



July 2012

Pastor's

“As Long as They’re Christians” Do denominational differences really matter? Part 1: An Infant Introduction



Zion Lutheran Church
110 East Grand Avenue
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

We have all heard phrases like, “My church just teaches the Bible,” or “All of us Christians pretty much believe the same thing, with only some minor differences in interpretation.” The truth is that the difference between most denominations centers on the issue of how mankind is saved, which is obviously a difference that matters. Over the next few newsletter articles that I write, we will explore some of these differences. We will birth the examination right now with Holy Baptism, by comparing the Lutheran teaching with main stream American Evangelicalism.

Both sides agree that the Bible is the inerrant infallible Word of God and the only source and norm by which to do theology.¹ Both also agree that the teaching of baptism is important since Christ Himself, in the Bible, institutes it.² However, there are basically two contradictory interpretations of the use and efficacy of baptism between those who claim to be Bible believing Christians. Most American Evangelicals teach that baptism is only for those who already have faith in Christ. They teach that baptism is something that man does only out of obedience to God and thus fulfills God’s command. For them, God does nothing in baptism, but it is merely a symbol and serves as their public confession of already having faith. Therefore, they reject infant baptism because they believe an infant cannot have faith and thus cannot choose to be baptized.

Lutherans teach that all people are to be baptized, including infants. For Lutherans baptism is something that God does for man. Therefore, baptism is not merely a symbol or public confession, but the place where faith is given and entrance into the kingdom of God occurs. Therefore, Lutherans uphold infant baptism because infants can have, and need, faith in order to be rescued from the curse of original sin. Faith then is more than a conscience understanding of particular knowledge.

So, why are there these two differing interpretations between fellow Bible believing Christians? Both agree that the One True Triune God speaks clearly in His Word. Therefore, the problem clearly does not stem from a lack of clarity in the Word of God. The problem lies within sinful man’s interpretation of Scripture. And both sides of the argument cannot simply agree to disagree on such matters because Christ Himself said in the last chapter of Mathew, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*”³ Christians must properly uphold all the things that Jesus taught as important, not only the things Christians deem as fundamentally mattering.

So, which is the Scriptural teaching of (infant) baptism? The next article(s) will lie out both arguments in more detail and allow the reader to decide which interpretation coincides with the Word of God.

These articles are written out of love and may be shared with your friends in other denominations, acknowledging that only God can teach correct doctrine through His Word.⁴ The only consideration for the reader is to allow the clear Word of God to rule over fallen human reason. I contend, and will show in Scripture, that Holy Baptism is God’s action, and a gracious gift intended for all of fallen mankind.

And Peter said to them, “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.” (Acts 2:38-9).

¹ II Timothy 3:16

² Mathew 28:19

³ Mathew 28:19-20

⁴ John 8:31

Pastor



Happy Birthday to all the members

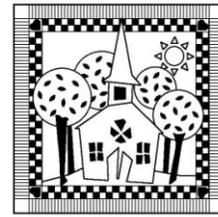
who have
July Birthdays!!

<i>Debbie Rognholt</i>	7/2
<i>Larry Gale</i>	7/3
<i>Richard Russell</i>	7/3
<i>Walter Deuel</i>	7/6
<i>Greg Leland</i>	7/6
<i>Jessica Geissler</i>	7/8
<i>Stephanie Geissler</i>	7/8
<i>Jacob Bellefeuille</i>	7/9
<i>Paul Michels</i>	7/10
<i>Jacqueline Schick</i>	7/12
<i>Jeanette Geissler</i>	7/14
<i>Nancy Sarauer</i>	7/15
<i>Paul Taylor</i>	7/15
<i>Joann Ehlers</i>	7/16
<i>Lorraine Heidtke</i>	7/17
<i>Amy Schumacher</i>	7/19
<i>Brian Schweistal</i>	7/20
<i>Henry Taylor</i>	7/20
<i>Juanita Lueck</i>	7/21
<i>Gerri Bresina</i>	7/23
<i>Ralph Bellore</i>	7/25
<i>Nancy Frank</i>	7/25
<i>Austin Kimball</i>	7/26
<i>Wyatt Stark</i>	7/27
<i>John Emanuel</i>	7/28
<i>Sara Hakes</i>	7/28
<i>Harold Polzin</i>	7/30
<i>Alice Schwetz</i>	7/30
<i>Sawyer Hakes</i>	7/31
<i>Krystal Paulson</i>	7/31
<i>Henry Stark</i>	7/31

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

<i>Mark & Carol Klemke</i>	7/11/1992
<i>Larry & Dawn Paulson</i>	7/19/2000
<i>Albert & Irene Przybyski</i>	7/25/1956
<i>Sam & Beth Hunt</i>	7/20/1985

CHURCH FAMILY



PICNIC

A MESSAGE FROM
THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD

It is time to remind everyone that our annual *Worship in the Park Service & Picnic* is fast approaching. It is a few weeks earlier this year so that it follows Vacation Bible School. The children will be singing that Sunday and a sampling of their craft work will be on display. Some fun activities are planned for them in the afternoon.

Please note the following:

The date: Sunday August 5th

The place: Main Pavilion at Irvine Park

The time: 10:30 a.m.

The picnic will follow the worship service. As in the past everyone is requested to bring a dish to share – hot dish, salad, dessert. The choice is up to you. Beverages, plates, cups, napkins and eating utensils will be provided. We pray the Lord will give us a beautiful day as he has before. Please mark your August calendar so you will be sure to join us for this special worship and fellowship time.



Zion's Women's Society News

The Women's Society met on Thursday, June 14th, for lunch at the Fill-Inn Restaurant. Nine members and three guests traveled the stormy weather to be there. Pastor was there and led us in the table prayer.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, July 12th. We will meet at 12:30 p.m. at church for a potluck luncheon. Just bring a dish to share. Everything else will be provided at church. All ladies of the congregation are once again invited to join us.

Thank You to Rosa Blake!

Due to health reasons, Rosa has decided to re-retire from serving as one of our secretaries. The Church Council and Pastor would like to extend a huge thank you to Rosa for all of her work, especially during the Call process and transition time. Our other secretary, Tricia Dull, will be taking over Rosa's hours so that the office will still be open, Tue.- Friday, 9-noon.



Thank you everyone for your help and support during the past two years. I enjoyed working in the office and on the Call Committee with Herman Sahr and the rest of the committee. We were blessed when Pastor Stark accepted our call.

I especially want to thank Pastor Stark for his prayers and kindness to members of my family; Regina Arndt for entering the offering and attendance; Ann Verch and Chuck Heidtke and their help with the Parish Life. May God continue to bless each of you. ~ Rosa Blake



We ask you to remember in our prayers
the homebound members:

Irene Kvapil

Isabel Lenz

Juanita Lueck

Myrna Mattison

BIBLE CLASSES

Sunday: We are studying "The Liturgy and Worship." It is never too late to join the Bible classes on Sunday mornings. It is open to jr. and sr. youth!

TUESDAY SUMMER BIBLE CLASS

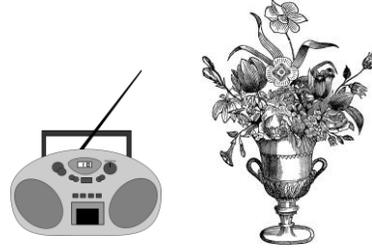
We are studying, "The Mission of the Church and Evangelism," highlighting the Biblical definition and exposing the errors of many man-made non-biblical 'missions and evangelism' programs. Anyone is welcome to join the class.

MISS A BIBLE CLASS OR SERMON?

Audio of the most recent Bible classes and sermons are on our website. Click the "Education" tab for Bible class or the tab for "Sermons."

CD'S OF SERMONS & BIBLE STUDIES

CD's of Sermons and Bible Studies will be made available for those who request them. Contact Brian Schweisthal with any requests. Brian's cell phone is 715-529-8342 and his email address is brians8881@gmail.com.



RADIO & FLOWERS:

If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion, please call the office. Altar flowers are **\$30.00**. There is a flower chart on the left of the door as you enter from the education wing. Sign your name by the date you would like to furnish flowers. The radio broadcast is **\$76.00**. Call the office if you would like to furnish a broadcast or have any questions about flowers or the broadcast.



If you would like a prayer on Sunday morning, please contact the secretary during the week. If it is a last minute, you can also catch pastor before service.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Sunday July 29th - Thursday August 2nd

We begin on **Sunday, July 29th**, at **5 p.m.** for a light supper with **opening devotions at 5:30 p.m.** in the sanctuary every night. We hope to share Jesus with all children age 3 years through 6th grade (as of the class they will be entering in the fall.) The students will rotate between Lesson, Music and Crafts, ending with everyone gathering for closing devotions in the sanctuary. **Dismissal will be about 7:30 p.m.** each evening. The last class will be on Thursday, August 2nd. We hope to have all students with their families join us for **Worship in the Park** on **Sunday, August 4th**, at **10:30 a.m.** and a **potluck lunch** with games following. The children will be singing hymns from VBS and showing items from "God's Gifts to Us", which they completed during the week. There will also be games for everyone to enjoy.

HELP NEEDED > Vacation Bible School needs your help.



We are looking for a Craft Director; 5 Lesson Teachers; several people to shepherd the students to learning stations. Contact Carol Gale, if you have questions. Sign-up on sheet hanging on bulletin board next to Office. Share *God's Gifts to us*. VBS dates are Sun. July 29th through Thurs. Aug. 2nd evenings: 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are in need of teachers for **July 15th through September 2nd**. Parents and others who are willing to teach a lesson or two during the summer months please sign up. A sign up sheet is posted outside of the office on the bulletin board. It has the lessons and Bible references for each week listed. Those teaching weekly lessons for the Summer Sunday School can find the Teacher's Guides and materials on the table in the back entrance. (Look in the blue plastic box) Student supplies are in the upstairs classroom 206. If you have questions, feel free to contact Carol Gale or Beth Welke. Thank you.



The Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day – continued from last month

<http://www.gloriachristi.org/id41.html>

Q: Would this mean that every communicant must receive the Sacrament every Sunday?

A: No. Absolutely not. This is about the *availability* of the Lord's Supper, not setting rules about how often someone should receive it. We are very staunch about not setting laws about how often it must be received. But for us to have the freedom to receive it often based on need, conscience, it needs to be available as Lutherans and the church catholic have known it in better times. So while the Augsburg Confession and its Apology (Defense) make it clear that Lutheran Churches celebrate the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day and on festival days, the preface to the *Small Catechism* also makes it clear we make no laws about how often someone should receive this gift personally. We take our vows of confessional subscription very seriously on both aspects of communion frequency. We are recovering lost treasures.

Q: How should I react if I see someone not going to the Lord's Supper now and then?

A: Put the best construction on it and think of it in the kindest way as the eighth commandment bids us do. The offering of the Lord's Supper every Sunday does not and should not imply that we must attend every time. Take the time to prepare regularly. When we may have grown up with an infrequent celebration of the Lord's Supper it is natural to think we should attend every time it is offered. But even that can be mechanical. But when it is offered every Sunday we can regain a more "organic" rather than "mechanical" view between how often we commune vs. how often it is offered. So there is a tremendous opportunity to grow in our faith and understanding when we can have it available every Sunday service and yet in freedom prepare. We should not act on any real or perceived social pressure in this regard. Resist that temptation. The Gospel is forced on no one – no conversion by the sword – but it is always preached and offered. So likewise with this sacramental form of the saving Gospel, the Lord's Supper, it is offered but forced on no one. This is our view with private confession and absolution as well – it is forced on no one but it is available for those who are troubled by sins they have a hard time believing are forgiven.

Q: Will weekly Communion cause the Sacrament to mean less?

A: On the contrary, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper will indicate and confess our high esteem and desire for the gift of our Lord's body and blood and the forgiveness of sins which is received in this gift. The Lord's Supper is a central way our faith is sustained in Christ. The Lord's Supper is no less important than the other gospel gifts by which our faith is sustained. We have weekly sermons, pray the Lord's Prayer regularly, confess the Creed, and so forth. The meaning of the Lord's Supper

does not come from us, but from Christ and His Word. Contrite sinners cannot have too much of the Gospel.

It acknowledges the Lord's holy presence with us and that gathered around Him, in heaven and on earth, are "angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven." That's something to rejoice in. Saying, "I love you" more often in a marriage doesn't cause it to mean less. This is about feeding faith and building up the Body of Christ. Consider what our Lutheran Confessions say about the "mass" (Divine Service with Holy Communion). In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV, we subscribe to the following:

At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we [Lutherans] do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things. [The Book of Concord]

Also see the following: [Acts 2:42](#); [Acts 20:7](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [John 6:52-57](#); [1 Cor. 11:23-26](#)

Movie Review: Courageous

by Pastor Stark

When it comes to the next best 'Christian' movie fad, like it was/is with "contemporary worship," even some congregations that bear the name Lutheran can't resist the temptation to sacrifice the Biblical/Lutheran doctrine for a misguided idea of growing the church. Though this movie is almost a year old and even the Baptist churches aren't showing it for 'evangelism' anymore, some Lutheran congregations are still showing this in a misguided attempt at evangelism (What is evangelism? Evangelism means "Good News." When the one true Gospel is proclaimed, it is evangelism).

The bottom line is that this movie is made by a Southern Baptism pastor and it has the Southern Baptism 'gospel' message, which is not the Biblical/Lutheran Gospel. Baptists and Lutherans don't agree on the Gospel and how a person is saved. So, how could this movie be helpful for evangelism? It can't. In fact it turns the 'gospel' into Law, which will drive people to self-righteousness or despair and away from Jesus. I sincerely pity those who follow the false gospel that this movie preaches. Christianity isn't about us doing--you dedicate your life, you be courageous, you choose Jesus and then He will give you a happy life--no--it is about what Christ has done for us by His courageous life, death, and resurrection, which He gives us by grace alone through faith alone in **baptism**--Word and Sacraments, apart for the work of decision theology. Bottom line, Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions condemn the message of this movie. **I encourage us all to be courageous and proud to be distinctively Lutheran**, which is purely Christian and Biblical. Our hope, and the hope of Christ, is that we all have unity as the body of Christ in the pure no-strings-attached Gospel, and not unity for unity sake.

I invite you to read on your computer a solid review of this movie from:

<http://www.whitehorseinn.org/blog/2011/10/11/courageous-christianity/>

Closed Communion

by

Rev. Phil Hale (LCMS) Nebraska District
Congregational Newsletter August 2008

Because the issue of closed communion continues to be misunderstood or confusing to many, this article will try to explain it in simple language.

Our church, along with those churches in line with historic Christianity, practices closed communion. This means that not everyone may come to our altar for communion. Only those who are members of our church, members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, or of a church we are in full altar fellowship with are welcome at our altar to receive the Lord's Supper. This is not just our practice, but an ancient, biblical practice.

Closed communion is not about people of other churches. We are not saying we are better Christians or others are not worthy. Closed communion says that we are truly in agreement in all teachings with those with whom we commune. It is about fellowship between churches—not a person's feeling or faith. Traditionally, Holy Communion has been considered the highest form of fellowship—a public confession or testimony that we are united in every article of Christ's Gospel. Our practice of closed communion says that we take this visible confession very seriously.

The Lord's Supper is Jesus' body and blood given for the forgiveness of sins. In addition to our relationship with God (through faith and repentance), there is another dimension to Holy Communion. Besides repentance (examining oneself and recognizing one's own sin), there is the outward unity expressed. God said through St. Paul in I Corinthians 10:16-17: "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." When we eat this sacred meal together we are forgiven, but we also express the unity of faith that we possess together. Because we do not have complete unity (in teaching) with all other churches, it would not be appropriate or honest to allow someone belonging to another church to commune at our altar. We go by the outward teaching of a church and the membership of people—we are not judging individuals by having closed communion.

Church membership shows our loyalty. It should match our faith. It is the outward badge that shows which teaching a person believes. For example, if I wear a University of Texas shirt into a bar full of Nebraska fans, they should think I am rooting for the Texas football team and not Nebraska. If I really am rooting for Nebraska, I would be giving a false impression by wearing the Texas shirt. The shirt is like one's church membership. It is an easy way to tell where our loyalties lie—because we cannot see into the heart to find out what people really believe. Closed communion says that only people with our beliefs (the same shirt or membership) should commune with us.

We do not say that those belonging to other churches are not Christian or saved. We welcome all people to hear the preached word and worship with us. But communion is a special meal that demonstrates and demands complete unity. This is why we wait until children have been taught the Christian faith and confirmed to offer them communion. Unlike the preached Word of God, the Lord's body and blood can also harm one who does not recognize what he receives. "Therefore, whoever eats

the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (I Corinthians 11:27-29). Out of love we closely guard this precious gift for the sake of others.

How about those who are Lutheran? Why can't all Lutherans commune here? At one time, years ago, those of some other Lutheran synods could commune at an LC–MS church. But the Lord's Supper is about beliefs, for we who are of one loaf partake of one body. The name “Lutheran” does not mean that we believe the same things.

Indeed, the biggest Lutheran synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), believes radically differently than we do in the Missouri Synod. The most obvious difference is that they mistreat God's Word. The Bible does not permit women to be pastors, for men are to lead God's flock on earth (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-14). Also, the Bible condemns the homosexual lifestyle as sinful (Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22). But the ELCA has women and practicing homosexuals as pastors—contrary to God's Word. This is against God's will and this is not what we believe in the LC–MS.

The ELCA has also officially declared full fellowship with the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. They have glossed over many doctrinal differences and do not sincerely hold the biblical teachings. Most of those churches the ELCA is in fellowship with do not believe that people receive Christ's body and blood at the altar—the bread and wine (if they use them) are just symbols to them. Also, in 1999 the ELCA came to an agreement with the Roman Catholic church on how we are saved—meaning the disagreements of the Reformation, in the 1600's, no longer matter.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Methodist_Church

These are serious differences. And even small differences in biblical teaching prevent churches from joining in fellowship together. “Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work” II John 1:9-11. Because doctrinal differences do exist, it would be inappropriate for an LC–MS member and an ELCA member to commune together—in an ELCA or an LC–MS church. Both churches cannot be right—we cannot be on both sides of these issues. Our beliefs are that important, and so is our public confession at the Lord's altar. Communion at a church which does not believe as we do gives a false impression: that we are in full agreement---when we're not.

Fellowship is not about an individual church. It is about who we are officially connected with by membership. An individual person or church may not believe everything their church body does, yet they are still connected by their membership. If they do not believe like that, then they should not belong. Membership, by definition, says that agreement does exist. So, a member of the LC–MS should not automatically commune at a church he feels comfortable at or where he feels like there is fellowship. Likewise, a member of another church should not commune at our church, without flying the same flag (membership) as us.

Fellowship is declared officially between church bodies, not between individual Christians or churches. It is like the person wearing the wrong shirt. We are happy if they seem to be in agreement with us, but they are still wearing the wrong shirt (belong to the wrong church)—the one that supports beliefs that we don't agree with. We have closed communion because we take the differences between churches earnestly---no point of God's Word is to be taken lightly or compromised on.

We are linked to our church by our membership. We do not commune people on the basis of personal beliefs, because there is no way to tell how a certain individual believes—we cannot see into the heart. We go by the outward flag one waves—their church membership. By allowing someone who waves a different flag (membership) to commune with us, we are saying that we agree with the whole church body that is flying that flag. Because communion shows complete unity in all teachings, we cannot allow those belonging to churches which we are not in fellowship with to commune here. It would be a false and misleading unity at the Lord's altar.

The truth of God's Word and our teaching does not change. But churches and their teachings sometimes do vary, just as a person might change churches. Therefore, our lines of fellowship must re-align. Right now we are in fellowship with only one other Lutheran church in the U.S., the American Association of Lutheran Churches. However, we are in fellowship with many churches around the world, including the Lutheran Church of Canada, and several churches in each of these regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. True fellowship and unity is a wonderful blessing to reverently celebrate in Holy Communion. To preserve this true closeness we practice closed communion.

We are not exclusive in the LC–MS. We welcome everyone who is not opposed to godly teaching. But before Holy Communion is offered, we need to make sure that one's personal beliefs are in order and one's outward membership is the way we do that. All are welcome to Holy Communion, but not without complete agreement on all Christian teachings. Therefore, anyone outside of the LC–MS wishing to commune with us is welcome to receive instruction in order to join our church. We do this to follow God's will in love and to preserve the unity which is expressed in the Lord's Holy Supper. Thank you for honoring our wishes and respecting our beliefs. For further explanation please talk to the pastor.

Adult Information



Catechism Class

New Adult Information (Catechism) Class Forming

Members of Zion, if you know someone who is interested in learning more about our congregation, please share the announcement below. Members, you are welcome to sit in as hearers of the class if you would like.

The purpose of the class is to teach what we believe, teach, and confess here at *Zion Lutheran Church* as part of the *Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*. To accomplish this task I will primarily teach from the Bible and Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. The class is designed so that you are free to ask questions when they arise. The class is for informational purposes and is not intended to pressure anyone into becoming a member. However, if you decide that you are in agreement with our teachings, we are happy to proceed with confirmation and membership upon completion of the class.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith, or have any questions, please contact me ASAP. **Our first class will be Sunday, August 12, from 11:15-12:15.** We will meet in the church basement. The class will meet for about 15 weeks, but may go longer depending on the dynamics of the class.

In Christ,

Pastor T. Clint Stark

PastorStark@gmail.com

715-379-3236 (cell)

Report: 50th Convention of the LCMS North Wisconsin District, June 10-11

On Sunday, June 10th after registration Pastor and I attended the Opening Worship Service with Holy Communion at Mount Olive Lutheran Church. 4th Vice President Rev. Daniel Preus was the preacher (excellent).

Back at the Reagan Ballroom we elected Pastor Dwayne M. Lueck to District President. Elected to Vice Presidents was Region A - Steven A. Hulke, Region B - Timothy W. Roser, Region C - William C. Plautz.

After the above elections the Pastors of the Eau Claire Circuit # 9 meet and selected Rev. Carl Kangus of Eau Claire as Circuit Counselor to replace Rev. Dan Welch who has accepted a call to Minnesota.

On Monday, June 11th. a.m. there were more elections of Pastors and Laymen to fill the various offices and boards of the district.

Convention Guest Speaker was - Dr. David Mairer, Dist. Pres. Michigan Dist.
There were several resolutions that were brought to the convention to be discussed and voted on.

On Monday p.m. there were more greetings from various people of the District and also a presentation on the Lutheran Malaria initiative was given.

The highlight of the afternoon was President Matthew C. Harrison. He spoke on some of the issues facing our synod and had a short Bible study. He also took questions from the floor. In my opinion he will be a very strong leader for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Convention closed at 5:15 p.m.

In Christ,
Your voting lay delegate, Herman A. Sahr