



The 31st Biennial Convention of the Arizona-California District, under the theme: "In Christ Alone," began with an opening communion service at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Tempe, AZ. Pastor Steven Hillmer served as the presiding minister and Prof. Richard Gurgel of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI served as the preacher. Professor Gurgel's sermon theme was "Claim God's Promise of Wisdom and Power;" it was based on 2 Timothy 3:10-17. The offering given at the service totaled \$1743.13 and was later designated by the delegates to be split among three mission opportunities: WELS Thailand Mission, WELS Apacheland Mission, and Resurrection Lutheran Church in Phoenix, AZ.

Two new big changes took place at this convention. Chaparral Suites in Scottsdale, Arizona served as the site of the convention. It was the first time in twenty years the convention was held at a different venue. The second big change was that almost all the convention material was distributed electronically. Very little was printed on paper for the convention, which saved a tremendous cost to the district. All materials were available on the district website, <www.azcadistrict.com>, and still are. District President Jon Buchholz served as the chairman of the convention. President Buchholz delivered his report in which the delegates were notified of official acts of the district from the past two years. He encouraged the delegates to consider having their congregations do a complete review of their called workers' compensation as it compares to synod code, and to work to bring it up to that if it is not. He expressed concern for the future of our Lutheran schools and the vital service they give to our children, having them sit at Jesus' feet daily and taught subjects from the perspective of God's Word. He also gave encouragements to the delegates to make use of the tools available for congregations to plan and evaluate their ministries, located on the district website, <www.azcadistrict.com>.

The keynote speaker was Professor Gurgel. His keynote address was entitled, "Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage." In a lively and engaging way, he spoke about the importance of having a regular devotional and prayer life, and how to put it into practice.

Elections of district officers were held. The delegates re-elected the current district presidium members: Pastor Jon Buchholz, district president; Pastor Steve Degner, first vice president; and Pastor David Clark, second vice president. Pastor Steven Gabb was newly elected as district secretary. The current secretary, Pastor Dan Schroeder has accepted a call to Northwestern Publishing House. Other district officers and circuit pastors were elected by the delegates.

WELS first vice president Pastor James Huebner addressed the convention and thanked the delegates for their support of the synod's work. Various speakers highlighted work being done in the areas of missions, ministerial education, and congregational services in both the synod and our district.

Four congregations were welcomed into the district with a round of applause: River of Life - Goodyear, AZ; Cross of Christ - Las Cruces, NM; Korean Fellowship - Las Vegas, NV; and Peace - Gilbert, AZ.

The delegates passed a resolution that encouraged the synod to support building a new music auditorium at our prep school, Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, WI. A District Help Team was established to assist called workers and their families who leave the ministry. A resolution was passed to encourage the synod to fill the vacant administrator positions in Adult and Youth Discipleship. Delegates were also encouraged in resolutions to raise awareness in their congregations of the importance of supporting our world missions and our synod work through our prayers and congregational mission offerings (CMOs). It was expressed that we can talk about these issues as important, but need to take action if it is important to us and our congregation.

Delegates enjoyed time growing in God's Word, fellowshiping, and making new friends and acquaintances.