

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER

2024



JULY 2024 Mission Support Memo

STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

Treasures Abound

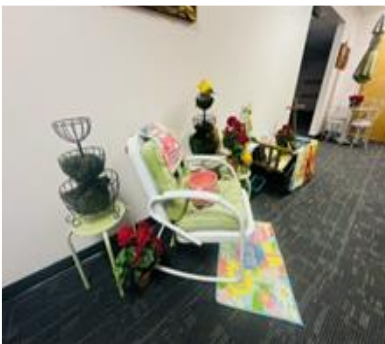
A story from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

As you read this story, what inspires you?

What treasures are you sharing in your neighborhood?

Many of us have had that time in our lives when we looked around and wondered what we could do with all our accumulated treasures, junk to some but precious and essential to others. Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bangor, Pa., created a “boutique-style” thrift storefront so visitors in the community can enjoy creative displays but even more importantly purchase items at a fair price. The congregation named it [POP's Treasures](#). With support from a [Witness and Service Team Grant](#), funded with mission support giving from the [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod](#),

POP's Treasures was able to prepare a location on its property and purchase a shipping container. The container was repurposed into an essential place to store inventory. The congregation open the doors each month for visitors to peruse the displays, buy things they need and welcome community members to join in and volunteer. They are constantly reminded that the community is engaged, and feel this is a wonderful program.



The treasures do not abound just during POP's Treasures open hours but in how the ministry inspires even greater generosity. When items aren't sold, they are often donated to other distribution organizations that benefit others. There has been an openness of the congregation to use two backrooms of the church and part of the fellowship hall during sale days, showing the space is treasured and used. The outpouring of community involvement has far exceeded anything imagined. Donated items abound as well as helpers to ready and serve at the sales.

POP's Treasures is so much more than having a place to donate and buy needed treasures, using the income generated for outreach. Meals have been provided for a transition shelter for people experiencing homelessness, toys have been donated to children, and monetary donations have been given to youth programs, an animal shelter, a Portland, Pa., food pantry and even ELCA Good Gifts. When the congregation hears of a need, they act to make it happen.

One of the greatest treasures has been making this dream happen. Jackie Horn, an organizer, shares these words of inspiration: “You may wonder if your congregations could do the same. Yes! If the organizers have the faith, it will work. Be willing to make changes and to realize that there are many paths to take to make it work. Success can be measured by outreach to the community and the programs it helps. We have been blessed beyond our wildest hopes and dreams.”

ENGAGE WITH US

[Webinar: Grant Writing for Congregations](#)

As communities work to find ways to fuel their ministries that incorporate other streams of funding, grant writing can be confusing and intimidating. Though not all communities of faith are eligible for all grants, there are some grants for those who are doing new and innovative ministry, especially with communities on the margins and vulnerable populations.

This webinar will explore both the technical side of grant writing (what are you funding and why?) as well as the process of finding grants and deciding if you fit the criteria. Though finding and writing grants can be intimidating, it can also be rewarding, as you’re able to bring something new to life in and for your community through outside fueling.

Mark your calendar:

Grant Writing for Congregations

Monday, Aug. 19

6-7 p.m. Central time

<https://elcafoundation.zoom.us/j/84795008544?pwd=ak0rSWpwT2IGR2V5NW5NSmYzVVlvZz09>

Meeting ID: 847 9500 8544

Passcode: 869038

GRATEFUL

This month we are amazed by the creation God has entrusted to us. As our colleague the Rev. Tim Brown (ELCA director for congregational stewardship) says, “Right now I’m grateful for the ‘House of Light,’ as my Celtic ancestors called it, or the outdoors. In these summer months, spending as much time outside to soak up the air and energy of our star is important to me.” We appreciate our many creation care teams and holy gardens across our church ministries that teach, grow and share God’s bounty. Our hope is that you too can spend time outside to glory in God’s goodness.

In deep gratitude,

Victoria Flood, Senior Director for Congregation and Synod Support

Nick Kiger, Director for Mission Support

Karen Kretschmann, Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement

