

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church
1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

Rev. Paul R. Harris – 512-453-3835 Church; 512-251-4204 Home
Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM
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June 2016 – July 2016

Report on the 2016 ACELC Free Conference and Business Meeting by: Mark Young, Lay Delegate

Dear Members of Trinity, Pastor Harris, Bart Goddard, and I attended the 2016 ACELC Free Conference, April 26-28, together this year in Nashville with Pastor Harris as pastoral delegate, myself as lay delegate, and Bart as a member of the ACELC Board of Directors.

The conference theme this year was “Christ for Us: Dispute Resolution”. Copies of the conference papers and videos of the presentations and the sermons for Matins and Vespers are located at the ACELC website: http://acelc.net/page/2016_free_conference_resources.

Business

Rev. Clint Poppe's introduction to the business meeting started with these words from Romans 12:11: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” He went on to say, paraphrasing, “That's the ACELC. Rouse people from their slumber. Be zealous. Make the good confession. Consider the image of the barking dog. A barking dog is a pest and annoyance and can be ignored, for a while. But, he barks, and he barks, and he barks, and he barks.” Related, see also Pastor's recent blog post entitled “Big Dogs, Little Dogs, and Cats”.

Here is a summary of notable business:

(1) Six new congregations joined ACELC in the last year. There are now 32 ACELC congregations in 16 states.

(2) Next year's conference, “Christ for Us: The Order of Creation”, will be held August 28-29, 2016, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

(3) Communion theses were not adopted. This stalled on Theses 3 on the same critical point with which we struggled in our reviews at Trinity. Rev. Clint Poppe and others shared the same concerns. It is now back to

committee to eventually be distributed again to churches within the ACELC and eventually to be voted on via email or phone.

(4) A proposed resolution to adopt the practice of “mark and avoid fellowship” was discussed. There was some interesting and fruitful discussion around this resolution, and some legitimate concerns about this approach. Bart rightfully pointed out that this resolution should not be voted on until we “know what fellowship is” by way of our communion fellowship theses. This resolution was tabled.

(5) Pastor Harris' concerns about hermeneutical and exegetical principles being taught at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, which can undermine the authority of Scriptures, was discussed at some length. This included concerns about Voelz' approaches and now Kloha's. Rev. Noland weighed in on both. Some good discussion. This will continue to move forward, but, no action taken.

(6) The final business topic was related to some frustration about perceived lack of progress of ACELC within Synod. Per Rev. Poppe, the question always is, paraphrasing, “Should we keep doing what we're doing? Time to pull plug and move on? Or, since we are allowed to continue to make the good confession, should we continue within Missouri, barking, barking, barking?” We reviewed and reaffirmed the current stated purpose of the ACELC. This will be an annual topic of business.

Presentations

In preparation for the conference, Pastor gave me several reading assignments, including two books (*Government in the Missouri Synod* and *Zion on the Mississippi*). These were useful in gaining context for a couple of the better papers, notably Rev. Paul Nus' and Rev. Martin Noland's papers.

There were several good papers this year. The best paper, in my opinion, was from Rev. Nus, entitled “The Message of Reconciliation – and Its Trustworthy Stewards”. It dealt with things in a churchly, theological manner, with some practical advice to deal with the dispute resolution and reconciliation processes. The focus was on dialectic / disputations. The first half was largely setup. The second half, especially last ten minutes or so, were gold. Slightly related to next year's topic, Rev. Nus exhorted to “act like men”. In the days of the Reformation, theologians were “men” (see also 1 Corinthians 16:13).

Rev. Noland's paper recounting the history of discipline and dispute resolution in the LCMS was quite informative. Rev. Rolf Preus and Rev. Poppe gave detailed, painful, gory accounts of actual adjudication and dispute resolution processes in their papers. The former involved Rev. Rolf Preus' father, Dr. Robert Preus, and his removal as president of the Ft. Wayne seminary, and the latter involving Rev. Poppe himself and Nebraska District Board of Directors and Stu Tietz. The concept of “due process” (and lack thereof in these processes) was a common theme in all three presentations.

Rev. Noland's and Rev. Poppe's papers also addressed the use of “reconcilers”, which has often been problematic, in practice. On that note, as with our conference at Trinity in 2013, and in keeping with the desire for these “free conferences” to involve point / counter-point, there was an invited counter-point paper from Rev. William Kilps, a “Synodical Reconciler”, entitled “The Cross in Reconciliation”.

Thank you for your support in sending us to the conference this year and for your continued support of the work of the ACELC.

June 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
			7:15 PM Romans			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		Voters Meeting 7 PM	7:15 PM Romans			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Installation of Officers BBQ & Icecream Social		Baseball Game		PASTOR	ON	VACATION
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		PASTOR	ON	VACATION		
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26	27	28	29	30		
		PASTOR	ON	VACATION		
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July 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			7:15 pm Romans			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	7:15 pm Romans			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
			7:15 pm Romans			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	PASTOR	AT	HIGHER	THINGS		
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