

**South Carolina Synod Assembly – I See Jesus**  
**June 8-10, 2023**  
**Columbia SC**

**Joshua LeClerg's Experience**

I'm relatively new to the ELCA, with Grace Rock Hill being the first Lutheran church I've attended. The opportunity to go to the Synod this year and learn more about the organizational structure of the ELCA was a wonderful opportunity. More important to me, however, was the opportunity to see how Lutherans live lives of faith within that structure. There were around 330 individuals gathered, many of whom were experiencing their first Synod Assembly.

The prospect of representing Grace at the Synod Assembly seemed a little daunting in the days leading up, however once I got there, much of the Assembly felt less like me representing Grace, and more like being invited into a celebration of God's work in and through the Lutheran church of South Carolina. We received presentations on our Synod partners in Tanzania and Japan, were introduced to Camp HUGG right here in South Carolina, and many other places within our own state where the Synod – the people living and worshipping together as Lutherans – were living out the call to be the hands and feet of God.

Yes, my presence there gave Grace a vote in the direction of the Synod as an organization, but more importantly, my presence there was an opportunity to bring back to Grace a *why*. Why do we organize as a community of like-minded Christians into a Synod? Why do we take the time to wrestle with the things we disagree on, and still continually come together as Synod? This year at Synod, I learned what we can do together, when we devote ourselves to being hands and feet, helping our neighbors down the street and across an ocean. I invite you to see some of what we saw in the Mission Support Video "I Love to Tell the Story," [here](#).

Theresa and I were first timers this year, but we didn't go alone. We had each other, we had the pastors, and, we discovered, we had every single person in that room. More importantly, we came back supported and loved, with the knowledge that we were part of something bigger. Each of us is Synod, and with everything we do, we contribute to the great, beautiful impact that we the Synod as one body leave on our world. Every offering we give, every committee we sit on, every act of service we do, in, with, and through our church community supports and is supported by our Synodical community.

If you're given the opportunity to attend a Synod Assembly, go. See what God has in store for you, what God is doing through each of us, and go secure in the knowledge that you do not go alone.

-Josh LeClerg