



Membership to Elect Leaders, Determine Priorities at National LCMS Convention

An estimated 1,200 voting delegates will be among those gathered in St. Louis July 20-25 for the **65th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod**. The triennial national convention is the Synod’s principal legislative assembly.

Charged with the responsibility to consider and vote on various resolutions and leadership choices, delegates represent the more than 1.7 million confirmed members in almost 6,200 LCMS congregations in 35 districts across the United States. Each electoral circuit selects one pastor and one layperson as its voting delegates. Commissioned church workers are exempt from serving as voting delegates but may attend the Convention in advisory positions or as guest observers. The Convention is open to the public.

The theme for the 2013 Convention is **Baptized for This Moment**, taken from Peter’s Pentecost sermon as recorded in Acts 2:38–39: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.”

Much of the business of the Convention results from the work of nine floor committees, whose members prepare and present resolutions crafted from various overtures in addition to coordinating the nomination, registration and election processes. Nine floor

committees were assembled for this Convention, including Witness; Mercy; Life Together; Theology and Church Relations; Seminary and University Education; Administration and Finance; Structure and Ecclesiastical Matters; Registration, Credentials and Elections; and Convention Nominations.

ELECTIONS

Among the LCMS national leadership positions to be filled at Convention are: First Vice President; five regional Vice Presidents; Secretary; Commissioned and Lay members of the Board of Directors; Ordained and Lay members of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; Ordained and Lay members of the Concordia Historical Institute Board of Governors; Lay members of the Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors; Ordained or Commissioned and Lay members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Board of Directors; Ordained and Lay members of the LCMS Foundation Board of Directors; Ordained member of the Concordia University System Board of Directors; Ordained, Commissioned and Lay members of the Boards of Regents for the various Concordia Universities and LCMS Seminaries.

The presidential election will take place before the start of Convention, a procedure that is one of several changes to go into effect in 2013. Electing five Regional Vice Presidents is another change, as is the selection of candidates for the First Vice President position.

A chart on the adjacent page summarizes these changes.

Election of the Synod President will take place electronically (via the Internet only) during a four-day period — June 22–25 — by each LCMS congregation/parish’s two voting delegates to its 2012 district convention.

If no candidate receives a majority of votes, the candidate with the least number of votes will be dropped from the ballot and a second vote will be taken one week later. No other nominations will be accepted.

Two weeks before the start of the convention — on July 6 — the Synod secretary will share the results of the election first with the candidates, and afterward, with the public. The candidate receiving the majority of votes will become president-elect of the Synod.

The three candidates for president are:
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison;
Rev. Dr. David P.E. Maier; and
Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.

More information on these candidates is presented on the following pages, as is information on the Regional Vice President election.

**JUNE 22, 2013
FIRST BALLOT
TO VOTE FOR
PRESIDENT**



The National LCMS Convention

What’s Changed?

This summer’s convention will operate differently than in the past. Here are some of the more notable changes — and what remains the same

PAST CONVENTIONS

2013 CONVENTION

PAST CONVENTIONS	2013 CONVENTION
<p>PRESIDENT</p> <p>The president was elected at the convention by approximately 1,200 voting delegates.</p> <p>The announcement of the presidential election</p>	<p>4 weeks prior to convention, approximately 8,200 voting delegates representing each congregation in attendance at last summer’s district conventions will begin to cast votes.</p> <p>2 weeks prior to convention, the Synod’s secretary will notify candidates and the public of results.</p>
<p>FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT</p> <p>Slate was composed of 5 ordained ministers receiving highest number of nominations and</p>	<p>Slate of five candidates are chosen by the president-elect and are taken from list of 20 ordained ministers receiving highest number of nominations and allowing their names to stand.</p>
<p>VICE-PRESIDENTS</p> <p>4 Vice-Presidents were elected to assist the president.</p>	<p>5 regional vice-presidents — in addition to the first vice-president — will be elected to assist the president.</p>
<p>BOARDS</p> <p>Board of Director positions were nominated and elected with no regional requirements.</p>	<p>The Board of Directors of synod and other boards now require nomination from their regions.</p>
<p>VOTING SYSTEM</p> <p>Delegates at convention, using electronic hand-held devices that totaled votes automatically cast their votes for president.</p>	<p>Votes for president are cast prior to convention by voting delegates via a “secure and verifiable method” on the internet.</p>
<p>PRIORITIES</p> <p>No official synodwide method existed for determining goals and emphases. Emphases or priorities were determined separately by each program or governing board.</p>	<p>Congregations, circuit forums, districts and the national convention participate in determining triennial mission and ministry emphases for the synod.</p>



Meet The Three Candidates For Synodical President



Matthew C. Harrison

580 Spragues Mill Court
Ballwin, Missouri 63011
Born: March 14, 1962
Birth Place: Sioux City, IA
Undergraduate: Morningside College, Sioux City (1984)
Seminary: Concordia Theological Seminary [CTS], Fort Wayne, IN (1989)
Year of Ordination: 1991

Harrison's first call was to St. Peter's-Westgate, IA, where he served from 1991 until 1995. For the next six years

he was at Zion-Fort Wayne. In 2001 he became the Executive Director of LCMS World Relief/ Human Care, a position he held until his election as Synodical President in 2010.

Harrison earlier spent a year as a missionary to Native Canadians with the Lutheran Association or Missionaries and Pilots. He was on the LCMS Board for Missions from 1993 until 1995, and served as Founding President for the National Lutheran Housing Support Corporation from 2004 until 2010. He has been on the Board of Directors for Lutheran Services in America and for Lutheran World Relief. On the District level, he was a member of the Task Force on Rural Ministry and the Synod Nominations Committee.



David P. E. Maier

7108 Ryan Road
Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189
Born: May 8, 1956
Birth Place: Levittown, PA
Undergraduate: Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI ['78]
Seminary: Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne ['82]
Year of Ordination: 1982

Maier began his full-time ministry as pastor for Our Savior Lutheran-Marlette, MI,

where he served from 1982 until 1984 when he accepted the call to St. Peter-Arlington Heights, IL. Maier returned to Michigan in 1989 as pastor of Our Savior-Lansing, a call he held until being elected Michigan District President in 2009.

Maier is a member of the LCMS Specific Ministry Committee and was the Council of President representative to the 2010 Convention Floor Committee on Seminary & University Education. His service to the Michigan District has included terms as Vice President and membership on the Board of Family Life and Circuit Counselor. For several years he was the Camp Dean at Michigan's Camp Arcadia.

Maier has been the speaker at numerous youth retreats and men's gatherings.



Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.

102 Front Street
Waterloo, Illinois 62298
Born: May 16, 1953
Birth Place: Grand Forks, ND
Undergraduate: Concordia College, Ann Arbor ['73]
Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne ['75]
Seminary: Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis ['79]
Year of Ordination: 1979

Mueller's first call after was to Mount Calvary-Chicago, where he served as the sole pastor from 1979 until 1983 when he accepted the call to serve as Associate Pastor for Zion-Bethalto, IL. Seven years later he was called to Immanuel-Waterloo, IL, where he served as Senior Pastor until his election to Southern Illinois District President in 1994. He was still serving in that capacity when he was elected First Vice President of the Missouri Synod in 2010.

On the Synodical level, Mueller has served on the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support, the Colloquy Committee and the Council of Presidents Program Committee. His service in the Southern Illinois District included terms as Secretary, First and Second Vice President. From 1997 through 2010 Mueller participated in six mission trips to Southern Africa.



How would you describe the biggest challenge facing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today?

Harrison Responds

Many challenges face the LCMS, but none of them are new! Bearing witness to the full and free forgiveness of sins we have in Christ Jesus— together without losing our biblical, Lutheran soul in this increasingly hostile culture — is our greatest challenge. A recent Pew Forum study pointed out that 1 in 3 Americans under the age of 30 is religiously unaffiliated. Compare that with 1 in 16 of the WWII generation!

Recently, I've been intensely studying the slow demographic decline of the Missouri Synod over the past 40 years. Florida-Georgia has performed better than average, but has experienced steady decline since 1996, despite the addition of 25 or more congregations in the same period. It has become obvious that the chief reason for the decline is that Americans of European decent are marrying later and having fewer children. This is a cultural fact and has had the greatest numerical impact upon the LCMS in its history. This demographic challenge has had huge ramifications for how pastors are viewed and treated, for parochial schools, and for many other areas.

Church planting, congregational renewal, outreach for the salvation of souls, care of families, and the continued witness of a church body that gets the Gospel right, are beyond vital. H. C. Schwan (3rd LCMS President) spoke to the convention: "On Preserving Unity While Avoiding Either Faddishness or Sluggishness." That says it all. I say we get back to basics: Law/Gospel preaching; quality worship; active and empowered laity — in short: Witness, Mercy, Life Together. Let's play to our strengths. Let's be Lutheran. ■

Maier Responds

I'd like to answer that question by telling this brief story I remember reading or hearing. The story was about two brothers who each had

a son. For their sons' Spring Break they decided to go fishing at their favorite summer fishing hole in north Texas. To make it more fun the four of them decided to also camp in the camper on the rear of the truck of one of the brothers. Everything was fine and dandy until rising early the next morning with the expectation of a full day of fishing ahead of them, they opened the camper door and experienced an early north Texas spring storm with snow and 30 MPH winds. They closed the camper door and decided to play cards the rest of the day. The also did a little bit of drinking to pass the time. It wasn't an all-bad day, talking about fishing and how they would rather be on the water. The next morning the weather was just as bad with a little snow and a whole lot of rain. They spent their time like the previous day playing cards, doing a little reading, getting on each other's nerves all the more. By supper that night, with the wind a little warmer but still blowing, they not only stayed inside and didn't fish, but jabbed at each other with cutting comments and sarcasm and began "fighting." So they packed up and went home.

The "moral" of the story was, "When fisherman don't fish, they fight."

We've to stop fighting each other. God has called us to "fish," (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17) to take the truths of Scripture, especially that God loves the world - God loves sinners (even a one like me), to take that Gospel message - which is still the power of God unto salvation - and declare it to the world. To be sure doctrine is important. Our Synod's first President, C.F.W. Walther, recognized good doctrine as tantamount to a farmer having and sowing good seed: it is the only way to ensure a good harvest. BUT, having good seed, we must sow it (Matthew 28:18-20) - (we must fish), demonstrating our concern for those who face a

Christless eternity! I believe that God wants us to spend more time finding better methods for equipping, encouraging, and supporting our laity in the mission work within our neighborhoods and communities - especially as we face the rise of secularism and Islam - and less time examining the doctrinal purity and practice of others. *How we relate to one another says much about our theology, our God, and our relevance to the world.* (Cf.1 John 4:7-16). ■

Mueller Responds

Our greatest theological challenge is faithfully to live in our confession of Christ and His Word. What does this mean? We are heirs of an incredible treasure! Our Lutheran confessions are not over the Word of God, but we are pledged to them unconditionally because they drive us deeper into the Word. They extol Christ alone as Savior and, properly read, also drive us out into the world to bring this good news to all who will hear. This is why I am a Lutheran! Our theology keeps us in the Word of God and does the best job of bringing the healing Gospel of Christ to hurting and broken people. There is no dichotomy between doctrine and mission. If you count yourself "confessional," that's great! Now get out there and "confess!" If you see yourself as "mission-driven," wonderful! It's the command of Christ, now be sure you are out there with the "good stuff," the real treasure that God gives by grace alone, for the sake of Christ alone, received through faith alone in the One who died and rose for all. "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). We are called to believe this message ourselves, and challenged to move out into our communities and into a world of hurting people. ■



How would you work to bring greater unity to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?

Harrison Responds

The Synod has been remarkably peaceful, especially for a convention year. Of course, we are not at all where we need to be. We began the Koinonia Project 2.5 years ago. Many districts, circuits and congregations are participating.* These groups have formed for clergy of differing views to come together to pray, talk and work toward greater unity for the sake of the Gospel. They follow the pattern used to bring unity to our Lutheran Church just after Luther died:

1. identify the points at issue; 2. state clearly the areas we confess together; 3. state clearly what we reject; 4. identify future action taken together, on the basis of Scripture and our Confessions.

We have gained an understanding as these groups have jelled with some groups accomplishing more than others. Most important has been pastors sitting down to talk in the spirit of Christian love, studying the Scriptures. I expect this summer's convention to heartily endorse the Koinonia Project, and that it will expand and produce good things.

I also expect that the Lord may well bring about greater unity among us, quite despite ourselves! As the climate for Christianity becomes more and more hostile in the U.S., we have been faced with intrusions on our religious freedoms, including: the HHS mandates that threaten the very existence of our health plans; gay marriage, which will become a major challenge to our ability to act according to our biblical convictions, both privately and in our church institutions; limitations on our military chaplains; the Hosanna Tabor Supreme Court case — which showed us the willingness of the government to intrude on the church's ability to hire commissioned ministers; increasing reports of IRS intrusions; and more. The Lord will use these difficulties to unite us. I noted this in the wake of my testimony before Congress last year. ■

Maier Responds

Unity is a gift of God. (Uniformity is not.) It is a wonderful gift, a blessed "grace" accomplished by the working of the Holy Spirit. God has chosen to work through the Means of Grace (the Word of God, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper) to bestow the blessing of salvation and all the other blessings that come with and through our salvation through faith in Jesus.

What a joy it would be to recognize that it pleases God when we live together in unity (Psalm 133:1).

Therefore, I would ask that, as a denomination, we find a time where we would repent of our sins — naming them, especially our sins against one another. It would then be my prayer and something that I would regularly emphasize, that we spend daily time meditating on God's Word where the Holy Spirit works and continues to transform us (Romans 12:2). Part of that regular emphasis and encouragement would be that we celebrate that unity and, through His power, pray for, and deliberately work towards, defending and maintaining His gift of unity. ■

Mueller Responds

The 2010 Convention of the Synod made significant adjustments in how we structure the work of the national Synod. We are still living into those changes and need to continue doing so. At the president's direction, we have been working to develop what we call the "Koinonia Project" designed to work toward resolution of some of those issues that cause dissension among us.

This effort to bring people together in theological discussion under the Word of God needs to grow into the future.

I believe one of the most important efforts we need to make along with the "Koinonia Project" is the strengthening of evangelical visitation. To that end, we could change the title "circuit counselor" back to "circuit visitor." Counselors wait for people to come to them. Visitors, well, they visit. We need to develop evangelical visitation more effectively from the president on down. Where it is going well, we need to lift it up. Where improvement is needed, we need to encourage it. Effective visitation under God's Word can build toward unity for the sake of the mission. We are accountable to Christ and to one another. Whatever hard decisions in your future, in your congregation's future, we can face them with Christ-given courage. God gives His gifts freely and liberally! We are "baptized for this moment!" ■



*See the President's Report for the convention in the Convention Workbook, pages 1–13, available online at <http://www.lcms.org/convention>, where numerous participants are noted.

Much is said — and written — about membership losses in the LCMS, with a failure on the Church's part to be 'relevant' to Christians in today's world being a strong contributing factor. How do you envision we change the culture of the Church to close the back door?

Harrison Responds

The culture is changing at such a rapid pace that some days it feels as though we can hardly keep up. The recent Pew Forum study of those with no religious affiliation demonstrates that America is on the same religious trajectory of decline that Europe suffered a generation and a half ago. And you can bet that many of the 1 in 3 under age 30 who are unaffiliated with a church include former LCMS Lutherans! The same study, however, tells us that fully 25% have traditional views on marriage etc., and that fully 10% are seeking a church. Regarding the "back door," nearly half of those we baptize don't make it to church or Sunday School, and again a large percentage of those we confirm don't make it into regular attendance. The good news is, however, that among Protestants we have among the highest rates of retention among youth and again among those who do attend regularly. We also know that among all Protestants, our young people have among the highest positive views of their congregations.

There are many things for us to do. First, I've begun a thorough demographic study of the decline. There are a lot of myths floating about the Synod regarding causes for decline. It's also a sad fact that there is no comprehensive database for us to measure the efforts of the last 40 years to stem the decline. We need facts, not myths and hunches. Then, back to basics: back to Bible and catechism; a renewed emphasis on solid Law/Gospel preaching; helping clergy to hone their pastoral skills (continuing education requirements for clergy are being proposed at convention); evangelism, especially by our capable laity. We are emphasizing evangelical visitation by local pastors, circuit counselors, district presidents, and the Synod president—to encourage, admonish, comfort, and invite into the mission. Visitation and care is

especially vital to "close the back door!" As this happens more and more, two things will be vital: 1. Repentance. My sinful flesh gets in the way of the Gospel. Too many of our congregations are wracked with controversy and discord. And 2. Prayer. Jesus said prayer is the most important thing for the sake of mission. "Pray the Lord of the harvest send workers" (Matt. 9:38). And He will. ■

Maier Responds

It seems that many of our losses are from the younger generations or from those they influence. As I've talked with them, it's not that they don't see what we are doing in our world with what we believe, or worse yet, that we are content with being "right" in what we believe, but don't want to share it. They are action orientated. They truly do embrace Luther's "Here I stand"; but they also want to embrace and obey Jesus' "Here we go" (Matthew 28:18-20). It's a dilemma for them.

Today, the "Here we go" can best be accomplished through 'acts of mercy' directed towards those both within and outside of the church. This would be a deliberate way of letting our light (God's light within us, or reflecting His light) "shine before men, that they may see [y]our good deeds and praise [y]our Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16). We would be (and should be) living in such a way that we gain the privilege of sharing what motivates us — the love of God (2 Corinthians 5:14), and then also be able to point to the hope within us (1 Peter 3:15).

The interesting thing is, the church is always relevant because it has Jesus and the truth of the Word of God. People need to see and hear about what's real and there is nothing more real or true than the message of the Gospel. But in the past, believing in Jesus and embracing the Word of God has been "comfortable" — very comfortable. Because of the challenges of this present age and the "shots"

— many of them major — taken at the Lord and our beliefs, we are not engaging our community with that truth spoken (witnessed) or shown through acts of mercy. We need to share our faith, be equipped to defend our faith, and be ready — with joy — to suffer for our faith. (See Acts 5:41) I think we will begin to stop our back door losses when we decide that God and His Word and His power and love are worth more to us than our "comforts". ■

Mueller Responds

Our first order is to repent — to repent of our indifference to the needs of people and our slowness to believe that the Word of God truly works! Receiving His forgiveness, Christ calls us then to pray — "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). Why? Because Christ has promised to hear! And as we continue to pray, we will find that God intends to use us to support those workers He wants to send, and perhaps He also intends to send you and me! This also points to the need to visit and strengthen our congregations in God's Word. Healthy congregations reach out. Healthy congregations support missions (and seminaries!) beyond themselves. Healthy congregations help people see we are "baptized for this moment!" Healthy congregations do everything possible to reach the people around them with the Good News. And God is working it, in many ways and places across the Synod. People fed in the Word see the "fields white unto the harvest" (John 4:35), see the opportunities the world is presenting us to bring Christ-centered Lutheran theology. We seek to plant and revitalize distinctively Lutheran congregations, congregations that live out what we confess. Why? That's where the comfort is for hurting and broken people — in Christ alone. ■



How can we best be in the world today witnessing the love of Jesus for all and being partners with our communities in times of crises?

Harrison Responds

I've been criticized for how I handled the Newtown crisis. That's fair. I'm not Jesus. I apologized for not handling it in a way that would have avoided so much negative public attention. However, let me point out two things: District President Yeadon and Pastor Morris handled this matter together under the cross and are at peace. The Council of Presidents published a unanimous statement of support for how we dealt with the matter together as brothers. Most significantly (unlike previous high profile events), there have been no charges filed. It's over.

As the former executive of LCMS World Relief and Human Care for a decade, I have very personally experienced the fact that world is beset by tragedy — tsunamis, bombings, shootings, tornados and in your case, hurricanes. We stood with Florida-Georgia in the heavy seasons in the mid 2000s. In these moments of tragedy, in particular, we as the Church have the blessing and challenge of being the mouth and hands of Jesus Himself. We remind the hurting that our Lord suffered for them. And we act in mercy. That's what Jesus did! (Mark 1:14-40).

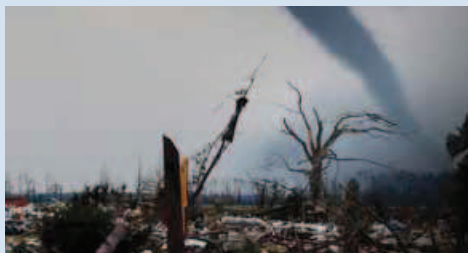
As a former inner city pastor and founder of a nationally recognized neighborhood renewal effort, I know very well what the "rough edge of mercy" looks like. I know very well that we must be side-by-side with hurting people (Matt. 11:28). We in the LCMS have defined certain parameters for our participation in public worship, particularly with non-Christian religions. Luther said, "Doctrine is heaven. Life is earth." The teaching of the Bible stays the same, but life gets messy as we face horrible situations. If we step over an agreed-upon line from time to time, the remedy is easy. "Forgive me. I'm sorry for the offense. I acted for the sake the Gospel." Response: "I understand dear brother. Forgiven! Now how can I help you most?" "Pray for us, that God may open a door for the Word." ■

Maier Responds

We can best be in the world today by NOT waiting for crises to be a part of our communities. We should daily and deliberately be living out our faith, individually and as congregations, through acts of mercy and other demonstrations of God's love.

When crises come to our communities we would already be known for who we are — bearers of God's love, "doers" of God's love — and for what we believe. James 2:17-18 is helpful here: In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do."

We do not necessarily have to demonstrate our love for Christ and our partnership in our communities by officially joining in civic events or worship services when crises occur. However, I am also aware that every situation is different, and that from a distance I personally do not know all of what has transpired when crises occur in different communities. I also trust our highly trained clergy to make appropriate, God-honoring, decisions. ■



Mueller Responds

We cannot hide from today's world. The church must be out there in every way possible with a clear witness for Christ — with mercy and care at every opportunity — fueled by a life together in the Word of God and the blessed Sacraments, where Christ unites us to Himself.

Every congregation is placed right where God wants it, and is surrounded by people who do not know Jesus, or have become disconnected from Him. Synod and district support congregations in confessing Christ clearly while reaching out with passion to care for people. Witness without care falls flat. Mercy works apart from a clear witness are incomplete. And if a congregation (or Synod!) cannot live together in love, drawing from its communion with Christ, we will consume one another and have nothing left for witness and mercy. Authentic proclamation of the cross coupled with untiring care for people are the ways Christ connects with the world through us. Pastors and congregations need to be involved in our communities without compromise. We cannot participate in idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14), or allow what we say or do make it seem as though Christ is one choice equal to many others. Christ alone rose from the dead and has the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18). At the same time, we must be visible in positive ways. ■



What do you see as the future of the LCMS?

Harrison Responds

This is a profound moment for the LCMS. We will continue to be challenged greatly by our times and culture. There simply are no easy answers. When I became president, we were borrowed against designated moneys some \$16 million. The Synod cannot operate that way. Currently that number is down to \$4.5 million and headed toward elimination.

We have streamlined and improved our national operations, from top to bottom. It is time to get our financial house in tip-top order so that we can have the flexibility to act nimbly as the mission demands. We must also like never before be accountable to one another and encouraging our districts, circuits, and congregations to be in mission.

We are observing a "tectonic shift" in world Lutheranism. Lutherans all over the world, tired of the loss of biblical substance in old partnerships, are coming to us. The Mekane Yesus Church of Ethiopia has asked that we provide leadership for their seminary system. They report 6.2 million members and will need thousands of new pastors over the next ten years. We have acted and provided them personnel. Our seminaries, universities, LLL, LWML, our many districts (like Florida-Georgia with its significant international relationships) are tremendous assets. The path ahead is difficult, but we are baptized for this moment.

My folks have been wintering in Florida the past few years. The first Sunday there, the pastor kindly introduced them. After church, a well-meaning woman came up to my mother and said, "We pray for your son every Sunday." Just as Mom was ready to thank her, she continued, "Is there some problem?" That gave us a really wonderful belly laugh! But it does point to a profound truth. "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:38). Do you pray for your pastor? He needs it. Do you pray for your district and Synod? We need it! Pastors, do you pray for your people?

May the Lord Jesus drive us all to our knees so that we pray for the salvation of souls and for each other. "Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). "Pray for us, that God may open a door for the word" ■

Maier Responds

I know, because of God's promises in His Word to us, that if we humbly turn to God in repentance, ask His forgiveness for where we have done wrong, and seek His kingdom and righteousness first (Matthew 6:33) God has an amazing and awesome plan for us: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11).

I am convinced of this because by His "great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." 1 Peter 3:3-7. This can be, and will be, our blessed future because God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:20 Therefore, "to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:21. ■

Mueller Responds

The future of the Missouri Synod is in Jesus Christ, and the Spirit-given confession of His name before the world. We have a future because Jesus is leading us into the future. I have had the privilege of serving as pastor in three different congregations for a total of 15 years, plus the privilege of serving as a district president. Our future in Christ will grow from the Spirit's work in the Word through pastors, commissioned ministers and congregations joyfully serving in Christ's name.

Despite all the challenges before us, our future in Jesus is full of joy. Not only the joy that awaits us at Christ's return, but the great joy now of preaching law and Gospel, teaching all that Jesus gave us, visiting, caring for people, baptizing young and old, giving out Jesus' body and blood, living for Christ, serving in witness, mercy and our life together.

Most amazing of all is seeing the work of God's Spirit in His Word to move people from unbelieving skepticism to firm faith in Jesus Christ, a work of God at least as miraculous as raising the dead! But my greatest joy and hope for the future is simply to be found in Christ myself — together with my family and those God will give — to be raised with Christ, who gave Himself that we might be His forever. ■





Meet the Five Candidates for

Elections in the upcoming LCMS National Convention will expand the church body's Praesidium from five to six – a full-time First Vice President who works out of the St. Louis headquarters and five Regional Vice Presidents.

In the past, Vice Presidents Two through Five were elected by Convention delegates with no regional requirements. Effective with the 2013 Convention, the LCMS has been divided into five regions, each to be represented by a Vice President elected by the delegates for those geographic boundaries.

Florida-Georgia is part of the East-Southeast Region — Region Five, which also includes the New England, Atlantic, Eastern, Ohio, New Jersey, Southeastern and Southern Districts as well as congregations in Ontario and Quebec, Canada. SELC and English District congregations belong to the region in which they are geographically located.

East-Southeast Region Vice President nominees are:

Rev. Dr. David D. Buegler of Avon, OH. A 1972 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary-



Rev. David Buegler officially inaugurates the B.D. (Bachelor of Divinity) program at Concordia Seminary during his service as Fifth VP of the LCMS

Springfield, Buegler from 1988 until 1996 served as Ohio District President. He was an LCMS Vice President from 2004 through 2010, and a past member of the Board of Regents for Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne.

Buegler, who has served congregations in Michigan and Ohio and is the former Executive Director for the Cleveland Lutheran High School Association, is a Trustee for Fairview/Lutheran Hospitals, Cleveland Clinic and a member of the Board of Directors for P.O.B.L.O. International Muslim Outreach and Community West Foundation, Cleveland. He and his wife, Susan, have two children. ■



Rev. Dr. Jon T. Diefenthaler finished his service as SE District President in 2012

Rev. Dr. Jon T. Diefenthaler of Columbia, MD. Diefenthaler, who graduated from Concordia Seminary-St. Louis in 1969, was Southeastern District President from 2003-2012 — serving as Vice Chair of the Council of Presidents from 2009-2012. He was an Assistant Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary-Springfield from 1972-1975.

Diefenthaler, who served congregations in Iowa, Virginia and Maryland, has been on the LCMS Board of University Education and on the Commission on Theology and Church Relations as well as on the Lutheran World

Relief Board of Directors. He is now on the Board of Directors for Luther Institute. Diefenthaler and his wife, Helene, have four children. ■

Rev. Dr. Robert T. Kuhn of Oviedo, FL. A 1963 graduate of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis,



Rev. Robert Kuhn is on the LCMS Board of Directors

Kuhn from 1995 until 2000 was First Vice President of the LCMS, assuming the President's office during 2001. The former Assistant Director of Development for Concordia University Chicago, he was Central Illinois District President from 1985 through 1995. Kuhn, who has served various congregations in Illinois, has been a member of the LCMS Board of Director since 2001 and will leave that position effective with this Convention. He and his wife, Judith, have three children. ■



Rev. Gerhard C. Michael Jr. is Executive Director of Luther Institute, Southeast Asia

Region Five Vice President

Rev. Dr. Gerhard C. Michael Jr. Michael, whose first call after his 1965 graduation from Concordia Seminary-St. Louis was as a missionary to Japan, was Florida-Georgia District President from 1997 until 2009. He served congregations in Wisconsin and in Georgia. For many years a member of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Michael has also served on the Oversight Committee for DELTO and SMP Programs and is on the Board of Trustees for Lutheran Haven-Oviedo. He is the Executive Director of Luther Institute, Southeast Asia, a position he has held since 2011. He and his wife, Joan, have six children. ■

Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor of Bronx, NY. Taylor, a 2000 graduate of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis, is the Assistant to the President of the Atlantic District and pastor of Redeemer Lutheran-Bronx. He was elected First Vice President of the Atlantic District at the 2012 convention. Taylor was on the Concordia College-Selma Board of Regents from 2007 through 2012. He is a member of the Clergy Coalition of the 47th Precinct Community Council in New York City. ■



Rev. Dr. Dien A. Taylor was a Bible study leader for the LCMS' 64th Regular Convention

2013 National Offering Recipients Announced

Every three years, a synodwide financial gathering called the National Offering launches during triennial Convention worship services. The five gift designations for the 2013-16 triennium — each with a \$200,000 goal — are:

Together As Synod

These unrestricted gifts can be combined with other donations and invested where needed most according to the financial and programmatic priorities approved by Synod's Board of Directors. These gifts are one of the most cost-effective ways to deploy resources at the national and international levels. They are tightly monitored as they are expended and audited for appropriate use.

LCMS Global Mission

Restricted to supporting the work of the Offices of National Mission and of International Mission, these gifts will supply resources whenever and wherever specially designated gifts are not readily available. Immediately deployable, LCMS Global Mission gifts will sustain, strengthen and expand efforts both at home and abroad. Gifts are used according to the prioritized plans of each Office and in compliance with polices established by their respective, elected boards.

Lutheran Malaria Initiative

These funds will help empower LCMS mercy teams to join in a coordinated battle to end malaria deaths in Africa by 2015 — in ways that shine the light and hope of the Gospel on afflicted homes and communities. LMI focuses on education, prevention and effective, affordable treatments for malaria.

The Joint Seminary Fund

Over the past decades, the amount of unrestricted funding available through Synod's annual budget to support its seminaries has declined. Offerings to the Joint Seminary Fund will be disbursed to Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne and Concordia Seminary/St. Louis. Gifts are equitably divided between the two seminaries according to an agreed-upon formula and are unrestricted income available for use as their Regents see fit.

Global Seminary Initiative

This effort brings eligible partner church pastors to LCMS seminaries for advanced theological education and helps send LCMS seminary faculty to partner church seminaries. The Global Seminary Initiative also supplies the essential theological resources needed by students and professors in a partner church seminary.