

The Church Becoming

When we introduced **Church Becoming** in late 2019 in anticipation of our 2020 Synod Assembly, we had absolutely no idea how fitting this theme would be. Church Becoming was intended as an invitation for all of us to step together into a space of **renewal and transformation** – to more fully become the church the Spirit is calling us to be for the life of the world. Three short months into 2020 our journey of becoming moved into turbo speed! Overnight we became a church meeting primarily online for worship; we became a church who gathered via ZOOM over hundreds of hours to brainstorm, lament, share resources, pray, plan, support, and be together.

Having witnessed the violence against George Floyd and other siblings of color, we became a church who engaged the collective work of anti-racism and dismantling white supremacy with greater energy and intention. In the midst of economic hardship, we became a church whose buildings suddenly served as food distribution centers, a church whose people mobilized to ensure for the basic needs of those most vulnerable during the pandemic.

There is no doubt we are a different church than we were last year. We aren't the same people of faith we used to be. And while it's not yet clear how this current chapter will finally shape our becoming, we know that the way forward does not lie behind us. As we move into the Spirit's promised future, **we claim our continued call to proclaim God's unconditional, cross-shaped love for the sake of world.**

We proclaim and embody God's love through our weekly worship and learning, through digital ordinations and installations, through the work of our Synod Council and our Candidacy Committee, through advocacy and outdoor ministries, through empowering leaders and growing in generosity, through our engagement on the border and our care of neighbors. We proclaim and embody God's unconditional, cross-shaped love as Church Together, through the people, congregations, and ministries of our Rocky Mountain Synod. **Thanks be to God for YOU!**

In Faith,
Bishop Jim Gonja

2020 Highlights

- **155 pastors, deacons, and lay leaders** joined via zoom for our fall Theological Conference.
- **23 installations & 6 ordinations** of pastors and deacons.
- **47.5% of mission support** received in our synod was shared with our Churchwide Organization.
- **Added 3 additional ZOOM** accounts to accommodate synod-wide connectivity, hosting more ZOOM meetings than we can count!
- Nearly **\$25,000** given away through Educate, Equip, Enact Ministerial Excellence Fund.
- **43 Congregations** are participating in **4 generosity programs** through 3E.
- **62 candidates** are currently pursuing rostered ministry.



LIVING FAITH:
CHURCH IN SOCIETY

A COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

RMS Welcome Statement

2021 marks the 5th anniversary of the welcome statement adopted by the voting members of the 2016 Synod Assembly. This welcome statement is part of the Reconciling in Christ process but also includes our commitment to inclusion and equity beyond sexual orientation and gender identity. As we continue living into our call to be a church becoming, reflect individually and as a community:

1. What do you notice about this statement? What do you wonder?
2. What is challenging or unexpected about this statement?
3. How is your community embodying this welcome? What tangible expressions have you noticed?
4. What are areas of growth for your community?



We as the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA welcome all into the fullness of God's love. This welcome is inclusive of people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental ability, sex, or station in life. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

Living the Gospel Outside our Walls

Rev. Rose Mary Sanchez-Guzman, Cristo Rey, El Paso, TX

We may not have services eye to eye, but we are living the gospel in serving many families and homeless people in El Paso. Thanks to the COVID-19 Churchwide grant, other donations, and partnerships we are distributing 142 food-boxes every week and have supported people with basic needs during this pandemic. Through other partnerships, we can distribute 100 hot meals to all our elderly members and others in the community. Every Wednesday, we pick up 72 food-boxes and distribute them to people in our community. It is how we are connecting with our members and getting to know other families in our community..

As an elder shared, "Pastora, I am thankful to God and the Church because since the Pandemic started, I am eating better than before".

We are not closed! We have so much ministry outside our four walls. We have met all kinds of people. One man was sitting outside his old apartment with his head down. He cried when we gave him the box of food. He said he had not eaten that day. My youngest daughter Allexa was with us that day. She said, "I love to see you guys helping people".

