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FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT PRESIDENT REV. DR. BILL HARMON

Dear Delegates, Advisory Delegates, and Guests:

Welcome to the 40th Convention of the Southeastern District!

Every three years, we have the opportunity to gather as the church in this region of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to celebrate our unity in the Gospel and uniqueness as mission stations over seven states and the District of Columbia. Thank you for taking the time to be with your sisters and brothers throughout the District. Your presence and participation will help to further our work as partners as we seek to connect people with Jesus so that lives are transformed and God's Kingdom grows.

The following pages are filled with information for our time together. These reports, statistics, nominations, and resolutions are all part of the workings of the church. As you read the materials in this Convention Workbook and prepare to engage in discussion, I pray that you are inspired by how the Lord is working in the SED and the impact he is making in the lives of people through our congregations, schools, service organizations, workers, laity and the District.

Although our time together is full, I invite you to meet new people, learn their stories, and share yours. This is not only a time of business but of fellowship and connection as the family of God. Please also visit the vendors and guests who have come to showcase their ministries and work. I pray this is a time of rejoicing in the opportunities God has given to us and those that He lays before us now.

Thank you for your leadership and participation. May the Lord bless you as you serve Him in this special way the Convention. "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."



Rev. Dr. Bill Harmon
President
Southeastern District-LCMS

FROM SED PRESIDENTS EMERITI

The Rev. Dr. John R. Denninger

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
It is an honor to extend these words of welcome as you gather in Richmond for our Southeastern District Convention celebrating our gift of "Immeasurable Hope" (Romans 5:5) in Jesus Christ.

That hope is immeasurable because it comes from the Lord's expansive love. It is being poured into us through the Holy Spirit. We are each a container of Holy Spirit hope! This hope keeps us looking up with anticipation and expectation. We see hope in the very first church convention recorded in Acts 15. People listened to floor speeches by Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James, the brother of Jesus. The result? The church made a courageous decision to send Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile mission field to share the hope found in Jesus' death and resurrection! Their mission-hearted resolve ripples out to impact us yet today.

For eighty-six years, our SED convention delegates have kept the mission of Jesus foremost in their resolves for good reason - we live in a vast mission field! Your church and your home are in a mission field today, that looks much like Corinth, Ephesus, or Philippi did to Paul two thousand years ago. Can you imagine what might happen if each of our SED congregations dedicate themselves to use God's Word to equip their baptized members to share Jesus' love with everyone in their pathway?

My hope and prayer for our 2025 SED Convention is that God's Word will compel us to make courageous decisions to take "the love of God that has been poured in our hearts" and let it overflow in the lives of people all around us.

I regret that Connie and I will not be able to be present with you. We are leading a Footsteps of St. Paul trip in Greece, Turkey, and Rome. As you meet, know that we are praying for you as we visit Paul's missionary sites in Thessaloniki and Philippi.

In the royal service of the King,
The Rev. Dr. John R. Denninger
Southeastern District - President Emeritus Served 2012 - 2022
SEO Gift Planning Counselor - LCMS Foundation



GREETINGS

2025 SED Convention

The Rev. Dr. Jon Diefenthaler

As I look back at my upbringing, one of the things for which I am especially grateful is that I was baptized on Easter Sunday. The hope of new life the Resurrection of our Lord gives to us, therefore, has become the lens through which I continue to look at all of life, whether it be my own or that of the church and the world around us.

The time in which we currently find ourselves, as congregations and church workers in the Southeastern District, is clearly challenging. Yet, I am not discouraged. Nor have I become cynical about our future. Instead, I am now looking for those places in our midst where our Lord is already making good on his Easter promise of new life. As I look to our future, moreover, I see us gradually discovering new, and perhaps even better, ways to move the same mission forward that the Risen Lord handed off to his disciples on the first Easter Sunday.

Hence, my hope for this SED Convention is that we will still hear the Risen One saying to each of us and to our congregations, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." (John 20:21)

Rev. Dr. Jon Diefenthaler

Southeastern District President Emeritus, served 2003 - 2012



The Rev. Dr. Roy Maack

I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who has enabled me and counted me worthy to be in ministry" I Tim 1:12-- In the S E District. It has been my privilege to have served in the S.E.D. since vicarage in 1954, when I pastored under the supervision of 3 of the first 4 District Presidents. The mission and vision of the S.E.D. has always been MISSIONS, "focused on Jesus", Heb. 12:2, our "IMMEASURABLE HOPE".

I pray each of you find the S.E.D. to be a blessing as it was and is to me. The best is yet to come, for the worst is over. Jesus died and rose again for us.

Blessings and Joy from Roy,

Rev. Dr. Roy Maack

Southeastern District President Emeritus, served 1994 - 1997



PRESENTER BIOS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

2025 SED Convention

LCMS PRESIDENT REV. DR. MATTHEW HARRISON

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison has served as president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) since 2010. As president, he is the chief ecclesiastical supervisor of the Synod and is responsible for the ministries directed by LCMS International Center staff, including the Office of International Mission and its nearly 150 missionaries serving around the globe.

Before becoming president, Harrison served for nine years as executive director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care (2001–2010), which expended over \$100 million for mercy efforts done in the clear name of Christ. These efforts included caring for people after 9-11, Katrina and many hurricanes, the great Asia tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, and many other disasters and humanitarian efforts. Harrison also managed relationships with some 120 LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and other inter-Lutheran social ministry organizations, worked in consultation with LCMS partner/sister churches to build capacity during numerous mercy outreach efforts, and managed LCMS pro-life efforts.

From 1995 to 2001, Harrison served as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. Prior to that, he served St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Westgate, Iowa (1991–1995). Ordained in 1991, he has served in a number of elected and appointed positions in the LCMS and on various entity boards of directors. Harrison is co-founder and chairman of the board of The International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (Old Latin School), which hosts some 40 students and church planters from the European Union and beyond who are studying to become ordained pastors. In addition, Harrison chairs the board of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty and serves on the executive committee of the International Lutheran Council. Harrison is also active in the pro-life movement and frequently speaks at such events.

A native of Sioux City, Iowa, Harrison holds a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Morningside University in Sioux City, Iowa. He attended Concordia University, Nebraska, in 1984. He has M.Div. and S.T.M. degrees from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Harrison has pursued additional graduate study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Furthermore, he has received honorary doctorates from Concordia University Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Mich., and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.



PRESENTER BIOS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

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Since 2010, Harrison has served as assistant pastor of Village Lutheran Church, Ladue, Mo. He has translated and edited five volumes of essays and letters by Lutheran theologian Hermann Sasse (published through Concordia Publishing House [CPH]). He has also revised C.F.W. Walther's *The Church and the Office of the Ministry* (CPH) and written several other books, including *Christ Have Mercy*, *A Little Book on Joy* and *At Home in the House of My Fathers*.

Harrison has been married to Kathy (Schimm) Harrison since 1981, and they have two sons (Matthew M.L. married to Courtney, and Mark M.C. married to Tara). The Harrisons have two grandchildren, Rosie and Shiloh. In his spare time, Harrison enjoys reading, writing, vintage Jeeps, old banjos and books, and — most of all — time with family.

PRESENTER BIOS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

2025 SED Convention

BIBLE STUDY PRESENTERS

Rev. Jeffrey Kloha

Jeffrey Kloha is Dean of the Center for Missional and Pastoral Leadership at the Institute of Lutheran Theology and Associate Pastor of Our Savior, Arlington, VA. He previously served as pastor of Gethsemane, Lakewood, OH, professor of New Testament and provost of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and chief curatorial officer of Museum of the Bible, Washington. He earned the PhD from the University of Leeds, UK.



Rev. Christopher Stout

Rev. Christopher Stout is Pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church & Center Grove Lutheran Church, Kannapolis, North Carolina, and Abundant Life Lutheran Church, Charlotte, North Carolina. He has a Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary (2012) and a B.A. from Ball State University. He and his wife, Kelly, have been blessed by 5 children: Solomon, Henry, Dorothea, Josephine, and Lazarus. In addition to the Lord's gift of his three congregations, he and Kelly are active in Trail Life, American Heritage Girls, and their homeschool co-op, and they love learning and making music with their children.



SPECIAL GUESTS

2025 SED Convention Parliamentarian

Donald Garrett, MPA, PRP

Tysons, VA 22102 | 703-873-7029 | info@LastMinuteMeetings.net

Donald Garrett is a Professional Registered Parliamentarian (PRP) based in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. He founded *Last Minute Meetings* after over nine years of advising clients on governance and meeting procedures. He has provided expertise in parliamentary procedures to various groups, including local churches, state agencies, and international nonprofits. He has also presented at international conferences on parliamentary procedure.



Areas of Special Competence:

- Parliamentary Procedure, Nonprofit Governance, Bylaws, Electronic Meetings, Vote Tabulation, Quorum Determination, Corporate and Nonprofit Bylaws, and more.

Education & Professional Background:

- **George Mason University**
MPA, BA in Government and International Politics (Minors: Japanese, Events Management)
- **Northern Virginia Community College**
Coursework in Accounting

Professional Memberships:

- National Association of Parliamentarians (2014–Present)
- Virginia State Association of Parliamentarians (2016–Present)
- Organizational Effectiveness Committee Chair (2020–Present)
- Editor, *Northern Virginia Marching and Gavel Society* (2016–Present)

Parliamentary Experience:

- Consultant for various organizations such as the *Virginia Parent Teacher Association*, *Medical College of Virginia Foundation*, and *Democracy Federal Credit Union*
- Inspector of Elections for various associations
- Presiding Officer for meetings and conventions in organizations like *Haymarket Crossing Condominium* and *Native American Church in North America*
- Consultant for governing documents, including bylaws, for groups like *A Farm Less Ordinary* and *Virginia Independent Auto Dealers Association*

PRESENTER BIOS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

2025 SED Convention

Rev. Christopher S. Esget

The Rev. Christopher S. Esget is fifth vice-president and a member of the Praesidium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). He was appointed as a vice-president in 2015 and was elected at the 2016 Synod convention. In 2019 and 2023 he was re-elected and ranked as fifth vice-president. He represents the church's East-Southeast Region. Esget is the senior pastor of Immanuel Evangelical—Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA., and superintendent of Immanuel Lutheran School where he has served since 2001.

Prior to being called to Immanuel, Esget served as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, DuQuoin, Ill., where he was ordained in 1998. He attended Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., where he earned a Master of Divinity in 1997 and a Master of Sacred Theology in 2005. He is a member of the Board of Regents for Concordia College—New York.

Esget is the author of *(Dis)Ordered: Lies about Human Nature and the Truth that Sets Us Free* (Concordia Publishing House, 2023). He is a contributing author to several other books, and has also been published in *The Lutheran Witness*, *Concordia Pulpit Resources*, *The Good Shepherd Institute*, *For the Life of the World*, *Higher Things*, and *Gottesdienst*. He is a 2015 Washington Fellow of the National Review Institute.

Born and raised near Minneapolis, Esget pursued his love of music with classical piano and trombone studies at the University of Minnesota before graduating *summa cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in music from the Berklee College of Music in Boston in 1993. Esget lives in Alexandria, VA, with his wife and son.



PRESENTER BIOS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

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2025 SED FLOOR COMMITTEES

Floor committees serve the convention by playing a key role in reviewing all overtures submitted by the district and forming resolutions to be presented on the floor during the Convention.

01 Witness

Rev. David Ziehr, Chair
Rev. Garet Ellis
Deac. Caitlyn Butcher
Mr. Keith Clements
Rev. Teka Fogi
Rev. Dr. Yared Halche

02 Wellness

Rev. Tim Bohlmann, Chair
Rev. Jeff Marquardt
Ms. Shawn Maassel
Mrs. Christine Wethman
Rev. Andrew Okai
Rev. Dr. Travis Guse

03 Stewardship & Finance

Rev. Dr. Lloyd Gaines, Chair
Rev. Joshua Keinath
Mrs. Nancy Nolley
Ms. Krista Young
Mr. Ronald Adolphi
Mr. Kirk Hymes
Mr. Sidney Heetland

04 Bylaws

Rev. Bill Beyer, Chair
Deac. Holly Cox
Rev. Wayne Fredericksen
Rev. Dr. Alexander Whitfield
Mrs. Allison Klettke
Mrs. Susan Maack

05 Theology & Practice

Rev. Alec Fisher, Chair
Rev. Dr. Matthew Borrasso
Deac. Grace Bergt
Rev. Alemu Katiso
Ms. Rebecca Wade
Rev. Martin Schultheis

06 Nominations & Elections

Ms. Jennifer Hills, Chair
Rev. Dr. David Maack
Mrs. Sarah (Beyer) Disch
Rev. Christopher Sperb