

SED Convention report by Roger Harrison

On May 12-13th I attended the 39th Convention of the Southeastern District (SED) in Richmond, VA as a lay voting delegate for OSLC. Pastors Peter and Josh were also in attendance. Delegates from across the district gathered for worship, to thank God for His blessings on the 214 LCMS churches and 74 schools across the district, to hear from guest speakers on mission reports, to vote on the new district president and vice presidents, and to vote on various resolutions presented. It was well attended with over 227 pastoral and lay delegates, 30 advisory delegates, and 45 guests on the first day.

Of particular note to our congregation, was a special thanks given to Tina McGuffey, for her faithful work as a district reconciler. Additionally, I saw a presentation from a group called MALIM – Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission. They help churches with mission funding and have also given crisis grants to early childhood centers including Open Arms. We received about \$5k in the early days of the pandemic when it was most needed.

The following new SED officers were elected: President, Rev. Bill Harmon, and 1st Vice President for the Northern region, Rev. Dr. Lloyd Gaines, of Prince of Peace, DC, as well as the Vice Presidents for the other regions.

Resolutions were presented from the following floor committees: Missions, Congregational Outreach, Stewardship and Finance, Bylaws, Theology and Practice. Most of the resolutions passed with little debate.

Two resolutions required some extended discussion. One was a resolution harmonizing the SED bylaws with changes made to the Synod bylaws. Unfortunately, because the modified resolution was not circulated among the congregations of the district at least 30 days prior to the convention, it could not be adopted at that time for procedural reasons. The solution worked out was to have the congregations individually vote on the resolution at voters' assemblies and then report back the results.

Another resolution which generated a lot of discussion was entitled, "Racial Justice and the Great Commission." The resolution sought to encourage the Synod to designate a specific Sunday as a day of "Repentance and Prayer for Racial Justice and Healing." It also encouraged us to welcome people across all racial and ethnic lines into fellowship with us through Jesus. After significant debate about the details, proposed revisions, and wordsmithing, the convention ultimately passed two resolutions on the subject which were needed in order to capture the broad consensus of views. This seems to have satisfied the supermajority of the delegates. I had the sense that God was working in peoples' hearts to achieve that united spirit.

I am thankful for the opportunity to represent OSLC at the SED Convention, and I think it was a wonderful experience to hear about the good work that God is doing in our region, to speak and network with other leaders in the district, to vote on important matters for governing the church, and to encourage the spread of the gospel message of Jesus Christ.