



For Immediate Release

Rev. Matthew C. Harrison's Acceptance Speech as President-Elect

HOUSTON, July 13, 2010—Rev. Matthew C. Harrison gave the following speech to delegates of the 64th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod following the vote electing him as the 13th president of the Synod:

“If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one rejoices, all rejoice together. Right now there are many rejoicing, and there are many suffering.

“Luther says when you're walking along and you strike your little toe on a chair or a table, table leg, what happens is the whole body bends over, the face grimaces, and grabs that little toe. There is no use saying, 'That's just a little toe,' because the whole body suffers.

This, I realize, is a tumultuous change in the life of our Synod. I wish to thank President Kieschnick for his heart for evangelism and his deep desire to move this Synod forward. Many are suffering, and it will be very challenging times to work together.

“I wish to inform you that you have kept your perfect record of electing sinners as president of the Missouri Synod. I guarantee you I will sin and fail. I will fall short. I will sin against you. I wish also to say that right now I forgive all who in any way have sinned against me or anybody else and plead your forgiveness for anything that I said or did that offended you.

I beg of you your prayers. I beg of you your daily prayers and intercession. These are challenging times. I promise you that I will be as straight with you as I possibly can, to the best of my ability, guided by the spirit of God.

“I pledge to you that I will not coerce you. I will do my best, by the Word of Christ, to lead with the generous Gospel of Jesus Christ, which forgives us all of our sins and motivates us to love and care for our neighbor in mercy and compassion. And I will work as hard as I possibly can for unity around the clear and compelling Word of God and nothing else.

“I wish to just introduce my dear wife to you, Kathy. Please, Kathy, would you stand? I’m so impressed by you at this convention, how you’ve borne with one another, been patient, asked for forgiveness. This is the greatest privilege and honor of one’s life, to stand before this body in this fashion. I could never imagine it.

“And I pray the Lord will bless you in the days to come, to work for unity and love and compassion, that the Gospel of Christ may go forth from all of us in every single place everywhere around the world that many may know--many, many more may know--the Gospel of Jesus for eternal life. The Lord be with you.”