



Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

These thoughts are being put together following the conclusion of our Michigan District Convention. We spent those blessed days focused on “Celebrating Christ’s Mission Near... Far... Forever...”. Please permit a few reflections on the 97th **Convention** of the Michigan District. This is a brief interruption in my series on **calling a pastor**. In the next issue of *Michigan In Touch* that series will continue to its completion.

As if on cue, the weather for the District Convention saw temperatures in the mid 90’s! The air-conditioning in Concordia’s gym labored valiantly, but was no match for the heat

and the large number of committed, energetic, hard-working **convention delegates**. The mark of our delegates was that they were not deterred by the soaring temperatures! They provided a wonderful witness of commitment to serve and a desire to work together toward mutual encouragement of one another. The goal is that “Celebrating Christ’s Mission” might extend far beyond the confines of the convention in both time and place, to the entire world.

Through the various presentations, we were able to see how we **work together** in District, Synod, Recognized Service Organizations, Auxiliaries, Agencies, and other entities of our church. It was equally exciting to learn from the displays in the Ministry Tent what congregations and ministries of the District are doing in mission near and far.

The main convention speakers led us in focusing on Mission and Ministry. The Holy Spirit worked through them to help us to think about reaching out with the Good News near and far. The presence of **President Juan Vielma** of the Venezuelan Lutheran Church personified the speaker’s message. The delegates were lifted to see and seize mission opportunities like partnering with the Venezuelan Lutheran Church.

Our host for the convention, **Concordia University, Ann Arbor**, made a very significant presentation outlining both the plight and the potential of the university. The

future is not guaranteed, but it is hopeful. The delegates of Michigan, and recently the Ohio District, passed a resolution of support. Delegates commended partnership with Concordia to all of our congregations throughout Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Concordia’s presentation also included a very appropriate recognition, via the Christus Primus award, to Caroline Krueger for her 39 years of service to our Lord and His church assisting in the work of the District President’s office and congregations. God be praised for

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the blessing Caroline is and the anticipation of continued excellence.

We are thankful that **Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick**, President of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, included the Michigan District in his itinerary of convention visits. He shared words of thanks on behalf of Synod to the Michigan District and our strong support of the work of Synod. He shared his vision for the work of our church both now and in the future. President Kieschnick also responded to the questions of delegates in a lively “Q & A Session”.

A **particular joy** for me occurred at the conclusion of the convention as I recognized the District staff for

their loving labor. Words of thanks were shared with them for the wonderful staff they are. It is a privilege to be a part of the team united in love of the Lord and service. The particular joy was when the delegates rose in applause with a standing ovation for our District staff! This, coupled with presence of the love of Christ that I felt at the announcement of my re-election as Barb and I stood before the assembly, are very encouraging. **Thank you** for your cooperation in ministry over the last six years and your confidence for the next triennium. It is a joy to serve you, to serve together with you is exciting to me. Such encouragement stands one in good stead when facing the exciting possibilities as well as the critical and sometimes difficult opportunities of service.

Finally, a most **meaningful comment** was shared with me at the conclusion of the convention. It echoed the following thought, that, as the relatively light load of necessary business was accomplished, maximum time was able to be focused on “Celebrating Christ’s Mission” in its many facets. This delegate felt energized for service in the kingdom as a result of his attendance. He further shared that this was surprising to him! It was unanticipated that a convention could be a wonderful ministry experience that will continue to encourage him as he serves the Lord. Praise God!

In Him with you,
C. William Hoesman