2020 was not at all what we expected it to be. Many of our expectations were not met, just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus confessed to Jesus, “we had hoped” for things but they went differently. Yet Jesus walked with the disciples, and the Holy Spirit has still been at work in South Dakota in 2020.

Here are some of the many projects that still took place, even though we might have hoped for something different.

All that, in the middle of a pandemic! All this work is possible because of the connections we have to each other. God has called us into ministry together, and many people have been generous with their different blessings of time, talents, and treasure.

We plan to continue to show up for you, no matter what 2021 holds for us. God promises us that we are not abandoned, and the body of Christ is the living testament to the world that God is here. Thank you for being part of the work as we Journey Together in Christ. Peace and blessings to you and your community.

Rev. Jonathan Steiner
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- Knowing things were already tough at the start of 2020, we provided opportunities for Mental Health First Aid and Psychological First Aid in response to the farm stress crisis.
- 18 leaders were trained as Peer Mentor Facilitators, creating four Peer Mentor Groups for our first call leaders to mutually support one another.
- The synod’s Coaching Network expanded, with a new cohort of coaches and further training options for existing coaches.
- Congregations and the synod were able to begin or expand digital worship, allowing us to proclaim the Gospel in a new way, and often reach new people.
- The synod is investing resources into Canvas, a digital teaching platform to help Christian Education be reformed in the midst of the pandemic.
- We started the Justice Table, a group of people committed to confronting racism in South Dakota, which will focus on Education, Advocacy, and Community Organizing.
- Journeying Together in Christ, the synod’s strategic vision plan, was created and rolled out after conversations with people across the synod.
- A Worship Task Force was created, which published guidelines and suggestions for worship during the pandemic.
- Despite cancelling Synod Assembly, we gathered digitally this Fall via the Synod Day event, and still celebrated our work together through speakers and worship.
- A Faith Formation task force was created to navigate options for congregations in different situations in the pandemic.
- We received numerous grants from our Lutheran partner organizations, including from the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit, Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA COVID Relief Fund, as well as numerous outside organizations.
- The Storyteller Network was launched as a group of people committed to telling ministry stories of what the Holy Spirit is up to in South Dakota through our ministries.