



SET IN STONE

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

**THURSDAY,
JUNE 28, 2018**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Remembering
Rev. Al Boysen
- Meet the Nominees
- Exhibit Hall Preview

WELCOME!

Greetings and welcome to the 20th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The theme chosen for reflection and guidance for this important event is, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my salvation!" from Psalm 18:2. Over the coming days, may we all be encouraged by this truth!

Many thanks are extended to our convention delegates as they share their time and consideration to glorify our Lord through their leadership. May they be blessed by their service over these next three days. While conducting important business will be the focus of the convention, may there also be moments to relax and enjoy the fellowship of friends from throughout the District.

Opening Worship Service

Hosted by Christ the King Lutheran Church & School

5:45-7:15 p.m.

DINNER in the
School Gymnasium
Sponsored by Thrivent

7:30 p.m.

WORSHIP SERVICE
The Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller,
Preacher

The offering at tonight's worship service will go toward the District's education debt fund to provide financial assistance to Mid-South pastors and commissioned church workers who are burdened with significant educational debt.

Christ the King is located at 5296 Park Avenue, Memphis 38119. Bus transportation is available. Please visit the Convention Office if you need to sign up for the buses.



IN FOCUS — The Important Work of Floor Committees

Since much of the business of the District Convention is conducted through overtures and floor committee hearings and recommendations, a brief summary of the process is in order. We are grateful to Rev. John Gierke, District Secretary, for answering our questions and providing insightful background for our edification. His comments are summarized here.

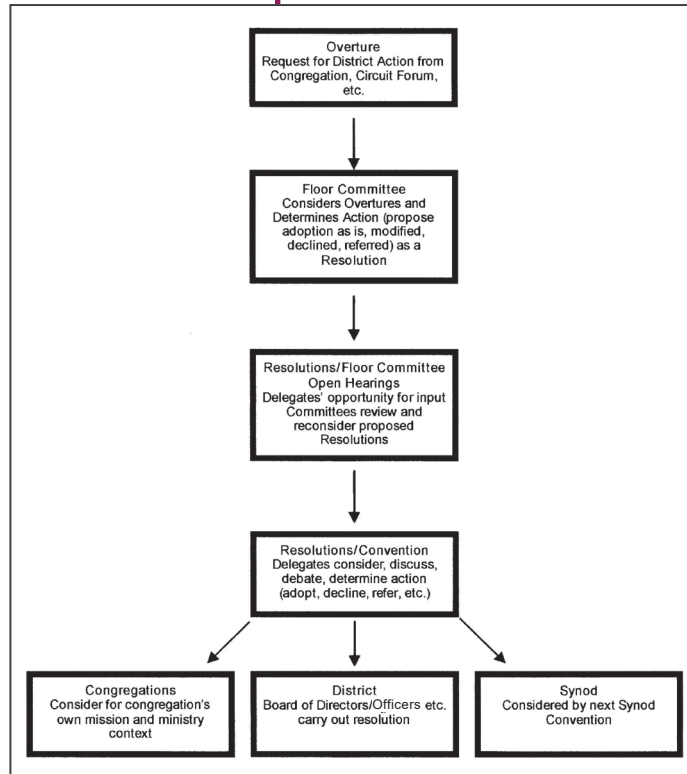
What is an overture? An overture is simply a recommendation in the form of a proposed resolution, requesting action on the part of the Convention. It may be submitted by a member congregation of the District, the District Board of Directors, a Circuit forum, or various other entities deemed appropriate by the Synod.

You may notice that some overtures are duplicates, or near-duplicates. This indicates that some overtures adopted by a congregation are then shared with other congregations, a Circuit forum, or the Board of Directors in order to obtain additional support and influence when presented to the Floor Committee. Each overture stands by itself in importance, as it is coming from its originating agency or entity of the Synod. However, when an overture has multiple supporters, a floor committee recognizes the issue affects more than just one group, which may then direct its recommendations to the Convention to adopt or decline.

MORE, Pg. 2 ►

The Important Work of Floor Committees *(continued)*

Overtures submitted by the Board of Directors often offer a glimpse into the priorities of the District. Others may be presented by the Board as a matter of business that only the District Convention has the authority to decide, and which the Board has been preparing in the triennium between Conventions. The proposed amendment of the District's Articles of Incorporation is one such example.



What is the role of the Floor Committee? Floor Committees are appointed by the District President, who then assigns overtures to the appropriate committees. Categories include Mission, Ministry, Business & Finance and Governance. The Committees met two weeks prior to this Convention to draft their proposed resolutions from the overtures, and these were posted to the District website in advance of the Convention.

Each Floor Committee considers every overture presented to them and determines if it should be presented to the Convention for adoption, declined, referred to another group, or sent on for consideration at the next Synod Convention.

During the District Convention, open hearings are held by each Floor Committee, which provide the delegates the opportunity to share support or opposition to each resolution, as well as an opportunity to listen and learn. Actual debate is reserved for the Convention floor. After the open hearing, the Floor Committee has the opportunity to revise its resolution based on new information or viewpoints shared during the open hearing. Once a floor committee brings a resolution to the floor of the Convention for consideration, delegates are able to speak for or against the resolution or offer an amendment or substitute resolution. Once all discussion and amending are complete, the final vote takes place to adopt or decline the resolution.

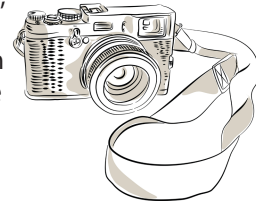
What happens after the Convention? Minutes of the Convention, including the dispensation of all resolutions, are disseminated throughout the District to all appropriate bodies. Adopted resolutions are taken up by the Board of Directors, officers or other appropriate group directed to implement the resolution. If a resolution is declined, it may be reintroduced at the next Convention by means of an overture. If a resolution was not able to be acted upon or have action completed before Convention adjournment, the resolution dies at the close of the Convention, but can be submitted at the next District or Synod Convention for consideration.

Please see the above flow chart for further clarification. Thank you again to Rev. Gierke for his thorough discussion, which was summarized herein. His references included the LCMS Constitution Articles, LCMS Bylaws, MDS Bylaws, and the Convention Workbook.



Dearly Missed Remembering Long-Time Publicity Team Member, Rev. Al Boysen

The Publicity Committee of the District Convention will not be the same this year as we miss the familiar face of Rev. Al Boysen, a long-standing contributor of quips, anecdotes, photographs, and interviews with his colleagues, all of whom deeply respected him as a man of strong faith and solid work ethic. "Big Al," a pastor within the Mid-South District for over 50 years—first at Faith Evangelical in Tullahoma (1961-1975), then at Immanuel, Memphis (1975- 1998) and after retirement as a sought-after preacher in a number of vacancies in the Circuit—was welcomed into the loving arms of his Lord in March of 2017, at the age of 83, leaving a legacy of faith and cherished memories with his beloved wife Pat, their three sons Steve, Michael, and Chris, their grandchildren and great-grandchild, and a host of friends, former members, and fellow pastors. We know his mellow baritone, long-respected in Memphis community choruses and at Christ the King in the tradition of an annual "Stille Nacht" duet with soprano Caroline Johnson, is mingling with the voices of the saints in heaven, praising his Savior, the Rock on whom his faith was built.



MEET THE NOMINEES for Mid-South District President



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
- District President
(2012-Present)



Rev. Andrew Toopes
- Sr. Pastor, Holy Trinity
Lutheran Church
in Bowling Green, KY

To get to know our two District Presidential candidates and their perspectives a bit better, *Set in Stone* asked each for his guidance to a parishioner who expressed particular concerns. Below is one of the questions posed, and an excerpt from each candidate's response:

QUESTION: *I have a young friend, a recent college graduate, very confident about her own convictions. She has been a faithful supporter of—and recently joined—a volunteer organization wherein I am active. The subject of faith arose and I was astonished to hear her express the belief that belonging to a particular church denomination of any type is "divisive" and foolish. "We are all God's children, no belief is better than another—we should all just believe in God and get along," she said. She believes that we, as Lutherans, are being divisive by embracing a particular doctrine, and is quite positive that I am wrong to belong to a Lutheran church. What would you advise me to tell her and others like her, considering how uncomfortable I am with evangelizing?*

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola Responds:

We have recently implemented a program called "Each One Reach One," which, in conjunction with District LWML President Diane Reimold, we are presenting to every society, every zone, and every congregation that requests it. The program is built on the elements of the "Every One His Witness" developed by Synod to address these situations—because every person is different in their spirituality.

If your young friend does not have the understanding that Jesus died for her sin, that is divisive in itself, because that becomes the foundation of what it is that the Christian church has to offer to people who want to have the certainty of the promise of life everlasting through Christ Jesus.

What our 'Each One Reach One' approach is doing is demonstrating that there are three kinds of thinking that will affect a person's understanding of faith. (This isn't getting into the whole scriptural thing; that's only one aspect of what it is that resonates with an individual.)

It is the 'head,' the 'heart' and the 'hand' that influence each person's faith: "Getting along" with others, as she says, and being able to make sure that we love each other—that's a 'heart' thing. So begin talking with this individual, listening to her story, learning what is formulating her decision. Ask questions about that; let her tell us her life story and continue to probe those kinds of things, and then seek out reassurances and confirmation of what it is that she's really looking for.

That shows us that she's going to be different than a

Rev. Andrew Toopes Responds:

That's a millennial mindset, in her case. I think you just have to approach things with—Millenials are big into relationships. For you to be able to make any progress with this young lady in particular, I would spend quite a bit of time developing a good relationship with her. Because she's got to trust you, first. If you were to fire back at her and say "You're wrong!" you're never going to get anywhere with her.

People have the right to be exceptionally wrong whenever they want to be. But if you can develop a good relationship with her, and she sees you as somebody that she can talk to, that she can confide in, I think that opens the door then for you to be able to sit down and talk with her about this. There are points of agreement: "I believe that we are all Christians, we just choose to practice our Christianity in different denominations. I choose to practice my Christianity in the Lutheran church. Some choose to practice their Christianity in the Methodist Church." You do have some points of agreement, so don't get confrontational with her. Instead, just say, "You know, that's an interesting idea; and here's my take on that."

Her belief that we are all God's children, and that denominations are divisive, is, unfortunately, part of that very simplistic view of the world by young people who have no earthly idea—or life experience. How to deal with that mentality—how to get through to these folks—that's been the struggle of the church for the last 15 years.

For the most part I would say, just start the dialogue, get the friendship going first. Because then, hopefully,

Q & A with President Harrison...

LCMS President Matthew Harrison will participate in a Q & A session on **Friday morning at 11:00 AM**. If you have a question to submit for consideration, be sure to drop it into one of the "Q & A" boxes in the Convention Hall prior to the session!

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola Responds *(continued)*:

person that's going to come to you and say "What kind of scriptural basis do you have for believing that you should be able to baptize children—babies?" That's a 'head' problem. The 'heart' problem that she has shows in her desire to get everybody to love and live together and so forth. Other people, who want to be contributing member of society, may join a church or become members of any type of group because that group provides something to society—that's a 'hand' thing.

Where this young lady sees divisiveness—well, the fact of the matter is that Christianity has hundreds of denominations, meaning that we all think differently in certain areas, but hopefully that each of us has Christ as our savior and that is given to us a gift from God.

Rev. Andrew Toopes Responds *(continued)*:

the church for the last 15 years. For the most part I would say, just start the dialogue, get the friendship going first. Because then, hopefully, in that process, you'll be able to hear from her why she feels that way.

A lot of these kids were hurt in church along the way, so they don't disavow God so much as they disavow the church. It may not be a Roman Catholic scandal—it may be that they had a pastor who made derogatory or judgmental statements about a friend of theirs: "They're horrible people", for example. And that's where these kids think that the church is wrong and denominations are wrong, because a lot of them have heard their pastors say "Well, your Methodist friends are wrong." —and they don't see that.

The word denomination is something that we learned in 4th grade, when we started doing fractions, which means that 'denomination' is something that does divide, because there are different understandings and different beliefs.

"Tell me about your belief. What is it that you think that religion does? What should it do to engage you as an individual?" That starts to talk to the person's heart. And that tells us where we go from there.

Asking (and listening!) "What has led you to believe this way" eventually gets us to the point where you can offer to share Jesus with her, saying "I'm not here to divide or separate, I'm here to bring you into fellowship with him." But that's got to be a long, long way away.

Don't Miss the Exhibits...

Be sure to visit some of the many exhibitors in attendance at the 2018 Convention:

- Alliance Defending Freedom
- Comfort Dogs
- Concordia Plan Services
- Concordia Publishing House
- Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- Financial Peace University
- Stephen Ministry/Griefshare - *Christ the King, Memphis*
- LCMS Foundation
- Lutheran Church Extension Fund
- Lutheran Federal Credit Union
- Lutheran Heritage Foundation
- Lutheran Hour Ministries
- Main Street Living
- Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar
- Orphan Grain Train
- Transforming Churches Network
- Trinity HOPE
- World Missions
- Thrivent

That's why kids don't want to go anymore; because they're tired of hearing other church bodies bashed because their friends are part of the other church bodies. That's why that friendship is so important. So they see a Christian person who is a denomination-attender as somebody who is a really nice person and cares about them. That's where it has to start.

Hear from both candidates in the Friday morning session!

FLASHBACK — A Look Back at Mid-South District Conventions of the Past!



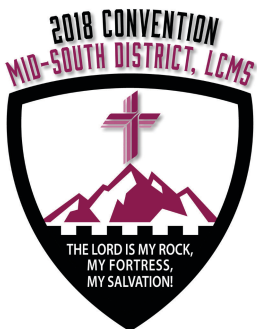
1960's



1990's



1980's



In the Next Issue —

The next issue of *Set in Stone* will be published Friday morning, June 29, featuring coverage of:

- The Opening Worship Service at Christ the King Lutheran
- The District's Deacon Program: a Follow-Up from the 2015 Convention
- The Recent Mid-South Mission Trip to Tanzania