

Continuing Education Plan (CEP) – July 2021

Submitted by Rev Sarah Dymund

In 2020, I was granted the ELCIC GSI Advanced Study Grant for the purpose of continuing my work on the Association of Chicago Theological Schools Doctor of Ministry (ACTS DMin) in Preaching Program through the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. I completed my first year of this program early in 2020, having traveled to Chicago for three weeks of classroom study in the summer of 2019. I joined with classmates from a number of different denominational backgrounds and preaching styles, and we were taught by faculty from a similarly diverse perspective. We took our learnings home and applied them in our congregational contexts, completing the coursework during the year.

I was very much looking forward to another year of study and community with the friends I had made in my first year. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made my second year of study a drastically different experience than my first. Instead of traveling to Chicago, I spent three weeks this past summer holed up in my office on Zoom, connecting digitally with classmates and faculty from all across North America, and Sweden. We still managed to gather as a community, and to learn a great deal during our classes, but the pizza isn't anywhere near as good in Regina as it is in Chicago!

The structure of the ACTS DMin program is that the learning done during the summer residency is applied to sermons that address the needs of the preacher's specific context and particular learning goals for their individual doctoral project. My congregation of Trinity, Regina, is in a time of significant transition right now. We have determined that we no longer have the resources to maintain our large property, nor the membership to require so much space. We have been discerning how we can change our relationship with our real estate and invite other organizations to participate in serving the needs of our community from our central location. This process has come a long way over the past year, and it is far from complete. I truly believe that the framework, support, and resources of the ACTS DMin program are helping to equip me to accompany and guide my congregation through this time of change faithfully.

Thank you to the members of the PCLM for making this journey possible through the Advanced Study Grant. I am looking ahead to the third and final year of the ACTS DMin program, and the benefit to my congregation, and to the wider church that this learning will provide.