

Boundless (Still):
An Interview with Pastor Meggan Manlove
Trinity Lutheran, Nampa, Idaho

By Diane McGeoch, President, Christian Education Network of the ELCA

The cancellation of the ELCA Youth Gathering created opportunities for alternative Youth Gatherings and adaptations for churches and groups intending to go to the Gathering. This interview is with Pastor Meggan Manlove of Trinity Lutheran, Nampa, Idaho, whose youth group attended **Boundless (Still)**, an event at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis with youth and adults from Minnesota, Iowa, Montana, and Idaho.

How did you learn of the alternative event?

We found the event on the ELCA Youth Ministry Network's Facebook page. It was organized by the Northeast Iowa Synod. We wanted to experience the Minneapolis – St. Paul area as originally planned and explore the themes of Boundless Creation, Forgiveness, Invitation, and Promise.

Describe the event and what the days included:

There were 220 youth and adults at Boundless Still. There were large and small group gatherings, first word, night life, and closing worship. The service days were also a part of our time together. The service-learning element was very important to us. The worship included videos of different people sharing their faith.

What was your group's experience of Minneapolis – St. Paul?

We worshipped at Holy Trinity Lutheran, Minneapolis and the youth loved the service. We made a commitment to use public transportation, which was not always comfortable but did enrich our experience. We also made a commitment to experience multi-ethnic food, including a visit to the Midtown Global Market. We ate at a Korean restaurant, a Hmong restaurant, and at Owamni by the Sioux Chef. Chef Sean Conroy at Owamni uses precolonial food like bison, elk, and grains. Trying new foods and being together on public transportation was a large part of our experience.

What stands out for you as you reflect on this event?

We took a Gray Line bus tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul and spent two and a half hours really seeing both cities. The history shared on the tour helped us learn about the conflicts that used to exist between the cities. The flour mills and the bodies of water were a part of this tour and we also stopped at Minnehaha Falls.

What were the areas of growth for the youth?

The teens worked well together and showed leadership abilities. We cared for each other, as we did get tired, and it was sometimes hard to keep track of stuff. The speakers and worship challenged us to answer the question: What does it mean to follow Jesus? We respond to God's love by serving our neighbor. The community life and our experience of the Twin Cities created new ways of learning about ourselves and learning about God. We especially thank the Northeast Iowa Synod for their planning of Boundless Still.