

**OVERTURE TO THE 61st CONVENTION
OF
THE LCMS NORTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT
MARCH 7-8, 2025**

To the 61st Convention of
The Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
March 7-8, 2025

OVERTURE: 3-05

Subject: TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR 150 YEARS OF BLACK MINISTRY

WHEREAS, Christ our Lord says at the end of Matthew’s Gospel, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”; and

WHEREAS, Revelation 5:9, 13:7, and 14:6 speak of salvation freely offered and the proclamation of the Gospel “to every nation and tribe and language and people”; and

WHEREAS, many other passages of Holy Scripture testify to God’s love for all people and our obligation to likewise love our neighbors regardless of ethnic, geographic, or social background; and

WHEREAS, 2027 marks the 150th anniversary of Black Ministry within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) with its establishment at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Ft. Wayne, IN at the 1877 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America; and

WHEREAS, the history of black ministry within the LCMS is, as the Rev. Dr. Richard C. Dickinson aptly put it in the title of its centennial history, one of both rose and thorns; and

WHEREAS, much more could be said about both there roses and thorns than can be included in a resolution;

Therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois District (NID) of the LCMS rise and give thanks to God by singing Holy God, We Praise Thy Name (LSB 940); and be it further



RESOLVED, that the NID celebrate the roses of this work both within and outside of our district, especially the missionaries, teachers, churches, and schools involved in this work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NID lament the thorns wherein the district and the LCMS have failed to meet the biblical standards of love for one another; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NID repeats and reaffirms the biblical condemnation of racism in all its forms; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NID encourage the study of the history of Black Ministry in the LCMS through books such as *Roses and Thorns: The Centennial Edition of Black Lutheran Missions and Ministry in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* and *Light in the Dark Belt: The Story of Rosa Young as Told by Herself*, films such as *The First Rosa*, and other sources; and be it further

RESOLVED, that able scholars within the LCMS be encouraged to provide an updated history of Black Ministry within the LCMS and build upon the centennial work of Richard C. Dickinson and the 50th anniversary publication of C. F. W. Drewes; and be it further

RESOLVED, that pastors, commissioned ministers, and lay people involved in this work be encouraged to record their reflections and personal accounts for the sake of preserving our knowledge of this important work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the district in convention memorialize the Synod to adopt this resolution *mutatis mutandis* at its 2026 convention.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut, IL

Carl von Holten, Chairman

Phillip Fischaber, Senior Pastor

