Real Estate Brokerage Company which he owned until the sale of the company in 2019. Mr. Benson has served the Wyoming Association of Realtors in many capacities over the years including serving as President in 2016. Mr. Benson served as a Board member of the Wyoming Community Development Authority from 1995 to 2002 and was Chairman of the Board from 1997 to 1999. He is a former Board member of the Stockgrowers State Bank and later served on the advisory board of American National Bank in Worland. In addition, Mr. Benson served as a founding Board member of the Wyoming Sugar Company board of managers and currently serves as Secretary of the board. Civic involvement includes service on the City of Worland Planning Commission and the Gottsche Foundation Board of Trustees Executive Committee. He is a member of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Worland, Wyoming where he has served as an Elder, Chairman of the congregation and Treasurer. He and his wife, Janet, together have three children and four grandchildren. He spends time gardening, building furniture in his woodworking shop, and volunteering his time to many charitable and non-profit organizations.

Mr. Benjamin Craig has been a member of Mount Hope Lutheran Church in Casper, Wyoming since 1996, and serves on the Board of Education and the Board of Elders. Mr. Craig was raised in a Southern Baptist Church and had been a member of several Christian churches before coming to Lutheranism. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology and biblical studies from Chrichton College and has previously worked for Federal Express, Halliburton, and the United Parcel Service.

Mr. Blake Pieper is a lay member of the Wyoming District Board of Directors. He farms and ranches on his family's farm located south of Hay Springs on Mirage Flatts Irrigation District. Blake is a faithful member of Zion Lutheran Church in Hay Springs, Nebraska where he serves on the Board of Education and helps lead adult Bible class. He has a great love for God's Word and loves studying theology. He has taken a few theology classes online from Concordia University Wisconsin and has started studying Greek. Blake has served as a lay member on the Wyoming District Board of Directors since October of 2022 and served as a voting delegate for the Pine Ridge Circuit at the LCMS Synod Convention in 2023. Blake truly enjoys serving his church and district, especially when it comes to youth breakaways in Laramie and summer camps in Lander. He loves and looks forward to board meetings so he can not only talk theology with his brothers in Christ, but so he can also serve his brothers and sisters in Christ within the Wyoming District. Blake's greatest accomplishment was marrying his wife, Tasha, nearly 25 years ago. Together they have been blessed with three beautiful daughters, a son-in-law, and one grandchild on the way.

COMMISSIONS CHAIRMAN-ELECT NOMINEES

CMS

Rev. Mark Mumme, Laramie

Rev. Samuel Needham, Thermopolis

Rev. John Preus, Cheyenne

Rev. Mark Mumme, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Laramie, Wyoming has served the Wyoming District faithfully for seven years. Ordained in 2000, Pastor Mumme took his first call to Zion Lutheran Church in Hardwick, Minnesota where he served for 17 years before moving to Riverton, Wyoming to serve the members of Trinity Lutheran Church. Pastor Mumme is the Continuing Education Coordinator for the Wyoming District and has previously served on the Pastors Conference Committee, as a Circuit Visitor, and has attended Synod Convention as a Delegate. Pastor Mumme enjoys spending time in his shop making custom-built wood Crucifixes and furnishings for churches.

Rev. Samuel Needham is the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Thermopolis, Wyoming. Ordained in 2009, Pastor Needham took his first call to Concordia Lutheran Church in Vermillion, South Dakota. Pastor Needham has served the

members of St. Paul for nine years and has served on the planning team for the Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp (Lander Camp).

Rev. John Preus serves as pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Ordained in 2011, his first call was to Trinity Lutheran Church in Clinton, Iowa where he served until 2019 before becoming a Wyomingite. He served on the Pastors Planning Committee for the Iowa East District in 2013 and currently serves on the Wyoming District Pastors Conference Committee.

CCS

Rev. Roger Mullet, Buffalo

Rev. Roger Mullet serves as pastor of Prince of Peace in Buffalo, Wyoming and is an Adjunct Lecturer of Theology for Luther Classical College. Ordained in 2019, Pastor Mullet earned his M.Div. and STM degrees from CTSFW with an emphasis in the areas of Old Testament and Hebrew. He and his wife, Megan, have three sons.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (2028) SLATES

Slate 1

Rev. Daniel Harrington, Powell

Rev. Neil Carlson, Chappell

Mr. Ronald Brown,

Mr. Robert Hilpert,

Rev. John Christensen, Thermopolis

Rev. Daniel Harrington joined the Wyoming District in 2024 when he was called to serve as Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Powell, Wyoming, where he and his wife Melissa, a rostered Deaconess, homeschools their 4 children. Before taking an early retirement and going to CTSFW for his M.Div., he worked in a laboratory leadership role at a Fortune 100 company in Midland, MI. He holds a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry from Central Michigan University, as well as two years of graduate studies in biomedical research from the University of Michigan. He enjoys photography, being outdoors, and tinkering and building things.

Rev. Neil Carlson, ordained in 2011, has served as Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Chappell, Nebraska and Trinity Lutheran Church South Divide in Sidney, Nebraska for the past nine years. He is co-author of *A Latin Ecclesiastical Glossary for Francis*

Piper's Christian Dogmatics Reader's Guide and author of *Diving into Concord*, as well as editor for *Atonement in Confessional Lutheran Theology* by Franz Pieper. He is currently the recording secretary for the Sidney Cycle Association.

Mr. Ronald Brown became a member of the LCMS in 1980. He was elected to be a lay delegate at the Great Commission Convention in St. Louis and served on the elections committee. Since that time, he has been a delegate at several other conventions. Mr. Brown has served on many boards in the congregations he has been a member of. He recently retired from his occupation as an RN. He and his wife live in Alliance, Nebraska and attend Immanuel Lutheran Church, where he serves on as Chairman on the board of Missions. He enjoys golfing, yard work, gardening, and taking collector cars to car shows.

Mr. Robert Hilpert has been a lifetime member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Potter, Nebraska where he serves as Trustee and Chairman. He has held various positions within the church to include Youth Group Sponsor, Sunday School Superintendent and teacher, Secretary of the Voter's assembly, and Finance Committee Chairman.

Rev. John Christensen, a retired pastor, was ordained in 1987 and has served congregations in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. During his time in the Wyoming District he served as pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Thermopolis and Trinity Lutheran Church in Cheyenne. He is an avid birder and National Park/Monument visitor and enjoys visiting his four children and 14 grandchildren with his wife, Diane.

Slate 2

Rev. Peter Preus, Bridgeport
Rev. Andrew Hill, Rock Springs
Dr. Timothy Narjes, Alliance
Mr. Josh Witkop, Casper
Rev. Ted Bourret, Potter

Rev. Peter Preus was ordained in 2024 after receiving his first call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, Nebraska. Before entering seminary at CTSFW, he was a District Manager for On the Hook Fish and Chips in Laramie, Wyoming. He and his wife, Taitlyn, have four children.

Rev. Andrew Hill, ordained in 2024, received his first call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Rock Springs, Wyoming and Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Green River, Wyoming where serves as Pastor. He attended CTSFW where he received his M.Div (2023) and his STM (2024). He and his wife Sarah have four children.

Dr. Timothy Narjes is a Family Medicine Physician in Alliance, Nebraska. He was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Lutheran South Divide in Sidney, Nebraska and is currently serving as the Chairman of the Stewardship Committee at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Alliance. He served as lay delegate to the Wyoming District Convention in 2018 and 2021, and as lay delegate for Synod Convention in 2019.

Mr. Josh Witkop is the Project Manager for Oftedal Construction in Casper, Wyoming. He is the Head Elder at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church in Casper, Wyoming where he serves as Head Elder. He is currently serving the district as Adult Ministry/Leadership Facilitator on the CCS. He and his wife have been married for 22 years and have four children and two grandchildren.

Rev. Ted Bourret has served the Wyoming District faithfully for 45 years. He currently serves Salem Lutheran Church in Gurley, Nebraska, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Potter, Nebraska, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sidney, Nebraska where he has served as pastor since his ordination in 2001. Pastor Bourret served his vicarage year at St. Paul Lutheran Church and Salem Lutheran Church. Born in Laramie, Wyoming, Pastor Bourret is a Wyomingite through and through. He attended the University of Wyoming and received his bachelor's degree in animal science (Veterinary) in 1984. Before entering the Seminary, he was a County Executive Director for USDA-ASCS. After almost 25 years in the ministry, Pastor Bourret will retire in May 2025 and he and his wife, Bonnie, will take up residency south of Pine Bluffs.

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OVERTURES

To Uphold the Scriptural Teaching of “Generations/Lineages”; To Reject the Modernistic Teaching of “Races”

OVERTURE 01

WHEREAS, The Apostle Peter speaks of the Church as “a chosen generation” (1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen generation [γένος], a royal priesthood, a holy nation ...” [NKJV, 1979; cf. KJV 1611]); and

WHEREAS, Several modern translations speak of the Church not as a “chosen generation” but as “a chosen race” (1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ...” [ESV, 2001; NASB, 1995]); and

WHEREAS, The Apostle Peter is using the language of the Prophet Isaiah, where Isaiah gives the promise of “my chosen people [LXX, τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν; MT, *‘am bachiyr*)” [Is. 43:20], such that with this word Isaiah is referring not to racial categories as used in modernism (“modernism” in the sense of post-enlightenment ideology) to speak of several races divided from one another, but rather speaks of the chosen people of God; and

WHEREAS, The Greek word γένος is used to translate the Hebrew word *‘am*) e.g., Is. 43:20, et al) which references not “races” (in the modernistic sense) but “people,” and the Hebrew word *zera’*, meaning “seed” or “lineage” (e.g., Jer. 29:32, et al), and to translate the Hebrew word *goy*) e.g., Jer. 31:36, et al), which, again, cannot mean “races” in the modernistic sense, but “nations”; and

WHEREAS, The prophets use the language of “the people/my people” (or “lineage” or “generations”) to reference not “races” in the modernistic sense, so that the prophets are proclaiming that the chosen lineage includes all those brought into the Promise of the Christ—i.e., the lineage of Abraham (as also the lineage of the promise to Adam and Eve, Gen. 3:15 and of the promise to Noah, Gen. 9), with the people of promise including all those from many other families and tribes whom the Lord gathered into the lineage of Israel (e.g., Ruth the Moabite, Rahab the Canaanite, et al); and

WHEREAS, The word “race” prior to modernism refers to the human race (singular), and not to “races” (plural)—where races are be set against each other, such that O.E.D. identifies the first usages of “races” in the modernistic sense (to denote not the human race descended from Adam and Eve, but several races divided from each other within the human race) to the mid-1700s and later; and

WHEREAS, As those of the Church, the chosen generation/ γένος (1 Peter 2:9), we are given to proclaim not the words of modernistic ideology (such as doctrine of “races” often taught in our public schools and in much political rhetoric), but rather the words of the Prophets and Apostles which proclaim Jesus Christ crucified for all nations/ἔθνη; therefore be it

1 **To Encourage Congregational Contribution to Concordia Retirement Plan**

2 **OVERTURE 02**

3 WHEREAS, the Concordia Benefits Plan covers the Pastor's Retirement benefits; and

4 WHEREAS, The current Pastor's Retirement benefits are set at 9.7% of the Pastor's
5 yearly combined base salary and benefits; and

6 WHEREAS, Currently many small congregations are faced with increasing financial
7 strain by accommodating the recommended salary, the housing equity (4% of base
8 salary), the health insurance, the dental insurance, the vision insurance, the disability
9 insurance (2.25% of base salary), the mileage and the retirement (9.7% of the Pastor's
10 yearly combined base salary and benefits); and

11 WHEREAS, The financial obligation of the total Benefit Plan increases each year, thus
12 creating even more financial strain on members which transfer to their congregations;
13 therefore be it

14 *Resolved*, That the Concordia Benefits Plan covers the Pastor's Retirement benefits,
15 the funding of each Pastor's retirement plan shall be a combination of contributions by
16 both the congregation and the pastor; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That to assist in the retirement benefit, the individual congregation shall
18 contribute 3% of the Pastor's yearly base salary

19 2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having
20 all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

21 Luke 3:12-14 Tax collectors came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher what
22 shall we do?" And he said, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." Soldiers
23 also ask what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by
24 threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages."

25 Philippians 4:18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having
26 received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice
27 acceptable and please to God.

28 Overture to the Wyoming District Convention
29 Trinity Lutheran Church - Sidney, NE South Divide
30 Zion Lutheran Church, Chappell, NE
31 January 28, 2025

1 **To thank the CTCR for its clear response to Wyoming District Res. 2021-1-01**
2 **and to forward its response to appropriate publishing arms of the LCMS**

3 **OVERTURE 03**

4 **Preamble**

5 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District noted that “the 2017
6 Explanation [of *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*], while it teaches that ‘I will
7 enjoy being with Christ in His new creation, in body and soul, forever.’ (p. 225, q. 224),
8 yet avoids speaking of the immortality of the soul and the Christian’s soul dwelling with
9 Christ upon death, and so breaks with the pattern of words (2 Tim 1:13) used by all
10 previous synodical Explanations”; and

11 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District noted that “the Synod’s
12 newest systematic theology teaches, ‘What does the scriptural understanding of body
13 and soul mean for the “immortality of the soul”? It denies this view, if by soul one means,
14 as is usually intended, a separate principle that a human being has or receives’ [Samuel
15 H. Nafzger, ed., *Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*
16 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 1:285, and see footnote 68]”; and

17 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District believed that “the 1969
18 Commission on Theology and Church Relations position paper, A Statement on Death,
19 Resurrection, and Immortality, rejects the immortality of the soul, claiming that, ‘The
20 Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions compel us: ...To reject the teaching that the
21 soul is by nature and by virtue of an inherent quality immortal’ (III, 6, e). The paper does
22 not, however, affirm that, like the angels, the soul is immortal by the ongoing and active
23 will of God”; and

24 WHEREAS, The Wyoming District in convention asked President Hill to invite the
25 contributing author of Nafzger’s Systematic Theology to come to the Wyoming District
26 and “to give a defense of calling the soul ‘personal identity’ instead of soul;” which
27 invitation went unanswered; and

28 WHEREAS, The Wyoming District in convention asked the CTCR to answer the
29 following question: “Does the Synod, in its teaching, affirm that man has in any way an
30 immortal soul, deny this, or leave it as an open question?”; and

31 Whereas the CTCR formally responded to this inquiry in a February 2, 2024, letter
32 to the Wyoming District that stated, in part, “the Commission answers in the affirmative:
33 the LCMS does hold to the biblical doctrine of the immortality of the soul”; therefore
34 be it

35 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention thank the CTCR for its
36 unambiguous answer; and be it further

37 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention ask LCMS’s doctrinal review to
38 distribute the answer of the CTCR to all reviewers serving the LCMS president in
39 reviewing articles for publication; and be it further

1 **Appeal for a Recognized Ecclesiastical Relationship between LCC and the LCMS**

2 **OVERTURE 04**

3 **Preamble**

4 The Classical Lutheran Education movement in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod
5 (LCMS) began in the late 1990s with a few schools and the gathering of a small number
6 of educators in what has become the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education
7 (CCLE, a Recognized Service Organization). As the Classical Education movement
8 gained momentum nationally, LCMS Lutherans sought to develop a uniquely Lutheran
9 curriculum and educational philosophy, distinct from the many Reformed, Roman
10 Catholic, Baptist, and secular versions of the classical liberal arts. In the LCMS,
11 Lutherans discovered that the Western Christian educational tradition had already
12 been richly and thoroughly adapted by Lutheran leaders (e.g. Luther and
13 Melanchthon) in the Lutheran Reformation and again in the United States of America
14 at the beginning of the LCMS under C.F.W. Walther’s leadership. Current Classical
15 Lutheran educators have sought to build on this tradition.

16 Today, this movement in the LCMS continues to grow rapidly among Lutheran schools
17 and homeschools. In the LCMS this movement is supported by new classical offerings
18 in our Concordia University System schools, by the biennial “Lutheranism and the
19 Classics” conference hosted by Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and by
20 the CCLE. Recent CCLE conferences have been attended by over 500 participants. The
21 number of CCLE accredited schools surpassed 20 schools in 2024. Numerous
22 homeschools throughout the Synod have embraced the high goals and standards of
23 Classical Lutheran pedagogy.

24 From the beginning, schools in the Classical Lutheran Education movement
25 throughout the Synod have sought to find and recruit pastors, teachers, and
26 headmasters who have received an education that combines a thorough knowledge
27 of Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran church with the skills and knowledge
28 appropriate to the Western Christian liberal arts tradition. For the past quarter-century
29 Lutheran schools and Lutheran parents have contemplated the need for a Lutheran
30 classical college in which sound Christian doctrine, philosophy, history, literature, the
31 classical languages, and the mathematical arts are thoroughly integrated and
32 incorporated into the life of the home, church, and community. Classical Lutheran
33 leaders who attempted to start such a college in the early years discovered that the
34 time was not right. The right time has now come.

35 In 2020, pastors, laymen, and congregations of the Wyoming District and across The
36 Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod organized a Board of Regents for the new Luther
37 Classical College (LCC). In 2025, LCC holds classes for its first cohort of students.

38 The college has been hosted and sponsored in various ways by two Wyoming District
39 congregations in Casper, Wyoming (Mount Hope and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran

1 Churches). Each congregation provides Regents to the LCC Board of Regents (BOR),
2 calls for rostered church workers, and has a role in the nomination of Regents.

3 The Wyoming District President is a member of the BOR; he advises the President,
4 BOR, Mount Hope, and Trinity in the appointment and election of faculty; and he
5 provides ecclesiastical oversight, encouragement, and counsel to LCC through its
6 President and BOR.

7 As of January 2025 LCC has been sponsored and funded by hundreds of supporting
8 LCMS congregations nationwide and more than a thousand individual LCMS donors.
9 LCMS families are sending their young men and women to LCC to receive a robust
10 Classical Lutheran Education. All the faculty and staff are members of LCMS
11 congregations. The pastors and commissioned teachers on the faculty and staff are
12 members of the Wyoming District and are under the ecclesiastical supervision and care
13 of the Wyoming District President.

14 Luther Classical College is a congregational college, that is, a college organized by,
15 supported by, and supporting the congregations of the LCMS. In its doctrinal
16 commitments and Lutheran culture it complements the Synod's Concordia
17 Universities, but it is not a member or part of the Concordia University System (CUS).
18 LCC is not governed by the LCMS and has no legal or financial connection to the
19 Synod. From the time of its organization, however, LCC has been seeking a formal
20 ecclesiastical relationship to Synod. Its mission fully supports and advances the divinely
21 instituted objectives of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

22 LCC is bound to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God and to the
23 Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures and a correct exhibition
24 of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. LCC is guided by these commitments:

25 Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition
26 and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society,
27 fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.
28 (LCC Mission Statement)

29 The college will provide a conservative, classical Lutheran education to Lutheran
30 students. Paramount will be the promotion of Christian culture, a stress on the
31 priority of Christian marriage, family, and piety, and a cultivation of confessional
32 Lutheran theology, liturgy, hymnody, and identity. With courses using the "great
33 books" of the past for the core curriculum, the college will offer Latin, history,
34 theology, literature, logic, rhetoric, music, geometry, biology, and mathematics,
35 all within a purposefully Christian and Lutheran framework. (lutherclassical.org)

36 WHEREAS, LCC is a thoroughly Lutheran micro-college with joyful commitments to
37 Holy Scriptures, the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and the doctrine of the LCMS;
38 and

39 WHEREAS, LCC fulfills the divine commandment to teach Lutheran young people the
40 pure doctrine of Holy Scriptures and a pious Christian life in devotion and vocation
41 (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8); and

1 WHEREAS, LCC not only conforms to the Confession of the LCMS (Constitution
2 Article II) but also advances the objectives of the LCMS to “aid congregations to
3 develop processes of thorough Christian education and nurture and to establish
4 agencies of Christian education such as elementary and secondary schools and to
5 support synodical college, universities, and seminaries” (Constitution Article III.5); and

6 WHEREAS, LCC is sponsored by LCMS congregations, is governed by LCMS Regents,
7 is located in LCMS congregations of the LCMS Wyoming District, is visited diligently by
8 the Wyoming District president for the maintenance of true ecclesiastical concord
9 (Preface to *The Book of Concord*, 24) and serves the congregations of the LCMS by
10 teaching her students and returning them for life and service to the congregations of
11 the LCMS; and

12 WHEREAS, The LCMS is currently not able to supply not only LCMS teachers for her
13 many schools, even when using secular colleges and universities and employing the
14 teacher colloquy process, but especially in providing adequately trained teachers for
15 Classical Lutheran schools and homeschools, and this urgent LCMS need is helped by
16 LCC; therefore be it

17 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention petition the Synod President and
18 Secretary to work with the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) to write a
19 proposed amendment to the Bylaws of Synod that creates a regular process for
20 establishing formal ecclesiastical relations between a micro-college sponsored by
21 LCMS congregations and the LCMS; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That the Synod President and Secretary consider proposing limitations in
23 these Bylaw amendments that include the following:

- 24 • that the micro-college be an undergraduate school restricted to a student
25 population of 400 or less;
- 26 • that the micro-college be a residential school;
- 27 • that the entire faculty and administration of the micro-college be members
28 of the LCMS or members in good standing of LCMS congregations;
- 29 • that the micro-college receive regular ecclesiastical visitation with a
30 visitation team to include, in addition to the district president of the LCMS
31 district in which the micro-college resides, one representative each from
32 the President of Synod, the President of the CUS, a CUS president or
33 member of the theology faculty, and a seminary faculty member;
- 34 • that the doctrine and practice of the micro-college in all its faculty, teaching
35 and preaching, worship practices, and campus culture be thoroughly
36 Lutheran in accord with LCMS doctrinal commitments;
- 37 • that the micro-college be clearly separate from Synod legally and financially
38 in a way similar to the requirements established for RSOs; and
- 39 • that the micro-college not prepare or posture itself to prepare pastors for
40 ordination or laymen to carry out the functions of the pastoral office, nor certify
41 teachers and other church workers for membership on the roster of Synod.

1 **Relation of LCC and the Wyoming District**

2 **OVERTURE 05**

3
4 **Preamble**

5 Wyoming District schools and educators were pioneers in the young Classical
6 Education movement in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), beginning in
7 the late 1990s. Three of the first conferences of the nascent Consortium for Classical
8 Lutheran Education (CCLE) were held in the Wyoming District at St. Andrew’s Lutheran
9 Church and Campus Center in Laramie and Trinity Lutheran Church and School in
10 Cheyenne. Presently, all five of the district schools have adopted Classical Lutheran
11 Education as their guiding pedagogical principle. Numerous homeschool families in
12 the district have also pursued the high goals and standards of Classical Lutheran
13 Education.

14 From the beginning, schools in the Classical Lutheran Education movement in the
15 Wyoming District and throughout the Synod sought to find and recruit classically
16 educated pastors, teachers, and headmasters. For the past quarter-century Lutheran
17 schools and Lutheran parents have contemplated the need for a Lutheran classical
18 college in which sound Christian doctrine, philosophy, history, literature, the classical
19 languages, and the mathematical arts are thoroughly integrated and incorporated into
20 the life of the home, church, and community. Classical Lutheran leaders who attempted
21 to start such a college in the early years discovered that the time was not right. The
22 right time has now come.

23 In 2020, pastors, laymen, and congregations of the Wyoming District and across The
24 Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod organized a Board of Regents for the new Luther
25 Classical College (LCC). This year, 2025, LCC will hold classes for its first cohort of
26 students. The college has been hosted and sponsored in various ways by Mount Hope
27 and Trinity Lutheran Churches in Casper. The college will be located permanently on
28 property adjacent to both Mount Hope and the Wyoming District’s Lutheran Ministry
29 Center. Trinity will be housing classrooms and faculty offices for the first year of
30 teaching. Each congregation supplies a pastor and elder to serve on the LCC Board of
31 Regents (BOR). The pastors and elders of each congregation supply the list of
32 candidates for the BOR, thus retaining congregational sponsorship of the college.
33 LCC’s pastors receive divine calls and LCC’s commissioned teachers receive teacher
34 calls from one of the two Casper congregations. The Wyoming District President is also
35 a member of the BOR; he advises the President, BOR, Mount Hope, and Trinity in the
36 appointment and election of faculty; and he provides ecclesiastical oversight,
37 encouragement, and counsel to LCC through its President and BOR.

38 LCC is sponsored and funded by hundreds of supporting LCMS congregations
39 nationwide and more than a thousand individual LCMS donors. LCMS families are
40 sending their young men and women to LCC to receive a robust Classical Lutheran
41 Education. All the faculty and staff are members of LCMS congregations. The pastors

1 and commissioned teachers on the faculty and staff are members of the Wyoming
2 District and are under the ecclesiastical supervision and care of the Wyoming District
3 President.

4 Luther Classical College is a congregational college, that is, a college organized by,
5 supported by, and supporting the congregations of the LCMS. In its doctrinal
6 commitments and Lutheran culture it complements the Synod's Concordia
7 Universities, but it is not a member or part of the Concordia University System (CUS).
8 LCC is not governed by the LCMS and has no legal or financial connection to the
9 Synod. From the time of its organization, however, LCC has been seeking a formal
10 ecclesiastical relationship to Synod. Its mission fully supports and advances the divinely
11 instituted objectives of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

12 LCC is bound to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God and to the
13 Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures and a correct exhibition
14 of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. LCC is guided by these commitments:

15 Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition
16 and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society,
17 fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.
18 (LCC Mission Statement)

19 The college will provide a conservative, classical Lutheran education to Lutheran
20 students. Paramount will be the promotion of Christian culture, a stress on the
21 priority of Christian marriage, family, and piety, and a cultivation of confessional
22 Lutheran theology, liturgy, hymnody, and identity. With courses using the "great
23 books" of the past for the core curriculum, the college will offer Latin, history,
24 theology, literature, logic, rhetoric, music, geometry, biology, and mathematics,
25 all within a purposefully Christian and Lutheran framework. (lutherclassical.org)

26 WHEREAS, At its October 27, 2020 meeting, the Wyoming District Board of Directors
27 (BOD) approved this resolution:

28 Be it Resolved that the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Wyoming District
29 LCMS support the effort to found Luther Classical College (LCC) on the
30 campus of Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, Wyoming, as described in
31 its Prospectus; and be it further

32 Resolved that the BOD affirm the Wyoming District President's ecclesiastical
33 oversight of LCC and its rostered workers; and be it finally

34 Resolved that the BOD encourage the congregations of the Wyoming
35 District to respond positively to the LCC Call for Support as they are able.

36 And,

37 WHEREAS, At its May 3, 2024 meeting, the Wyoming District Board of Directors
38 resolved:

1 that the Wyoming District BOD support the work of LCC as a mission effort of
2 the district in all aspects possible: theologically, materially, and with
3 encouragement coupled with due diligence, in order to ensure faithfulness in all
4 areas.

5 And,

6 WHEREAS, Because LCC is sponsored by Wyoming District congregations, is
7 governed by Wyoming District congregations and Regents, is located in the Wyoming
8 District at our Casper congregations, is visited diligently by the Wyoming District
9 president for the maintenance of true ecclesiastical concord (Preface to *The Book of*
10 *Concord*, 24) and serves the congregations of the Wyoming District by teaching her
11 students and returning them for life and service to the congregations of the Wyoming
12 District.

13 Therefore be it

14 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention affirm the resolutions and
15 actions of the BOD in supporting Luther Classical College; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the BOD continue, in its care for congregations and workers and in
17 advancing the educational mandates given to the district, to help and support LCC with
18 the resources God provides it; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District affirm and support the District President's duty
20 to provide ecclesiastical supervision to LCC and its pastors and teachers, to encourage
21 and counsel LCC's BOR and administration with God's Word, to advise the LCC
22 President and BOR in the College's search for and appointment of faculty, to advise
23 Mount Hope and Trinity in the calling of LCC faculty, to assist the LCC President in the
24 college's interactions with LCMS entities and agencies, and to serve *ex officio* on the
25 BOR of LCC; and be it further

26 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Wyoming District and their members be
27 encouraged to pray for LCC, send their young people to LCC as students, and provide
28 financial gifts and support to LCC as they are able; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District commend LCC for preparing future husbands
30 and wives, congregation members, workers, seminary students, teachers, musicians,
31 and the like for godly service in their homes, congregations, and communities; and be
32 it finally

33 *Resolved*, That, most importantly, the Wyoming District recognize and give thanks
34 to God that Luther Classical College serves the congregations of the Wyoming District
35 in obedience to God's Word (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-
36 9; Psalm 78:1-8).

37 Overture to the Wyoming District Convention
38 The Wyoming District Board of Directors
39 Rev. Paul Cain, Chairman
40 Rev. Darrell Debowey, Secretary
41 January 28, 2025

1 **For the Church of Christ to Stay and Do Her Duty**

2 **OVERTURE 06**

3 WHEREAS, God commands, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8);
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Our Lord and Savior proclaims, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by
6 every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4); and

7 WHEREAS, The Scriptures admonish Christians to "consider how to stir up one
8 another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of
9 some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near"
10 (Heb. 10:24-25); and

11 WHEREAS, Christian liberty should not be determined by someone else's conscience
12 (1 Cor. 10:29); and

13 WHEREAS, The Large Catechism teaches that the Sacrament of the Altar is essential
14 to Christian faith, "A great number of people who hear the gospel, now that the pope's
15 nonsense has been abolished and we are freed from his compulsion and commands,
16 let a year, or two, three, or more years go by without receiving the sacrament, as if they
17 were such strong Christians that they have no need of it. Others let themselves be kept
18 and deterred from it because we have taught that none should go unless they feel a
19 hunger and thirst impelling them to it. Still others pretend that it is a matter of liberty,
20 not of necessity, and that it is enough if they simply believe. Thus the great majority go
21 so far that they become quite barbarous and ultimately despise both the sacrament
22 and God's Word" (Large Catechism V 41 [Kolb-Wengert]; cf. AC VII, AC XXIV; 1932
23 Brief Statement); and

24 WHEREAS, During the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, responses to the COVID-19
25 pandemic included the cancellation of public, communal, in-person worship services,
26 by congregations, pastors, and affiliated educational institutions; and

27 WHEREAS, These responses taught God's flock and the world at-large that public,
28 communal, in-person worship is non-essential (while allowing grocery stores, liquor
29 stores, and cannabis dispensaries to remain open); that such public worship of God by
30 those who wish to do so can be forbidden by the consciences of others who do not
31 wish to gather in public worship; that public opinion or government demand can forbid
32 public worship; and

33 WHEREAS, Great societal distress over the COVID-19 pandemic ought to have
34 instead compelled the Church to keep her doors open instead of close them; therefore
35 be it

36 *Resolved*, That we commend the desires of faithful pastors to care for their flocks in
37 a time of pandemic, grating charity and a wide latitude of understanding to our
38 brothers in the Public Office of the Holy Ministry due to the emergency nature of the
39 situation at that time confronting us all; and be it further

1 **Concerning the Practice of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)**

2 **OVERTURE 07**

3 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that human life is a sacred gift from God, who is
4 the Creator of all life (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139:13-16); and

5 WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that human beings are created in the image of God and
6 that this image is bestowed upon each person at conception (Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41-
7 44); and

8 WHEREAS, Christ sanctified and redeemed even human embryos in his incarnation
9 and conception of the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary, His shed blood upon the cross, and
10 His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Luke 1:35; Matthew
11 1:20-23); and

12 WHEREAS, The tradition of the Christian Church, in accordance with the creation
13 order revealed in Holy Scripture, has consistently upheld the sanctity of human life and
14 the dignity of procreation as an act that belongs within the marital union between a
15 man and a woman (Genesis 1:27-28; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-6); and

16 WHEREAS, The practice of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) involves the creation of human
17 embryos outside the womb, often resulting in the destruction or indefinite freezing of
18 embryos, which contradicts the biblical teaching on the sanctity of human life and the
19 proper context for procreation; and

20 WHEREAS, the practice of IVF undermines biblical understanding, reducing the child
21 to a product of human will and technological manipulation rather than seeing and
22 receiving the child as a gift from God; and (Genesis 30:2; Psalm 127:3); and

23 WHEREAS, the use of IVF introduces a separation between the procreative and
24 unitive aspects of marriage, thereby undermining the integrity of the marital union as
25 God intended it (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31-33; LC I, 206-209); and

26 WHEREAS, IVF commodifies human life, treating embryos as objects to be used,
27 purchased, stored, or discarded, rather than recognizing them as persons created in
28 the image of God, deserving of dignity and protection and all the rights thereof; and

29 WHEREAS, IVF commonly uses gametes taken from a third party thus violating the
30 one flesh union and depriving the child of their natural right to their biological mother
31 and father; and

32 WHEREAS, the desire for children is good, right, and godly but sinful means may not
33 be used to procure a good end; therefore be it

34 *Resolved*, That the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) condemns the practice
35 of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) as contrary to the teachings of Scripture, the tradition of the
36 Church, and the sanctity of human life and the one flesh union; and be it further

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

For the Church of Christ to Stay and Do Her Duty

Resolution 01

(Overture 06)

WHEREAS, God commands, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord and Savior proclaims, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Peter declares, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures admonish Christians to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24-25); and

WHEREAS, Christian liberty should not be determined by someone else's conscience (1 Cor. 10:29); and

WHEREAS, The Large Catechism teaches that the Sacrament of the Altar is essential to Christian faith, "A great number of people who hear the gospel, now that the pope's nonsense has been abolished and we are freed from his compulsion and commands, let a year, or two, three, or more years go by without receiving the sacrament, as if they were such strong Christians that they have no need of it. Others let themselves be kept and deterred from it because we have taught that none should go unless they feel a hunger and thirst impelling them to it. Still others pretend that it is a matter of liberty, not of necessity, and that it is enough if they simply believe. Thus the great majority go so far that they become quite barbarous and ultimately despise both the sacrament and God's Word" (Large Catechism V 41 [Kolb-Wengert]; cf. AC VII, AC XXIV; 1932 Brief Statement); and

WHEREAS, During the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic included the cancellation of public, communal, in-person worship services, by congregations, pastors, and affiliated educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, These responses taught God's flock and the world at-large that public, communal, in-person worship is non-essential (while allowing grocery stores, liquor stores, and cannabis dispensaries to remain open); that such public worship of God by those who wish to do so can be forbidden by the consciences of others who do not wish to gather in public worship; that public opinion or government demand can forbid public worship; and

1 WHEREAS, Great societal distress over the COVID-19 pandemic ought to have
2 instead compelled the Church to keep her doors open instead of close them, faithful
3 in her vow to “intend to continue steadfast in this confession and to suffer all, even
4 death rather than fall away from it”; therefore be it

5 *Resolved*, That we commend the desires of faithful pastors to care for their flocks in
6 a time of pandemic, granting charity and a wide latitude of understanding to our
7 brothers in the Public Office of the Holy Ministry due to the emergency nature of the
8 situation at that time confronting us all; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That pastors and congregations recognize that not offering public
10 worship was sinful, even if done in ignorance, and to repent; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That online or virtual worship is not a substitute for corporate worship
12 (Heb. 10:24-25; LCMS 2023 Convention Resolution 5-08A); and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That appropriate Synod leadership repent for not encouraging pastors,
14 congregations and educational institutions of Synod to stay and do their duty by
15 holding public worship services during the COVID-19 pandemic for those who wished
16 to attend; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That in the future, Synod leadership should give proper concern and
18 understanding to the doctrine of the two Kingdoms especially as it relates to resistance
19 to government tyranny (cf. 1932 Brief Statement, Church and State), and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Synod’s district presidents and those who assist them be
21 counseled and urged to instruct our pastors and congregations on the basis of Holy
22 Scripture’s example and exhortation to gather and meet together and also celebrate
23 the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25) on the basis of the examples found in
24 Augsburg Confession Articles VII and XXIV, and be it finally

25 *Resolved*, That in the future the Church should stay and do Her duty and not
26 abandon Her people in such a crisis and instead exhort pastors and congregations not
27 to abandon the holy, faithful people of God even if it should bring persecution, but
28 rather that the sheep be gathered together accompanied by their pastors, comforted
29 by the Word of God, by the sacraments, by fellowship, and by prayer.

30
31

1 **To Uphold the Scriptural Teaching of the Church as One**
2 **“Generation/Lineage” in Spite of the Existence of Various Earthly Races**

3 **Resolution 02**

4 *(Overture 01)*

5 WHEREAS The word “race,” which can broadly be used to refer to all descendants of
6 Adam (i.e. “the human race”), has also come to refer to various bloodlines/lineages;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The Scriptures acknowledge the existence of various bloodlines/lineages
9 of people, (e.g. Genesis 10, Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Acts 2:5-12, Acts 17:26); and

10 WHEREAS, The Apostle Peter speaks of the Church as “a chosen generation” (1 Peter
11 2:9: “But you are a chosen generation [γένος], a royal priesthood, a holy nation...”); and

12 WHEREAS, The Apostle Peter, using the language of Isaiah (“My chosen people”
13 [LXX, τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν; MT, ‘am bachiyr]), speaks of the Church as a people
14 (γένος) not in reference to a single earthly race but rather to the chosen people of God,
15 the sons of Abraham by faith; and

16 WHEREAS, The prophets use the language of “the people/my people” (or “lineage”
17 or “generations”) to include all those brought into the Promise of the Christ—i.e., the
18 lineage of Abraham (as also the lineage of the promise to Adam and Eve, Gen. 3:15
19 and of the promise to Noah, Gen. 9), with the people of promise including all those
20 from many other families and tribes whom the Lord gathered into the lineage of Israel
21 (e.g., Ruth the Moabite, Rahab the Canaanite, et al); and

22 WHEREAS, As those of the Church, the chosen generation/γένος (1 Peter 2:9), we are
23 given to proclaim not the doctrines of the world, but rather the words of the Prophets
24 and Apostles which proclaim Jesus Christ crucified for all nations/ἔθνη; therefore be it

25 *Resolved,* That we recognize the existence of various races as descended from
26 Adam and Eve; and be it further

27 *Resolved,* That we reject any racism in the Church, that is, exclusion of another from
28 the Body of Christ or hate of a brother in Christ because of his race (1 John 3:15,
29 Matthew 5:21-22), or the deeming a neighbor as sub-human because of his race
30 (Genesis 1:27, Proverbs 14:21)—these acts break the Fifth Commandment; and be it
31 further

32 *Resolved,* That we recognize and affirm our Lord’s promise to the Church that we
33 are a “chosen lineage” or “chosen generation” (1 Pet. 2:9), which is the lineage of all
34 those called into the Promise; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That we rejoice that as the Church, the lineage of the promise, we are
2 given to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his
3 marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9), a proclamation to be proclaimed to all nations (Matt. 28);
4 and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That we affirm that the Church denounces anyone who excludes another
6 from the Body of Christ or hates a brother in Christ because of his race, or deems a
7 neighbor as sub-human because of his race; and be called to repentance with the hope
8 and the prayer that the Lord restore them to the Church, the chosen lineage of the
9 promise; and be it finally

10 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention memorialize the Synod to affirm
11 that the Church denounces anyone who excludes another from the Body of Christ or
12 hates a brother in Christ because of his race, or deems a neighbor as sub-human
13 because of his race; and be called to repentance with the hope and the prayer that the
14 Lord restore them to the Church, the chosen lineage of the promise.

1 **To thank the CTCR for its clear response to Wyoming District Res. 2021-1-01**
2 **and to forward its response to appropriate publishing arms of the LCMS**

3 **Resolution 03**

4 *(Overture 03)*

5 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District noted that “the 2017
6 Explanation [of *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*], while it teaches that ‘I will
7 enjoy being with Christ in His new creation, in body and soul, forever.’ (p. 225, q. 224),
8 yet avoids speaking of the immortality of the soul and the Christian’s soul dwelling with
9 Christ upon death, and so breaks with the pattern of words (2 Tim 1:13) used by all
10 previous synodical Explanations”; and

11 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District noted that “the Synod’s
12 newest systematic theology teaches, ‘What does the scriptural understanding of body
13 and soul mean for the “immortality of the soul”? It denies this view, if by soul one means,
14 as is usually intended, a separate principle that a human being has or receives’ [Samuel
15 H. Nafzger, ed., *Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*
16 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 1:285, and see footnote 68]”; and

17 WHEREAS, The 2021 Convention of the Wyoming District believed that “the 1969
18 Commission on Theology and Church Relations position paper, *A Statement on Death,*
19 *Resurrection, and Immortality,* rejects the immortality of the soul, claiming that, ‘The
20 Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions compel us: ...To reject the teaching that the
21 soul is by nature and by virtue of an inherent quality immortal’ (III, 6, e). The paper does
22 not, however, affirm that, like the angels, the soul is immortal by the ongoing and active
23 will of God”; and

24 WHEREAS, The Wyoming District in convention asked President Hill to invite the
25 contributing author of Nafzger’s Systematic Theology to come to the Wyoming District
26 and “to give a defense of calling the soul ‘personal identity’ instead of soul;” which
27 invitation went unanswered; and

28 WHEREAS, The Wyoming District in convention asked the CTCR to answer the
29 following question: “Does the Synod, in its teaching, affirm that man has in any way an
30 immortal soul, deny this, or leave it as an open question?”; and

31 WHEREAS, The CTCR formally responded to this inquiry in a February 2, 2024, letter
32 to the Wyoming District that stated, in part, “the Commission answers in the affirmative:
33 the LCMS does hold to the biblical doctrine of the immortality of the soul”; therefore
34 be it

35 *Resolved,* That the Wyoming District in convention thank the CTCR for its
36 unambiguous answer; and be it further

37 *Resolved,* That the Wyoming District in convention ask LCMS’s Commission on
38 Doctrinal Review to distribute the answer of the CTCR to all reviewers serving the LCMS
39 President in reviewing articles for publication; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District express its special concern that doctrinal
2 reviewers be alert not only for overt denials of this Biblical doctrine, but also for errors
3 of omission when it is appropriate to express the immortality of the soul for a full
4 confession of the faith; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District forward the letter of the CTCR to Concordia
6 Publishing House; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention formally ask Concordia
8 Publishing House to reconsider Nafzger’s *Systematic Theology* especially in its
9 substitution of the term “personal identity” where “soul” would better maintain “the
10 form of sound words,” and, where appropriate, to amend this substitution in future
11 editions; and be it finally

12 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention formally ask Concordia
13 Publishing House that in all future editions of the synodical explanation of the *Small*
14 *Catechism*, to make explicit confession of the soul’s dwelling with Christ upon death—
15 as it was made in all editions of the synodical explanation prior to the 2017 edition.

1 **Relation of LCC and the Wyoming District**

2 **Resolution 04**

3 *(Overture 05)*

4 **Preamble**

5 Wyoming District schools and educators were pioneers in the young classical
6 Education movement in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), beginning in
7 the late 1990s. Three of the first conferences of the nascent Consortium for Classical
8 Lutheran Education (CCLE) were held in the Wyoming District at St. Andrew’s Lutheran
9 Church and Campus Center in Laramie (2003) and Trinity Lutheran Church and School
10 in Cheyenne (2011) and Martin Luther Grammar School in Sheridan, Wyoming (2017).
11 Presently, all five of the district schools have adopted classical Lutheran education as
12 their guiding pedagogical principle. Numerous homeschool families in the district
13 have also pursued the high goals and standards of classical Lutheran education.

14 From the beginning, schools in the classical Lutheran education movement in the
15 Wyoming District and throughout the Synod sought to find and recruit classically
16 educated pastors, teachers, and headmasters. For the past quarter-century Lutheran
17 schools and Lutheran parents have contemplated the need for a Lutheran classical
18 college in which sound Christian doctrine, philosophy, history, literature, the classical
19 languages, and the mathematical arts are thoroughly integrated and incorporated into
20 the life of the home, church, and community. Classical Lutheran leaders who attempted
21 to start such a college in the early years discovered that the time was not right. The
22 right time has now come.

23 In 2020, pastors, laymen, and congregations of the Wyoming District and across The
24 Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod organized a Board of Regents for the new Luther
25 Classical College (LCC). This year, 2025, LCC will hold classes for its first cohort of
26 students. The college has been hosted and sponsored in various ways by Mount Hope
27 and Trinity Lutheran Churches in Casper. The college will be located permanently on
28 property adjacent to both Mount Hope and the Wyoming District’s Lutheran Ministries
29 Center. Each congregation supplies a pastor and elder to serve on the LCC Board of
30 Regents (BOR). The pastors and elders of each congregation supply the list of
31 candidates for the BOR, thus retaining congregational sponsorship of the college.
32 LCC’s pastors receive divine calls and LCC’s commissioned teachers receive teacher
33 calls from one of the two Casper congregations. The Wyoming District President is also
34 a member of the BOR; he advises the President, BOR, Mount Hope, and Trinity in the
35 appointment and election of faculty; and he provides ecclesiastical oversight,
36 encouragement, and counsel to LCC through its President and BOR.

37 LCC is sponsored and funded by hundreds of supporting LCMS congregations
38 nationwide and more than a thousand individual LCMS donors. LCMS families are
39 sending their young men and women to LCC to receive a robust classical Lutheran
40 Education. All the faculty and staff are members of LCMS congregations. The pastors
41 and commissioned teachers on the faculty and staff are members of the Wyoming

1 District and are under the ecclesiastical supervision and care of the Wyoming District
2 President.

3 Luther Classical College is a congregational college, that is, a college organized by,
4 supported by, and supporting the congregations of the LCMS. In its doctrinal
5 commitments and Lutheran culture it complements the Synod's Concordia
6 Universities, but it is not a member or part of the Concordia University System (CUS).
7 LCC is not governed by the LCMS and has no legal or financial connection to the
8 Synod. From the time of its organization, however, LCC has been seeking a formal
9 ecclesiastical relationship to Synod. Its mission fully supports and advances the divinely
10 instituted objectives of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

11 LCC is bound to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God and to the
12 Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures and a correct exhibition
13 of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. LCC is guided by these commitments:

14 Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition
15 and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society,
16 fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.
17 (LCC Mission Statement; lutherclassical.org)

18 The college will provide a conservative, classical Lutheran education to Lutheran
19 students. Paramount will be the promotion of Christian culture, a stress on the
20 priority of Christian marriage, family, and piety, and a cultivation of confessional
21 Lutheran theology, liturgy, hymnody, and identity. With courses using the "great
22 books" of the past for the core curriculum, the college will offer Latin, history,
23 theology, literature, logic, rhetoric, music, geometry, biology, and mathematics, all
24 within a purposefully Christian and Lutheran framework.

25 WHEREAS, At its October 27, 2020 meeting, the Wyoming District Board of Directors
26 (BOD) approved this resolution:

27 Be it Resolved that the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Wyoming District
28 LCMS support the effort to found Luther Classical College (LCC) on the
29 campus of Mount Hope Lutheran Church, Casper, Wyoming, as described in
30 its Prospectus; and be it further

31 Resolved that the BOD affirm the Wyoming District President's ecclesiastical
32 oversight of LCC and its rostered workers; and be it finally

33 Resolved that the BOD encourage the congregations of the Wyoming
34 District to respond positively to the LCC Call for Support as they are able.

35 And,

36 WHEREAS, At its May 3, 2024 meeting, the Wyoming District Board of Directors
37 resolved:

38 that the Wyoming District BOD support the work of LCC as a mission effort of
39 the district in all aspects possible: theologically, materially, and with

1 encouragement coupled with due diligence, in order to ensure faithfulness in all
2 areas.

3 And,

4 WHEREAS, Because LCC is sponsored by Wyoming District congregations, is
5 governed by Wyoming District congregations and Regents, is located in the Wyoming
6 District at our Casper congregations, is visited diligently by the Wyoming District
7 president for the maintenance of true ecclesiastical concord (Preface to *The Book of*
8 *Concord*, 24), and serves the congregations of the Wyoming District by teaching her
9 students and returning them for life and service to the congregations of the Wyoming
10 District; therefore, be it

11 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention affirm the resolutions and
12 actions of the BOD in supporting Luther Classical College; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the BOD continue, in its care for congregations and workers and in
14 advancing the educational mandates given to the district, to help and support LCC with
15 the resources God provides it; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District affirm and support the District President's
17 duties

- 18 • to provide ecclesiastical supervision to LCC and its pastors and teachers,
- 19 • to encourage and counsel LCC's BOR and administration with God's Word,
- 20 • to advise the LCC President and BOR in the College's search for and
21 appointment of faculty,
- 22 • to advise Mount Hope and Trinity in the calling of LCC faculty,
- 23 • to assist the LCC President in the college's interactions with LCMS entities
24 and agencies, and
- 25 • to serve *ex officio* on the BOR of LCC;

26 And be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Wyoming District and their members be
28 encouraged to pray for LCC, send their young people to LCC as students, and provide
29 financial gifts and support to LCC as they are able; and be it further

30 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District commend LCC for preparing future husbands
31 and wives, congregation members, workers, seminary students, teachers, musicians,
32 and the like for godly service in their homes, congregations, and communities; and be
33 it finally

34 *Resolved*, That, most importantly, the Wyoming District recognize and give thanks
35 to God that Luther Classical College serves the congregations of the Wyoming District
36 in obedience to God's Word (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-
37 9; Psalm 78:1-8).

1 **Appeal for a Recognized Ecclesiastical Relationship between LCC and the LCMS**

2 **RESOLUTION 05**

3 *(Overture 04)*

4 **Preamble**

5 The classical Lutheran education movement in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod
6 (LCMS) began in the late 1990s with a few schools and the gathering of a small number
7 of educators in what has become the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education
8 (CCLE, a Recognized Service Organization). As the classical education movement
9 gained momentum nationally, LCMS Lutherans sought to develop a uniquely Lutheran
10 curriculum and educational philosophy, distinct from the many Reformed, Roman
11 Catholic, Baptist, and secular versions of the classical liberal arts. In the LCMS,
12 Lutherans discovered that the Western Christian educational tradition had already
13 been richly and thoroughly adapted by Lutheran leaders (e.g. Luther and
14 Melancthon) in the Lutheran Reformation and again in the United States of America
15 at the beginning of the LCMS under C.F.W. Walther’s leadership. Current classical
16 Lutheran educators have sought to build on this tradition.

17 Today, this movement in the LCMS continues to grow rapidly among Lutheran schools
18 and homeschools. In the LCMS this movement is supported by new classical offerings
19 in our Concordia University System schools, by the biennial “Lutheranism and the
20 Classics” conference hosted by Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and by
21 the CCLE. Recent CCLE conferences have been attended by over 500 participants. The
22 number of CCLE accredited schools surpassed 20 schools in 2024. Numerous
23 homeschools throughout the Synod have embraced the Western tradition of classical
24 education.

25 From the beginning, schools in the classical Lutheran education movement throughout
26 the Synod have sought to find and recruit pastors, teachers, and headmasters who
27 have received an education that combines a thorough knowledge of Scriptures and
28 the Confessions of the Lutheran church with the skills and knowledge appropriate to
29 the Western Christian liberal arts tradition. For the past quarter-century Lutheran
30 schools and Lutheran parents have contemplated the need for a Lutheran classical
31 college in which sound Christian doctrine, philosophy, history, literature, the classical
32 languages, and the mathematical arts are thoroughly integrated and incorporated into
33 the life of the home, church, and community. Classical Lutheran leaders who attempted
34 to start such a college in the early years discovered that the time was not right. The
35 right time has now come.

36 In 2020, pastors, laymen, and congregations of the Wyoming District and across The
37 Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod organized a Board of Regents for the new Luther
38 Classical College (LCC). In 2025, LCC holds classes for its first cohort of students.

39 The college has been hosted and sponsored in various ways by two Wyoming District
40 congregations in Casper, Wyoming (Mount Hope and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran

1 Churches). Each congregation provides Regents to the LCC Board of Regents (BOR),
2 calls for rostered church workers, and has a role in the nomination of Regents.

3 The Wyoming District President is a member of the BOR; he advises the LCC President,
4 BOR, Mount Hope, and Trinity in the appointment and election of faculty; and he
5 provides ecclesiastical oversight, encouragement, and counsel to LCC through its
6 President and BOR.

7 As of January 2025, LCC has been sponsored and funded by hundreds of supporting
8 LCMS congregations nationwide and more than a thousand individual LCMS donors.
9 LCMS families are sending their young men and women to LCC to receive a robust
10 classical Lutheran education. All the faculty and staff are members of LCMS
11 congregations. The pastors and commissioned teachers on the faculty and staff are
12 members of the Wyoming District and are under the ecclesiastical supervision and care
13 of the Wyoming District President.

14 Luther Classical College is a congregational college, that is, a college organized by,
15 supported by, and supporting the congregations of the LCMS. In its doctrinal
16 commitments and Lutheran culture it complements the Synod's Concordia
17 Universities, but it is not a member or part of the Concordia University System (CUS).
18 LCC is not governed by the LCMS and has no legal or financial connection to the
19 Synod. From the time of its organization, however, LCC has been seeking a formal
20 ecclesiastical relationship to Synod. Its mission fully supports and advances the divinely
21 instituted objectives of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

22 LCC is bound to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God and to the
23 Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures and a correct exhibition
24 of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. LCC is guided by these commitments:

25 Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition
26 and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society,
27 fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.
28 (LCC Mission Statement; lutherclassical.org)

29 The college will provide a conservative, classical Lutheran education to Lutheran
30 students. Paramount will be the promotion of Christian culture, a stress on the
31 priority of Christian marriage, family, and piety, and a cultivation of confessional
32 Lutheran theology, liturgy, hymnody, and identity. With courses using the “great
33 .books” of the past for the core curriculum, the college will offer Latin, history,
34 theology, literature, logic, rhetoric, music, geometry, biology, and mathematics, all
35 within a purposefully Christian and Lutheran framework.

36 WHEREAS, LCC is a thoroughly Lutheran micro-college with joyful commitments to
37 Holy Scriptures, the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and the doctrine of the LCMS;
38 and

1 WHEREAS, LCC fulfills the divine commandment to teach Lutheran young people the
2 pure doctrine of Holy Scriptures and a pious Christian life in devotion and vocation
3 (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8); and

4 WHEREAS, LCC not only conforms to the Confession of the LCMS (Constitution
5 Article II) but also advances the objectives of the LCMS to “aid congregations to
6 develop processes of thorough Christian education and nurture and to establish
7 agencies of Christian education such as elementary and secondary schools and to
8 support synodical colleges, universities, and seminaries” (Constitution Article III.5); and

9 WHEREAS, LCC is sponsored by LCMS congregations, is governed by LCMS Regents,
10 is located in LCMS congregations of the LCMS Wyoming District, is visited diligently by
11 the Wyoming District President for the maintenance of true ecclesiastical concord
12 (Preface to *The Book of Concord*, 24), and serves the congregations of the LCMS by
13 teaching her students and returning them for life and service to the congregations of
14 the LCMS; therefore be it

15 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District in convention petition the Synod President and
16 Secretary to work with the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) to write a
17 proposed amendment to the Bylaws of Synod that creates a regular process for
18 establishing formal ecclesiastical relations between a micro-college sponsored by
19 LCMS congregations and the LCMS; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Synod President and Secretary consider proposing limitations in
21 these Bylaw amendments that include the following:

- 22 • that the micro-college be an undergraduate school restricted to a student
23 population of 400 or less;
- 24 • that the micro-college offer instruction primarily through in-person classes;
- 25 • that the entire faculty and administration of the micro-college be members
26 of the LCMS or members in good standing of LCMS congregations;
- 27 • that the micro-college receive regular ecclesiastical visitation with a
28 visitation team to include, in addition to the district president of the LCMS
29 district in which the micro-college resides, one representative each from
30 the President of Synod, the President of the CUS, a CUS president or
31 member of the theology faculty, and a seminary faculty member;
- 32 • that the doctrine and practice of the micro-college in all its faculty, teaching
33 and preaching, worship practices, and campus culture be thoroughly
34 Lutheran in accord with LCMS doctrinal commitments;
- 35 • that the micro-college be clearly separate from Synod legally and financially
36 in a way similar to the requirements established for RSOs; and
- 37 • that the micro-college not prepare or posture itself to prepare pastors for
38 ordination or laymen to carry out the functions of the pastoral office, nor certify
39 for membership on the roster of Synod teachers and other church workers;

40 And be it finally

1 *Resolved*, That this resolution be sent as an overture to the 2026 LCMS convention
2 as the record of the Wyoming District's appeal regarding LCC's ecclesiastical
3 relationship with the LCMS.

1 **Concerning the Practice of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)**

2 **RESOLUTION 06**

3 *(Overture 07)*

4 WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that human life is a sacred gift from God, who is
5 the Creator of all life (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139:13-16); and

6 WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that man is made in the image of God and that this image
7 is bestowed upon each person at conception (Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41-44; Genesis
8 9:6]; and

9 WHEREAS, Christ sanctified and redeemed even human embryos in his incarnation
10 and conception of the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary, His shed blood upon the cross, His
11 resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Luke 1:35; Matthew
12 1:20-23); and

13 WHEREAS, The tradition of the Christian Church, in accordance with the creation
14 order revealed in Holy Scripture, has consistently upheld the sanctity of human life and
15 the dignity of procreation as an act that belongs within the marital union between a
16 man and a woman (Genesis 1:27-28; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-6). This is also found
17 in the early Christian document *Didache 2.2* "You shall not murder a child by abortion,
18 nor kill a child at birth"; and

19 WHEREAS, The practice of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) involves the creation of human
20 embryos outside the womb often resulting in the destruction or indefinite freezing of
21 embryos, which contradicts the biblical teaching on the sanctity of human life and
22 proper context for procreation; and

23 WHEREAS, The practice of IVF undermines biblical understanding, reducing the child
24 to a product of human will and technological manipulation rather than seeing and
25 receiving the child as a gift from God (Genesis 30:2; Psalm 127:3); and

26 WHEREAS, The use of IVF introduces a separation between the procreative and
27 unitive aspects of marriage, thereby undermining the integrity of the marital union as
28 God intended it (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31-33; LC I, 206-209); and

29 WHEREAS, The practice of IVF often involves surrogacy, which is the rental of another
30 woman's womb, also undermining the integrity of the marital union as God intended
31 it; and

32 WHEREAS, IVF commodifies human life, treating embryos as objects to be used,
33 purchased, stored, or discarded, rather than recognizing them as persons created in
34 the image of God (Gen. 9:6), deserving of dignity and protection and all the rights
35 thereof; and

36 WHEREAS, IVF commonly uses gametes (sperm and eggs) taken from a third party
37 thus violating the one flesh union and depriving the child of his natural right to his
38 biological mother and father; and

1 WHEREAS, The desire for children is good, right, and godly, but Scripture teaches
2 that sinful means may not be used to procure a good end; therefore, be it

3 *Resolved*, That the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) condemn the practice
4 of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) as contrary to the teachings of Scripture, the tradition of the
5 Church, and the sanctity of human life and the one flesh union; and be it further

6 *Resolved*, That the LCMS urge its members to uphold the biblical understanding of
7 procreation as a sacred act within the marital union, rejecting practices that treat
8 human life as a commodity or a product of human will; and be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the LCMS commit to educating its members about the ethical and
10 theological problems and spiritual dangers surrounding IVF and surrogacy,
11 encouraging them to seek alternatives that respect the sanctity of life and the God-
12 given dignity of all human beings; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That pastors be exhorted to provide pastoral counseling and absolution
14 for those who have engaged in the practice of IVF; and be it finally

15 *Resolved*, That the Wyoming District send this resolution to the Synod convention
16 as an overture.

1 **To Encourage Struggling Congregations to Provide Financially For their Pastors**

2 **Resolution 07**

3 *(Overture 02)*

4 WHEREAS, The life of the Church comes solely from Christ's Word and Sacraments,
5 and her pastors are the men called by God to administer these vital gifts to her; and

6 WHEREAS, Congregations are called to care financially for their pastors (1 Timothy
7 5:18, "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,'
8 and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'"); and

9 WHEREAS, Financial burdens of congregations (especially small congregations) are
10 increasing due to decreased active membership and rising costs, especially insurance;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Jesus instructs His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him
13 deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23), and bearing the
14 cross is therefore part of the life of all Christians; and

15 WHEREAS, Christians are called to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2); and

16 WHEREAS, Our Lord promises to provide for His Church (Matthew 6:31-33) and will
17 never let her fall (Matthew 16:18); therefore be it

18 *Resolved*, That congregations be encouraged to prioritize the care of their pastors
19 and pastors' families financially, according to the current district guidelines, both in
20 salary and in benefits, even in the midst of financial struggle; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That congregations strive to bear one another's burdens, especially the
22 burdens of providing for a pastor and his family through both direct assistance and
23 other means such as entering into ministry sharing agreements or into multi-parish
24 agreements; and be it finally

25 *Resolved*, That congregations not be condemned, by others or by themselves, for
26 being unable to meet district compensation recommendations despite their best
27 efforts to do so.

1 **Appeal to Memorialize District Visitation by the Synod**

2 **Resolution 5-09**

3 *(President's Report, pp. 17-58)*

4 **Preamble**

5 The LCMS defines ecclesiastical oversight as

6 "The responsibility, primarily of the district president, to monitor; to make
7 inquiry and receive a response thereto; to make suggestions; to bring concerns
8 to the attention of a higher authority, namely the Synod status granting office, as
9 relates specifically to the ecclesial relations of a recognized service organization
10 operating within his district, and the impact and/or reflection of its work on the
11 mission and ministry of the church. (Bylaw 1.2.i).

12 So also, the LCMS defines ecclesiastical supervision as

13 "The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district
14 presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and
15 administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject
16 to the provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes
17 visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel,
18 advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to
19 assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed
20 and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting,
21 interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod's congregations.
22 Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe,
23 monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the
24 Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives (cf. Bylaw
25 2.14.1 [a]). Further, those constitutional articles and bylaws pertaining to
26 ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical
27 supervision (LCMS Bylaw 1.2.j).

28 While the LCMS does not, strictly speaking, practice an episcopal form of
29 governance, there remains an evangelical and biblical form of governance that places
30 pastors under the supervision of their district president, and district presidents under
31 the supervision of the President of Synod. That supervision is enacted by way of
32 visitation (ἐπισκοπή, Luke 19:44).

33 It is the Evangelical Lutheran position that forms of governance are adiaphora, but as
34 the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws are a human institution (1 Peter 2:13), Christians

1 who have willingly aligned themselves with the LCMS are duty-bound to submit to the
2 authority of the LCMS.

3 The shared ordination vows of pastors, as well as the confirmation vows of
4 laypersons, demonstrate that there is an earnest desire to *walk together* as Synod.
5 There are, however, theological differences among pastors and laypersons that
6 extend far beyond those topics that may be relegated to adiaphora.

7 Concerning supervision and oversight Martin Chemnitz, in his *Enchiridion* (1574)
8 writes:

9 Now, when this little book was to be published, I then dedicated and
10 addressed it first to you, reverend heads of the monasteries of this duchy,
11 because the reformation of the monasteries was directed to this end, that the
12 prelates should gradually be drawn in and used in the consistory, for visitation,
13 for examinations, and for synods, etc. and because the examinations of pastors
14 in the first visitation were for the most part held in the monasteries, so that this
15 little book might publicly testify what kind of doctrine it is regarding which
16 pastors were examined toward the beginning of the reformation, which
17 [doctrine] also Your Reverences embraced and still profess. Moreover, at the
18 same time I also addressed you, the superintendents, general and special, and
19 all pastors of the churches of this duchy, to testify publicly, confirm thoroughly,
20 and firmly preserve Christian, salutary unity in pure doctrine, against all
21 pernicious corruptions, among the ministers of the churches in the duchy and
22 in the city of Brunswick, as this very model of pure, incorrupt doctrine
23 resounded by divine grace in all these neighboring and other nearby churches
24 of Saxony, in thesis and antithesis, till now and still resounds, as the chief points
25 are explained in a simple manner in this manual. And since God has given His
26 special grace and blessing, so that the Christian declaration of the disputed
27 points of religion - which [declaration] was incorporated in the church order of
28 the duchy of Brunswick, from which also this manual was for the most part
29 drawn - is approved and praised as correct by many leading churches, not only
30 nearby but also far away, I could not object when the printer wanted to issue
31 this little book anew, and I have also improved it in some places. And I hereby
32 want the first, previous dedication of this little book to Your Reverence and
33 Honor to be repeated and confirmed.

34 May the faithful and most merciful God rule, teach, bless, and keep us in pure
35 doctrine and unity of the Spirit, so that we may one and all, by the grace and
36 help of the Holy Spirit, according to the teaching of Paul, hold steadfastly to

1 the Word, which is salutary and sure, refute those who contradict, Tts 1:9, and
2 endeavor to keep—besides pure doctrine—Christian, brotherly, unity and the
3 bond of peace, Eph 4:3. Let us guard against unnecessary, vexatious division
4 and schism, Ro 16:17. Let us not give way or place, even in the least, to the
5 wolf and to tares of false doctrine, Jo 10:12, but, as Luther says, do both
6 faithfully and diligently: feed the sheep and drive away the wolf. Amen. Written
7 at Brunswick, August 6, A.D. 1574

8
9 Martin Chemnitz
Lord Superintendent

10 It is well-established by the LCMS that visitation is a duty of district presidents and the
11 President of Synod:

12 **Constitution**

13 **Article III Objectives**

14 The Synod under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall—

- 15 1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work
16 through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church
17 bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom.
18 16:17), and heresy;
- 19 2. Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word
20 and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and
21 extend that Gospel witness into all the world;
- 22 3. Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and
23 provide opportunity for their continuing growth;
- 24 4. Provide opportunities through which its members may express their Christian
25 concern, love, and compassion in meeting human needs;
- 26 5. Aid congregations to develop processes of thorough Christian education and
27 nurture and to establish agencies of Christian education such as elementary
28 and secondary schools and to support synodical colleges, universities, and
29 seminaries;
- 30 6. Aid congregations by providing a variety of resources and opportunities for
31 recognizing, promoting, expressing, conserving, and defending their
32 confessional unity in the true faith;
- 33 7. Encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to
34 develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs
35 which are in harmony with our common profession of faith;

- 1 8. Provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and
2 other professional church workers of the Synod in the performance of their
3 official duties;

4 **Article XI Rights and Duties of Officers**

5 A. In General

- 6 1. The officers of the Synod must assume only such rights as have been
7 expressly conferred upon them by the Synod, and in everything pertaining
8 to their rights and the performance of their duties they are responsible to
9 the Synod.
10 2. The Synod at all times has the right to call its officers to account and, if
11 circumstances require it, to remove them from office in accordance with
12 Christian procedure. ...

13 B. Duties of the President

- 14 1. The President has the supervision regarding the doctrine and the
15 administration of
16 a. All officers of the Synod;
17 b. All such as are employed by the Synod;
18 c. The individual districts of the Synod;
19 d. All district presidents.
20 2. It is the President's duty to see to it that all the aforementioned act in
21 accordance with the Synod's Constitution, to admonish all who in any way
22 depart from it, and, if such admonition is not heeded, to report such cases
23 to the Synod.
24 3. The President has and always shall have the power to advise, admonish,
25 and reprove. He shall conscientiously use all means at his command to
26 promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of
27 the Synod.
28 4. The President shall see to it that the resolutions of the Synod are carried
29 out. ...

30 **Article XII**

31 The district presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the
32 doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned
33 ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the
34 congregations of their district. To this end they shall visit and, according as they
35 deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this
36 work are the circuit visitors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the
37 district president. District presidents are empowered to suspend from membership
38 ordained and commissioned ministers for persistently adhering to false doctrine or

1 for having given offense by an ungodly life, in accordance with such procedure as
2 shall be set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod.

3

4 **Bylaw 1.9.2**

5 Before materials stipulated in Bylaw 1.9.1 are published, they shall be submitted to (a)
6 doctrinal reviewer(s). Reviewers shall make a careful evaluation of the doctrinal
7 content of all items submitted. Materials are to be reviewed in a prompt manner and
8 completed in no longer than four weeks. Exceptions shall be arranged by mutual
9 agreement between the reviewer(s) and the originating entity.

- 10 a) The primary responsibility for doctrinal supervision and review lies with the
11 President of the Synod (Constitution Art. XI B 1).

12 **Bylaw 4.4.3**

13 The district president shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Synod, in his
14 ministry of ecclesiastical supervision, visit the congregations of the district.

- 15 a) He shall arrange in advance for an official visit to each congregation of his
16 district at least once every three years and otherwise as he deems it necessary.
17 He may call upon the circuit visitors and vice-presidents to assist him with the
18 triennial visitation of congregations.
- 19 b) In his official visits he shall seek to bring about to the greatest possible degree
20 the achievement of the Synod's objectives as expressed in Article III of its
21 Constitution.
- 22 c) He shall conduct his official visits in an evangelical manner.
- 23 d) He shall come to the pastor and the congregation as a brotherly advisor,
24 reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church.
- 25 e) In his visits he shall include fraternal discussion in regard to worship and
26 communion attendance; participation by the congregation in missions and the
27 work of the church at large; the congregation's evangelism and education
28 endeavors; its cultivation of sound stewardship principles; all aspects of
29 compensation for professional church workers; the need for maintenance of
30 purity of doctrine; the strengthening of the bond of Christian fellowship; and
31 the provision of resources, opportunities, and assistance so God's people can
32 grow in their faith, hope, and love. ...

33 WHEREAS, All pastors of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod make the same vows
34 upon their ordination and installation concerning pure doctrine; and

1 WHEREAS, It is the duty of district presidents to carry out ecclesiastical oversight and
2 supervision per the bylaws of Synod; and

3 WHEREAS, It is the duty of the President of Synod to carry out ecclesiastical supervision
4 per the bylaws of Synod; and

5 WHEREAS, It is the duty of Synod in convention to exhort the men who hold such
6 offices to do their duty; and

7 WHEREAS, Christians are called to submit to all human institutions (1 Peter 2:13); and

8 WHEREAS, Hebrews 13:17 teaches that submission to leaders is to be done out of love
9 and respect with the confession that such leaders watch over the souls of those under
10 them and will have to give an account to Christ at judgment day; and

11 WHEREAS, Pastors must therefore give an account for the souls in their congregations
12 (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28); and

13 WHEREAS, District presidents must therefore give an account for the pastors in their
14 district; and

15 WHEREAS, The Synod President must therefore give an account for district presidents;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Proverbs 10:17 teaches that paternal discipline is a blessing to the one
18 being disciplined. Proverbs 23:13-14, Hebrews 12:5-6, & 12:11 also teach this lesson;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, God desires that all people - including pastors - would repent when their
21 error is made known to them (Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 18; 2 Peter 3:9); and

22 WHEREAS, No one lights a lamp and then hides it (Luke 8:16); therefore, be it

23 *Resolved*, That congregational pastors and district presidents be open and
24 transparent with their ecclesiastical supervisors concerning their doctrine and
25 practice; and be it further

26 *Resolved*, That the President of Synod be encouraged to visit each district at least
27 once during each triennium for the sake of theological review, pastoral counseling,
28 and reproof where necessary; and be it finally

29 *Resolved*, That district presidents allow their leaders to visit them "with joy and not
30 with groaning," (Hebrews 13:17).