

On Saturday, June 26, 2021 I had the pleasure of attending the virtual SC Synod assembly as one of Grace's lay delegates. This year's assembly theme was "To Boldly Go to Proclaim" drawn from Acts 4:29 "Lord... Grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness." Along with the usual Synod business - budget approval (\$2.6 million for 2022-2023), the election of new synod wide committee members (our very own Pr. Rachel served as Elections co-chair), and updates from many SC Synod ministries, we heard from four speakers who spoke to the various ways the Lutheran Church is boldly proclaiming God's promise in today's world.

Lisa Fedyk serves as treasurer of the ELCA who updated us on the many ways the ELCA's \$40.7 million dollar Mission Support budget (over \$972,000 from SC Synod!) was used to help those in need over the past year. Mission Support distributed \$1.56 million to 63 Synods in COVID relief funds including a grant to the SC Synod for the Lutheran Retreat Center and Lantix ministries. Members and Congregations of the SC Synod gave over \$388,000 to ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Response. In SC, these grants from these funds supported Hope Center for Children, MORE Justice and Shepherd of the Sea Lutheran Church in Garden City for a food pantry which serves over 1000 people each month.

Proclaiming closer to home, Rev. Carl Taylor addressed the prison ministry as not just providing worship and counsel while incarcerated, but also as hospitality outreach for those recently released and their families. Christina Galardi Hendricks introduced the Transitional Foster Care program offered through SC Lutheran Services. Transitional Foster Care helps unaccompanied minors who have travelled primarily from Central America to rejoin their families here in the United States. The program has provided care for 133 children since 2017. Going boldly and proclaiming to reach college students was the topic of the Rev. Jesse Canniff-Kuhn's reflection on campus ministries. Reaching students with God's message of hope and acceptance provides a foundation of compassion, comfort and strength at a time when young people are bombarded with contrary messaging. These speakers highlighted the importance of going forth to boldly proclaim God's word at all stages of life not just the high or lows. It was so encouraging to hear how our church and our Synod is unafraid to lead the way in this message.

The keynote speaker was the highlight for me. Ryan Panzer is a consultant to both the technology industry and the church on ways to integrate worship into today's technology focused world. His keynote address, titled "The Holy and the Hybrid", discussed the technology challenges congregations went through trying to develop hybrid ministry during the pandemic. He argues that congregations should embrace technology as means of increasing accessibility to church much like installing a wheelchair ramp, rather than as a way of just pushing the Sunday service online. I would encourage you to watch the address on the SC Synod YouTube [channel](#).

If you are interested in learning further details about any these speakers, the full synod assembly is available on the SC Synod YouTube [channel](#). The closing worship is particularly wonderful and not just because it includes many familiar faces! We should all be proud to be a part of a synod and a church unafraid to Go Forth Boldly and Proclaim!

-Lori Brown, Council Member