

# WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER

2024



## STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

### August 2024 Mission Support Memo

#### Empowering Story

A story from Nick Kiger, ELCA Director for Mission Support

**As you read this story, what inspires you?  
Who can you empower to share a story?**

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend my first ever [ELCA Youth Gathering](#). I've never experienced more vibrancy and joy in this church than I experienced at the Gathering. Once I had come to terms with the incredible fact that we had sold out an entire NBA arena, I was able to sit back and experience the church around me. One of the greatest gifts of the Gathering was how it empowered youth and young adults to share their stories and how those stories led to transformational experiences.

From the large, 16,000-person mass gatherings to the smaller, regional worship gatherings, participants were empowered to share their stories through word, dance and song. These spaces were filled with young people who were given the microphone, the amplifier and the stage. Their joy and energy generated by these moments was palpable, and other young people in the audience were moved by these stories of their own generation.



When we think about whom to send onstage to teach and inspire, it's easy for us to just "leave it to the experts." The Gathering hosted its fair share of public theologians and rostered ministers and bishops, yet the most inspiring, energizing stories were from people who might otherwise have been just another person in the crowd of youth and young adults. We got to hear and see those stories because someone recognized the stories these people had within them and empowered them to tell, play or dance that story.

You've probably heard us say this before, but I will say it again: every person is a storyteller, and every person has a story to tell. We've presented workshops on being a good storyteller and story hearer, but we also need to be story empowerers.

Whom in your synod, on your council, in your congregation or in your worshiping community can you empower to share their story? They are probably right there, in the crowd, maybe not even knowing their story can change lives. Find them, lift them up and let their story shine.

## ENGAGE WITH US

### Stewardship Kaleidoscope—Portland, Ore.

Sept. 23-25, 2024

In-person \$350 or virtual \$125

Register at [Annual Conference — Stewardship Kaleidoscope](#)

Stewardship Kaleidoscope offers real tools for real ministry and is perfect for both rostered and lay leaders. The mission of the conference is to ignite generosity, give attendees practical tools for encouraging congregational generosity, expand leadership capacity for stewardship leaders, and cultivate adaptive approaches to funding Christ's mission throughout the world.

Offered by the ELCA Stewardship and Generosity team in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this three-day conference is dedicated to digging deeply into stewardship and generosity. This year, attendees will explore what “makes stewardship weird” and hear from a number of people with thoughts on both practical and cutting-edge aspects of fueling ministry.

**Limited partial scholarships are available! Contact the Rev. Tim Brown at [Tim.Brown@elca.org](mailto:Tim.Brown@elca.org).**

## GRATEFUL

This month our gratitude section comes from the Rev. Phil Hirsch, Executive Director, Christian Community and Leadership in the ELCA:

*“The 2024 National Youth Gathering was a success, and we take a moment to thank God and all the staff and volunteers who worked for years to prepare. We are especially grateful to all those who were in New Orleans last week and we pray that our youth and young adults will take the Spirit of love and service back to their churches and communities. We ask you to help relay these stories. May this event inspire generations to come.”*

In deep gratitude,

Victoria Flood, Senior Director for Congregation and Synod Support

Nick Kiger, Director for Mission Support

Karen Kretschmann, Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement

