Missions

1 Resolution 1-01
2 To Assist Congregation Outreach

3 WHEREAS, Congregations may need assistance in finding ways to engage their communities; and

4 WHEREAS, Members of our congregations would like to interact with their community in caring ways; and

5 WHEREAS, Many congregations do not have the resources available to engage in outreach; therefore be it

8 Resolved, The New Jersey District establish a fund to assist congregations with seed money to impact their communities; and be it further

10 Resolved, That this fund would be managed by the Outreach Council in consultation with the New Jersey District Board of Directors; and be it finally

12 Resolved, That results of all outreach projects be published through the Grapevine and Servant to Servant so as to encourage other congregations’ outreach activities.
Resolution 1-02
To Reaffirm the Urgency of Making Disciples

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS adopted the following statement in Convention in 1995, “In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world;” therefore

Resolved, That the New Jersey District reaffirm the urgency of making disciples and the Mission Statement of the LCMS; and further

Resolved, That every congregation that God has strategically placed throughout the State of New Jersey, rededicate themselves to join with Jesus in mission as “ambassadors for Christ,” finding ways to boldly engage their communities; and be it further

Resolved, That every congregation will engage their communities by studying and understanding the demographics of their communities; and be it further

Resolved, That all Circuit Visitors encourage the congregations of their Circuits to be more incarnational and missional, reporting at their respective Circuit meetings the efforts of each congregation and sharing the results with the Outreach Council of the District; and be it further

Resolved, That the Outreach Council and member congregations of the New Jersey District aid and support those congregations that are requesting assistance; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations will use their God given creativity to find way to impact their communities with the love of Jesus; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the New Jersey District will join together to give prayerful and financial support to those missionaries working within the District in the areas of church plants, urban ministry, restarts, etc.; and be it finally

Resolved, That the New Jersey District commit itself to hastening the day when “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11).
Resolution 1-03
To Explore New Models of Church Ministry In Order to Continue to Reach Our Communities

WHEREAS, Many of our congregations are continuing to decline in membership and financial stability; and

WHEREAS, Many of these same congregations and pastors are highly engaged in creative outreach, Learning Communities, Transforming Churches Network, Kairos Network, etc.; and

WHEREAS, This dissonance of effort and results can produce high anxiety and so lower levels of creativity which affects our ability to continue reaching our communities; and

WHEREAS, Our pastors are highly gifted in various tasks of pastoral ministry, but none in every task; and

WHEREAS, It would benefit our pastors to have a colleague to work with in a shared ministry; and

WHEREAS, At every church closing, many of those current members become disengaged from congregational life, no longer receive pastoral care, and cease attending worship; and

WHEREAS, When a church closes we cease to have a Gospel-centered presence in that community; and

WHEREAS, One of the roles of a district is to support the members of Synod, both congregations and workers to be effective at reaching their community; and

WHEREAS, The Preamble Synod reads, “Our Lord’s will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit 1 Cor 12:4-31”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the NJ District explore, promote and facilitate new ministry options for congregations to yoke together in dual parish ministries, combined ministries, regional parish models, city parish, missional communities, multi-site, church planting, church replanting and church mergers that would be served by multi-pastorates, deaconesses, DCEs, other church workers, and missionaries, along with the priesthood of all believers so as to make full use of the giftedness of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the NJ District help congregations in developing creative ways to manage the resource of land and facilities, including the sale of said properties so that the Gospel would continue to go out in that community and thrive in a new way; and be it finally

Resolved, That the NJ District promote and train local leaders for the work of ministry and outreach; and be it finally

Resolved, That the NJ District partner with other districts which are currently involved in this type of work in order to learn the best practices of the church models.
Resolution 1-04  
To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724

WHEREAS, Overture 2-04 (To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724) was not brought forward for debate at the 2016 LCMS National Convention which was submitted by four LCMS districts, three district boards of directors, one circuit, and seventeen LCMS congregations and two other overtures (2-07, 2-09) were submitted to the 2016 LCMS Convention that also requested that CCM Opinion 14-2724 also be overruled; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Bylaw 3.9.2.2(c) regarding the CCM says, in part: “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod. Overtures to a convention that seek to overrule an opinion of the commission shall support the proposed action with substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. All such overtures shall be considered by the floor committee to which they have been assigned and shall be included in a specific report to the convention with recommendations for appropriate action;” and

WHEREAS, No such report was given to the 2016 convention of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, the Word of God (Acts 13) clearly reveals that in the first century of the New Testament, a local congregation of believers in the Lord Jesus, assembled in Antioch, after much prayer and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, freely consecrated and sent missionaries, notably Barnabas and Saul, into mission fields; and

WHEREAS, Article III.2 of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod identifies an objective of the Synod as to “Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world;” and

WHEREAS, Article VII of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod states, “In relation to its members, the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body”; and

WHEREAS, Article XIV of the Constitution states, “The Synod in convention may adopt bylaws that are consistent with and do not contradict the Constitution of the Synod, which controls and supersedes such bylaws and all other rules and regulations of the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, 2010 Synod Convention Res. 8-32B encourages the Synod to study Article VII of the Constitution, including study of “Congregations and Synod, Background Material on the Advisory Nature of the LCMS” along with opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters related to this topic (including CCM Opinion 09-2573 listed in a “Whereas” paragraph in Resolution 8-32B); and

WHEREAS, 1983 Synod Convention Res. 5-10A in a “Resolved” clause states that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaffirms that its synodical polity is essentially and principally congregational in nature; and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 09-2573 states in part that “... there is a common understanding that a congregation exercises its self-government... in carrying out... its own ministry programs and financial affairs...”; and
WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 3.8.3 deals only with who has authority to send ministers of religion and other workers into Synod foreign mission fields, and prior bylaws have been careful not to restrict congregational activity specifically relating to whom congregations could send funds overseas, and nothing in the current bylaws restrict or could restrict the right of member congregations to (a) fund ministries in foreign countries, or (b) send/fund congregation members for service with organizations seeking to share the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, 1983 Synod Convention Res. 5-37 amending the bylaws only dealt with who on behalf of Synod as a whole could send missionaries at the expense of the Synod, and where the restriction applied, it being a sending bylaw only, clearly not applicable to congregations in any event; and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 14-2724 referring to 2013 Synod Convention Res. 1-08, “To Work Together in Mission,” called for a two-fold response: First, “Resolved, That the Synod, by the next convention, develop and provide a mission best practices policy document for districts and congregations engaged in mission projects to assist them to better carry out their mission and their life together”, indicating that districts and congregations have and are recognized to have mission work and practices of their own, and because they have their own mission work and practices, the Synod should assist and support those efforts by developing a best-practices policy; and second, “that these best practices include encouragement to districts and congregations to communicate their international mission activities to the Synod’s Director of Church Relations and Offices of National and International Mission for the purposes of healthy coordination and stewardship” (underlined portions indicate emphasis added), indicating that districts and congregations can have their own mission activities and when they do they are encouraged to communicate these activities to the Synod for coordination and good stewardship; and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 14-2724 states in part, “Congregations may not send funds to mission societies and non-Synod entities for work in foreign areas without taking into consideration policies developed and determined for this purpose by the Board of International Mission as the only sending agency;” and

WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 14-2724 incorrectly restricts the mission outreach of congregations and others to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the New Jersey District and of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged, with much prayer and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to send missionaries to foreign areas; and be it further

Resolved, That the New Jersey District affirms and encourages congregations, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, districts, and individual members of the Synod, in their efforts to give bold witness by word and deed, to the love and work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness to all the world; and be it further

Resolved, That nothing in the bylaws of Synod should ever be interpreted to limit efforts by congregations, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, districts, and individual members of the Synod, to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness to all the world, but only be interpreted as requesting information which might allow Synod to support (and to assist in connecting potential support for) congregations and individual members, to assist in connecting potential mission partners, and to provide best practices information which could assist the efforts; and be it further
Resolved, That the New Jersey District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to adopt this resolution and to overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724, to be thereby declared null and void and of no effect; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of Synod be directed to assure that the provisions of Bylaw 3.9.2.2(c) are followed with respect to this resolution and any other resolution that becomes an overture to the Synod asking for a CCM opinion to be overruled; and be it finally

Resolved, That also in our agreements in how we will work together in the LCMS, things “be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40).