

The North Dakota District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod held its 56th Regular District Convention January 22-25, 2012 in Grand Forks North Dakota with the convention theme being “Now You Are The People Of God: Faithful Pastors, Bold Witnesses, Empowered Stewards.” 91 voting delegates were present: 43 pastoral voting delegates and 48 layman voting delegates. The Rev. Dr. James Baneck was re-elected as District President of the North Dakota District with 55% of the vote on the first ballot. Elected District Vice Presidents are The Rev. Arie Bertsch (1st Vice President from the West) and The Rev. Clark Jahnke (2nd Vice President from the East). The delegation of 91 voters ratified the Slate of Circuit Counselors and elected the following pastors as circuit counselors: Rev. Scott Ramey – Northeast Circuit, Rev. David Wagner – East Circuit, Rev. Douglas Wanderer – Southeast Circuit, Rev. Richard Biberdorf – Central Circuit, Rev. Carlyle Roth – Northwest Circuit, and Rev. Michael Wolters – Southwest Circuit.

Registration/Credentials/Elections committee also placed before the voting delegation at the convention nominees who agreed to let their names stand in an election for the following North Dakota District positions. Those positions and elected individuals include: District Secretary - the Rev. Alan Eppen; District Treasurer - Mr. Leon Bladow; two (2) pastoral delegates to the Board of Directors - the Rev. Thomas Marcis and the Rev. Toby Heller; five (5) Layman delegates to the Board of Directors - Mr. Robert Bauer, Mr. Michael Janke, Mr. Robert Drees, Mr. John Riley, and Mr. Merlyn Mindeman.

One of the more crucial items on the voting docket was **Resolution #2-02: Policy Based Governance in the North Dakota District**. There was considerable discussion regarding this resolution as it would bring about a change in the polity of the District’s governance. While we are at times want to keep things status quo, policy-based governance provides the opportunity to establish very clear and distinct boundaries while still maintaining the freedom of Christian liberty and doctrine as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Book of Concord. Change of this type certainly does not come easy, nor without a price. Yet, after a call to the motion was made, the voting delegation was led by God to vote 53% to 47% in favor of adopting Policy-Based Governance in the North Dakota District. One other resolution moving to have term limits abolished brought some discussion as well. However, after the resolution was deliberated, it was voted to retain term limits so as not to incorporate too much change to our District’s polity at one time.

Outreach, Missions, and Human Care has always been a very important part of the ministry of the North Dakota District. The North Dakota District takes to heart, “Now You Are The People Of God!” To be God’s people led the district to

vote in favor of maintaining a grass-roots ministry right here in North Dakota both through catechesis and Christian faith-in-action among our own people, as well as reaching out to North Dakota's native American population. Reaching out to North Dakotans, especially through times of terrible natural disasters, is certainly one of the ways our Lord cares for His creation through the North Dakota District. Another exciting ministry the North Dakota District has been supporting is an ongoing ministry in Kenya. The voting delegation affirmed their desire to continue this ministry as well as formalizing a partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya and working in conglomeration with the Minnesota North District in financially supporting the building of a total of 3 orphanages!

A synopsis of the North Dakota District convention would not be complete without the mention of ***Faithful Pastors, Bold Witnesses, and Empowered Stewards***. This is what we as a unified District voice believe means to be ***“Now You Are The People Of God.”*** As a District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the convention acknowledged through its vote and voice that our faithful pastors, bold witnesses, and empowered stewards exhibit what our beloved LC-MS has impressed upon us all as children of God to live with *Concordia* in a world broken by sin...Mercy, Witness, and Life Together! With ongoing youth initiatives, continuing youth events, and supporting our Lutheran schools and centers of learning, backing our Christian retreat center (Shepherd's Hill At The Crossroads), promote continued study of God's Holy Word in our congregations, and all the things listed above are just a few of the ways we bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that our good and gracious God continue to richly bless the work of His Stewards through Word and Sacrament ministry in the North Dakota District. Soli Deo Gloria!