

One People—Forgiven!

Hundreds of delegates from around the world, gathered for the 64th Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas.

Once again the vibrant tapestry that makes up the LCMS, was alive with a diversity of people, unique, yet sharing in a common theme...we are One People—Forgiven! The opening day of the convention was a day woven with surprises, old and new: old friendships renewed, new friends made; preparation intertwined with celebration.

Preparations were made in the morning as floor committees listened to issues, and clarified questions and concerns. President Linnemann, helped with floor committee 8, dealing with the proposed Synod structure and governance changes—major enough to add two extra days of convention time. In the afternoon, delegates gathered for orientation on convention process. All of this was undergirded by prayer and the hidden weavings of the Holy Spirit. We discovered that thousands of people are in prayer for this convention. Over 4,088, roughly more than 500 a day, signed up to pray for God's leading in a 24-hour prayer vigil from 8am Sunday to adjournment.

The celebration was climactic. Delegates and hundreds from the Houston area worshipped together with the ancient songs of the saints interwoven with majestic melodies and voices of children and choir, electric guitar, symphony, and organ. Together we rejoiced that through common words spoken by the called and the baptized is the most amazing miracle—God forgives our sins! President Kieschnick pointed out in his message to the gathered, that offering forgiveness through Word and Sacrament IS the business of the Church. Because of God's work in Christ Jesus, we are duty bound, yet completely free to forgive others their sins, even before they even acknowledge their sin. In the words of Jesus, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:24-25)

We received forgiveness at the table of the Lord. Then later, at the delegate dinner, we enjoyed fellowship and friendship around a good ol' Texas Barbeque. We are One People—Forgiven!