

Synod Assembly Thoughts to Share

On June 16th I had the privilege of attending the Metro DC Synod Assembly with Pastor Darcy and Richard Shock at Lord of Life Lutheran Church. It was a full day with an amazing group of brothers and sisters in Christ including our synod Bishop Graham, many pastors, and lay people. The day began and ended with worship in the sanctuary and it was wonderful and inspiring to hear almost 250 voices raised in song and hearts raised in prayer. The rest of the day was divided into business items for the synod and times of fellowship and workshop sessions with each person getting to attend two of these.

I was part of the ELCA Q&A session and was able to learn a lot about how our synod and ELCA are making huge efforts to combat hunger and offer disaster relief through the generosity and commitment of individuals and congregations. I also learned about initiatives to help immigrants and ways in which the need for continued leaders is being addressed in programs involving campuses and seminaries. Through this session and the general videos and presentations throughout the business sessions, I learned a lot about the organization of our synod and the ELCA as well as the various ministries and how we are all part of this—we are church and we are church together for the sake of the world. Richard and I were also able to share LCOC's work with ACTS and Project Mend-A-House in this Q&A.

I also was able to attend a workshop called Are You Leaving Money on the Table? This was led by the Regional Gift Planner for our synod, Yvonne Jones Lembo, who will be coming to speak to our own LCOC Council in July. She provided insight on how congregations can fund their ministries more effectively by setting up gift policies and respectfully working with members to provide for the church in their estate plans and with other gift sources such as stocks and annuities. There is a lot to learn.

It was very interesting and also powerful to see how our voices can be heard through resolutions that were passed in the business session. Those we were able to weigh in on included requesting all congregations draft and put in place a Child Protection Policy before the 2019 Synod Assembly. Our leaders at LCOC have already begun research on that. We also weighed in on a resolution to direct our Bishop to advise government officials that the synod opposes the State of Israel's failure to guarantee basic rights and protection to Palestinian children and our opposition to any US taxpayer funds being used for such practices. It was inspiring to see that our synod and ELCA is speaking out with regard to societal and international issues.

I had been asked to speak for just a moment or two in the whole assembly about LCOC's BLESS series efforts. I spoke primarily about Serve with Compassion (our work with Project Mend-A-House and ACTS food drive) and Share with Conviction (about paying it forward and using the Bless cards, using my own personal experience) in assembly and then expanded those to include our Bridge with boldness and Listen with openness activities led by our youth, our Eat with friendliness congregational potluck and Carrabba's Italian Dinner including folks from the

community and working to raise funds for Rise Against Hunger in the video. LCOC's efforts were of interest to other congregations and the exciting projects they have been doing were great too. We are all in this together and sharing ideas and lifting each other up is really important.

It was a wonderful experience and I would encourage any of you who have the opportunity to go to an assembly to do so. Please also visit these really informative websites: www.elca.org and <https://metrodcelca.org/> to learn more about all the amazing work being done-God's Work, Our Hands.

Peace and blessings to you,

Patti Beattie