

## **Devotional: Stories Connect Us Together**

Our stories knit us together and help us to share encounters with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We hope you will be eager to share these stories from our “Stories of Faith in Action” as a devotion for a variety of group gatherings. This might include congregational councils, synod leadership, synod council, groups such as WELCA, and so many other places. Here is a framework; however, let the spirit guide you to create your own!

**Opening Leader:** “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians, 12:12-13).

**Response:** “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

*Select a biblical passage, using either the ones above or another from these below:*

Psalm 105:1-3

Psalm 145:4-12

Mark 12:41-44

Luke 10:25-27

Acts 2:43-47

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

2 Corinthians 7:16-8:7

Galatians 5:22-26

*Now, choose and read one story from this “SOFIA.”*

Discussion: As you read the story, ask folks to listen for the words and phrases that stand out, that touch them and that make them want to learn more.

Once the story is done, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What words or phrases touched you?
- In what way(s) does this story exemplify the Scripture passage we read?
- How did this story connect or relate to your ministry?
- What are the passions that motivate the people in the story? What passions motivate people in your ministry setting?
- What one thing did this story teach you about ministry across the ELCA? How might you share this with others in your ministry setting?
- What new ideas for ministry in your setting does this story inspire?

**Leader:** Let us pray.

**Response:** Gracious God, we cannot begin to know all the ways we, as your church, respond to the needs of the world. We thank you for the generosity shared from across our church. Give us strength to respond to your call to live out our faith in service to our neighbors, near and far. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.