

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
5 ways; and

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

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

10 *Resolved*, That this fund would be managed by the Outreach Council in consultation with the
11 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
13 Servant so as to encourage other congregations' outreach activities.

1 Resolution 1-02
2 To Reaffirm the Urgency of Making Disciples

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District commit itself to hastening the day when “at the name of
29 Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue
30 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11).

1 Resolution 1-03
2 To Explore New Models of Church Ministry In Order to Continue to Reach Our
3 Communities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 *Resolved*, That the NJ District partner with other districts which are currently involved in this
34 type of work in order to learn the best practices of the church models.

1 Resolution 1-04
2 To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 WHEREAS, CCM Opinion 09-2573 states in part that “. . . there is a common understanding that
40 a congregation exercises its self-government . . . in carrying out . . . its own ministry programs
41 and financial affairs . . .”; and

42 WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 3.8.3 deals only with who has authority to send ministers of religion
43 and other workers into Synod foreign mission fields, and prior bylaws have been careful not to
44 restrict congregational activity specifically relating to whom congregations could send funds
45 overseas, and nothing in the current bylaws restrict or could restrict the right of member
46 congregations to (a) fund ministries in foreign countries, or (b) send/fund congregation members
47 for service with organizations seeking to share the Gospel; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

79 *Resolved*, That nothing in the bylaws of Synod should ever be interpreted to limit efforts by
80 congregations, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, districts, and individual members of
81 the Synod, to give bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God the Father, Son
82 and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness to all the world, but only be interpreted as
83 requesting information which might allow Synod to support (and to assist in connecting potential
84 support for) congregations and individual members, to assist in connecting potential mission
85 partners, and to provide best practices information which could assist the efforts; and be it further

86 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to
87 adopt this resolution and to overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724, to be thereby declared null and void
88 and of no effect; and be it further

89 *Resolved*, That the President of Synod be directed to assure that the provisions of Bylaw
90 3.9.2.2(c) are followed with respect to this resolution and any other resolution that becomes an
91 overture to the Synod asking for a CCM opinion to be overruled; and be it finally

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