



SET IN STONE

Newsletter of the 20th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District, LCMS • June 28-30, 2018 • Memphis, Tennessee

**SATURDAY,
JUNE 30, 2018**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *Snapshot of a Church Planter*
- *A Look at Electronic Voting*
- *LCMS President Shares Greetings*

Election Results Determine Clear Winner: District President Roger A. Paavola Retains Office!

By a convincing majority vote of 117-43, cast by 175 convention delegates and pastors in attendance, incumbent president Roger Paavola retained his position as the Mid-South District's leader, winning over the Rev. Andrew Toopes, who announced his candidacy for the presidency in April.

Paavola, who was declared the winner at 8:53 a.m. on Friday, June 29, pledged to continue his efforts to support rural and small-town ministry and the planting of new churches, as well as other programs targeted toward more effective mission and ministry work—including emphasis on local-regional outreach to the unchurched through the Each One Reach One initiative.

President Paavola plans to continue town hall meetings and to fight the growing spectre of opiate addiction. He praised the success of the District's partnership with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese, Tanzania, and the LIME Institute, Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar, represented here at the Convention by Bishop Emmanuel Makala and Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo.

From his perspective in the presidential seat since 2012, Paavola points out the measurable growth of baptized members of the church within our district in recent years, and refers to this as the "best district"—with excellent potential to build on that growth as the deacon program continues to produce more pastors for the district.

PRESIDENT		
1. REVEREND DR. ROGER PAAVOLA	73.1%	(117)
2. REVEREND ANDY TOOPES	26.9%	(43)



Mid-South District Welcomes Bishop Makala

Delegates to the 2018 Mid-South District Convention were blessed to hear from Bishop Emmanuel Makala from the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese in Tanzania. Bishop Makala thanked the Mid-South District for its continued partnership, through both mission teams and funding. Both have been an instrumental part of the growth in the Diocese over the last five years. Delegates and guests are encouraged to visit the Tanzanian mission team table in the Exhibitors' Hall to learn more about the great work taking place there!



Be sure to visit the Mid-South District's website for electronic copies of all editions of **Set In Stone**, including the wrap-up edition that will be issued following the Convention. Simply go to mid-southlcms.org and click on the Convention link.

Snapshot of a Church Planter

Confident without cockiness, self-assured with a measure of humility, Rev. John David Zischke, also known as JD, meets the challenges of church planting in the West Fayetteville, AR, area with aplomb. Growing up as a Southern Baptist in San Antonio, TX, supported by a single-parent mother who worked four jobs in order to give her children a private (Lutheran) school education, Pastor Zischke was raised in a home where church-going and fellowship were valued and encouraged. As he entered Concordia College at Seward, Nebraska, he was concerned by the fact he was not in Communion fellowship with his fellow Lutheran students, which led him to delve into the Confessions and Luther's writings, seeking instruction from his professors at Seward, and eventually being confirmed in the Lutheran faith as a junior at college.

While studying to become a DCE, he was re-directed to the pastoral ministry after encouragement from his mentors. He spent his senior year at Seward feverishly studying Greek and Hebrew to prepare for the seminary.

Upon Pastor Zischke's graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, the Mid-South District called him as Missionary-at-Large Church Planter for the Fayetteville Circuit, with the intention of beginning a congregation in West Fayetteville, a quickly growing area which is 80% unchurched. Quickly, JD realized that evangelism efforts that may have worked in his vicarage town of Clio, Michigan, were

going to need some re-thinking in West Fayetteville, which is largely suburban. After six-eight months of prayer-walking, learning the ins and outs of the city and its history, meeting city leaders, and sitting down with pastors in the circuit, one-on-one, to get a better sense of life in northwest Arkansas, he became comfortable in a place which was to be his city. With the movement of the Holy Spirit through his efforts, a core group evolved, praying together, building relationships, enjoying a rhythm of studying God's Word and Lutheran theology.

As the group solidified, thoughts turned to fund-raising in order to provide a place to worship. With the help of the Mid-South District Office and Paul Reaves, Lutherans from around the neighboring Arkansas cities gathered in May for a Celebration Banquet, raising both interest in the ministry and financial support. So now that he has done his research, created community with other Lutheran pastors and congregations, and generated momentum and funds, the dream is set to become a reality. With continued prayer and support, Pastor Zischke is eager to see what the Lord has in store for him and his family (wife, Mikaela and three beautiful babies), for West Fayetteville, and for the Lutheran Church in the Mid-South District. May the Lord continue to bless his efforts!



A support banquet for Pastor Zischke's ministry drew many from across the Northwest Arkansas community.



Rev. JD Zischke, Church Planter in the Fayetteville, AR community.

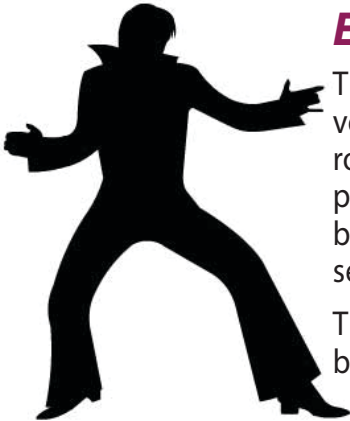
ANSWER to Bible Trivia:

What is the shortest verse in the Bible*?

- a) 1 Chronicles 1:25
- b) Luke 17:32
- c) John 11:35
- d) Revelation 20:4

* King James version

Did you get the answer right? The verse is John 11:35, "Jesus wept."



Electronic Voting Process Steals the Show

This year's convention again featured an impressively instantaneous vote-counting process from Padgett Communications that leaves no room for delay, and apparently none for error, as each day's polling process proceeded efficiently and accurately with a push of each voter's button—delivering an automatic electronic count of the results within seconds.

The system, first introduced at the 2015 district convention, is also used by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod nationwide for its official business. This meeting's initial 'test' vote determined importantly that a majority of Mid-South District Convention delegates are confident that Elvis is NOT still alive.

LCMS President Addresses Delegates

The Convention welcomed the Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, to the Friday morning session. President Harrison's address emphasized JOY: the joy of the Lord in us, and our joy from abiding in the Lord; the joy that pastors have in their congregations, and the joy with which members greet their pastors. After an illuminating illustration of Lazarus rising from the dead (or rather, President Harrison rising from the table), we were reminded of the Christian joy to be found in the sacrifices of prayer, thanksgiving, works of love, and speaking the Gospel. Following his address, President Harrison took questions from the Convention attendees, which included the Synod's position on immigration ("The right-hand Kingdom is mandated to love your neighbor"), the question of division within the Synod ("The Church is calm, Grasshopper"), and possible seminary closings ("Seminaries are stable, in healthy financial condition"), Pastor Harrison closed with a reminder from St. Paul to pray without ceasing and "to stay away from the bad stuff." He then thanked the Mid-South District, its staff, pastors, and lay people, for their continued faithfulness in sharing the Gospel.

President Matthew Harrison's address combined compelling reminders about our daily lives as "missionaries" with a bit of humor, including an impromptu impression of Lazarus.



Vice Presidents Elected to Serve Mid-South

Winners of the Vice-presidential election are as follows:

1st Vice President-	Rev. Charles J. Neugebauer	(Region 3)
2nd Vice President	Rev. James C. Walter	(Region 2)
3rd Vice President-	Rev. Gilbert H. Pingel (EM)	(Region 4)
4th Vice President-	Rev. Paul E. Hass	(Region 1)

Vice Presidents won their regions by the following votes:

Region 1:	Rev Paul C. Hass	91	61.5%
	Rev. Joshua J. Willadsen	57	38.5%
Region 2: (Run-off)	Rev. James C. Walter	98	66.2%
	Rev. Kevin Conger	50	33.8%
Region 3:	Rev. Charles J. Neugebauer	102	65.8%
	Rev. Andrew W. Toopes	44	28.4%
	Rev. William D. Miller	9	5.8%
Region 4: (Run-off)	Rev. Gilbert H. Pingel (EM)	74	50.3%
	Rev. Robert M. Portier	73	49.7%

Winners were determined as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Vice Presidents by the following votes:

1st Vice President: (Run-off)	Rev. Charles J. Neugebauer	106	66.7%
	Rev. James C. Walter	53	33.3%
2nd Vice President:	Rev. James C. Walter	91	58%
	Rev. Gilbert H. Pingel (EM)	35	22.3%
	Rev. Paul Hass	31	19.7%
3rd Vice President:	Rev. Gilbert H. Pingel (EM)	83	54.6%
	Rev. Paul E. Hass	69	45.4%
4th Vice President	Rev. Paul E. Hass	(Unopposed)	

District Secretary Results

Rev. John Gierke was re-elected as Secretary of the Mid-South District. Results were:

Rev. John Gierke	131	83.4%
Rev. William Ondracka	26	16.6%

Worth 1,000 Words...

Enjoy these pictures from the various sessions, events and exhibitors from the first two days of the 20th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District!



Ms. Martha Israel leads the seating and singing for delegates.



Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo and wife, Razafindradio, from Madagascar.



Rev. Ken Krueger, CEO of the Lutheran Federal Credit Union, addresses the delegation in Thursday's session.



LCMS First VP, Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller in the first convention session.



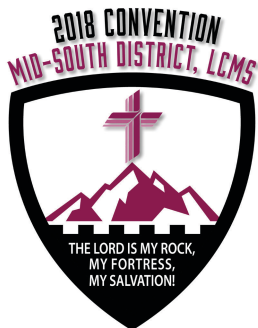
LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison poses with Martin Luther



Everyone loves to visit with a Comfort Dog!



Delegates preparing to cast their votes.



In the Next Issue —

The next issue of *Set in Stone* will be published at the Convention's conclusion and emailed to delegates. In particular, watch for coverage of:

- **An Interview with the Comfort Dogs**
- **Photos of Newly Elected Groups**
- **Greetings from Madagascar**