

**Discovering. Discerning. Doing.** These are 3 words that summarize my experience of the 2024 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly.

**Discovering.** In the assembly, through the business and the breaks, we discovered what is happening across the synod through the work and updates of the synod staff and volunteers, and the work and updates of our fellow congregations across the synod. Themes I heard included challenges of changing culture and demographics around church, people trying new things, partnerships (partnerships, partnerships), and resource considerations. The synod leadership shared about the new lay day and synod youth gathering that were made possible by big gifts from families as well as congregations donating real estate assets upon closure. The synod shared a vision for even bolstering those offerings in years to come. We discovered what other ministry organizations across the synod and the country are up to. And in catching up with friends and colleagues, I discovered what's moving in some individual people's lives.

**Discerning.** The assembly was called into discernment. We discerned about the action being taken in resolutions. We discerned the wider questions of the church in structured workshops and assembly time as well as unstructured 1-1 conversations. And we discerned in prayer. It's a very discerning time, as is the case for most congregations and ministries in this season of the church.

**Doing.** We did... in our eventual adoption of resolutions and memorials, we took action. Action that takes a stance as a collective of the church, denotes our values and position and voices those to the wider church and beyond. Action that will influence future decision making and work of the synod. We worshiped... that is action, too. We gathered, prayed, listened, reflected, gave, partook of Christ, and were sent forth. That is action. And at the same time, I notice a yearning for more doing *AS* a synod... not more doing individually, we're all busy, but how can we have more *doing* together... What partnerships might we benefit from? What resource sharing might strengthen our communities? What action might we take collectively for greater impact?

And so we continue the cycle of **discovering, discerning, and doing**. May we all join in that work.

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