SYNOD CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

DELEGATES OFFER RESOUNDING SUPPORT FOR LCMS SEMINARIES

Delegates, Synod leaders, and guests spent nearly a week in Phoenix, Arizona, at the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) July 18–23, 2026, engaging in spirited discussions about the work of the Synod. A substantial part of that work focused on pastoral formation. Resolutions related to the Synod's two seminaries, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), passed with broad support.

"The Synod in convention reaffirmed what they've already said numerous times before, that they deeply support the work that's going on at our seminaries, that they want pastors formed in residence, and that they want exclusive use of the two LCMS seminaries for Missouri Synod pastors and Missouri Synod congregations," said Dr. Jon S. Bruss, president of CTSFW and a member of Floor Committee 6, which prepared and presented 14 resolutions on pastoral ministry and seminaries. "I regard that as the most important thing that came out of this convention."

Among the resolutions passed:

- 6-04A: To Support Residential Master of Divinity and Alternate Route Pastoral Formation for the Sake of the Flock (Passed: 75.45%)
- 6:05A: To Reaffirm the Synod's Process for Training and Certification for Pastors (Passed: 81.86%)
- 6-06A: To Affirm and Support Established Parameters of Specific Ministry Pastor Program (Passed: 80.59%)

"It's great to be able to go back to the Seminary and say, 'The church is behind us,'" said Bruss.

Election Results

The convention schedule also included elections for leadership positions, including Synod vice-presidents, the secretary, and members of boards and commissions. Following are CTSFW-related election results.

CTSFW faculty elected to serve

- Lawrence R. Rast Jr.: Concordia University Chicago Board of Regents
- Robert V. Roethemeyer: Concordia Historical Institute Board of Governors

CTSFW Board of Regents

- Ordained: Korey D. Maas
- Ordained: David P. Ramirez
- Commissioned: Mark W. Meehl
- Lay: Christian A. Preus



2026 CONVENTION CONVERSATIONS



Rev. Jesse Kueker
Director of Enrollment (CSL)

Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt
Vice President of Admission (CTSFW)

"Our theology—and I think this is uniquely Lutheran—is absolutely practical."



Rev. Joel Heckmann
CSL Admissions Officer

Rev. Jeffrey Kazmierski
CTSFW Admission Counselor

"Getting to the seminary and finding that sense of community and realizing there were other students in the same boat that we were as a family—finding that community was so incredible."



Dr. Jon Bruss
CTSFW President

Dr. Thomas Egger
CSL President

"I think it's just a wonderful time to be in the ministry—being able to say that Jesus has died for the sins of the world, and nothing can undo that fact, ever. Your sins have been paid for."

To see a complete playlist of We Are Your Seminaries videos, scan the QR code.

CTSFW regents elected to other offices

- David L. Daniels: Board for National Mission (East-Southeast, Lay)
- John L. Powers: Board for International Mission (Great Lakes, Lay)

Also joining the CTSFW Board of Regents is the Rev. Dr. Alfonso Espinosa, who was appointed to the board by Synod President Matthew C. Harrison after the convention.

"We Are Your Seminaries": Recruiting the Next Generation

CTSFW and CSL staffed a joint "We Are Your Seminaries" booth at the convention, which focused on recruiting future pastors and deaconesses.

"We started exhibiting jointly at the 2019 convention, and the response has been very positive," said the Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, assistant vice president of Admission at CTSFW. "With this year's convention exhibit, we're encouraging the whole church to join our two seminaries in the effort to recruit church workers, especially pastors."

One sign that the collective effort is bearing fruit: The two seminaries welcomed 115 residential pastoral ministry students this fall, the largest combined number since 2015.

In support of the recruiting effort, the seminaries recorded a series of short videos about formation during the convention, featuring conversations with representatives of both CTSFW and CSL. The videos are now available on each seminary's YouTube channel.