

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER



STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

April 2025 Mission Support Memo

Stories Bring Us Together

A story about our Northwest Intermountain Synod,
by Karen Kretschmann

As you read this story, what inspires you?

How in your synod are stories created and shared?

The air was clear, crisp and full of the smell of pine as I pulled into [Camp Lutherhaven](#) the first weekend in April. Located on the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho, the camp felt peaceful, calm, yet bursting with new things to come. It was the first council retreat in several years for the [Northwest Intermountain Synod](#), and I was asked to speak about storytelling as a way to express their mission “to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully.”

We were at “camp,” so what better way to explore stories than through the parable of the sower in Matthew 13? This text calls us to see and hear and share the stories that Jesus is telling the people. It also allows us to play with good soil, so we potted herbs, peppers and flowers — and we played in the dirt! We explored how our experiences and perspectives empower us all to be storytellers. Stories engage. Stories connect. Stories invite us to be part of something bigger.

“All Jesus did that day was tell stories—a long storytelling afternoon. His storytelling fulfilled the prophecy: I will open my mouth and tell stories; I will bring out into the open things hidden since the world’s first day.”

(Matthew 13:34; The Message)

Throughout the time together, we meditated on our stories and sought to embody the stories that God entrusted to each of us to hear and share. What an honor it was to accompany the Northwest Intermountain Synod on this journey of empowering each council member to share the synod stories that call to them. This collaborative work happens through the generosity of the whole church, made possible by Mission Support. Keep our synod councils and leadership in prayer and seek the good “soil” that allows our imagination and creativity to dare, to hope, to share, and to act in justice and love.



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ENGAGE WITH US

“Why People Give: Love Letters to Our Church”

What inspires people to give? Often it starts with gratitude. In this session, you’ll learn to invite your members into a storytelling practice: writing “Love Letters to Our Church.” As people name how their faith community has shaped their lives, you’ll witness a congregation already rooted in connection, care and shared purpose. And when a community sees the collective impact of its love, generosity flows naturally — no persuasion needed.

Hosted by the Rev. Dr. Eric H.F. Law, founder of the Kaleidoscope Institute, this webinar will reimagine stewardship as something deeply human, healing and hopeful. No need to register, just attend!

Mark your calendar: “Why People Give: Love Letters to Our Church”

Thursday, May 8

6-7:30 p.m. Central time

[Join the meeting here.](#)

GRATEFUL

Connecting with synod councils and leaders is a vital aspect of our Congregation and Synod Support Team’s work. It is with deep gratitude that we do this work. Training, learning from and experiencing each unique synod’s context brings us deeper together as a church. We support our synods by facilitating strategic planning conversations; analyzing data and engagement in giving; curating a narrative around Mission Support and generosity; empowering synod council leadership, offering Mission Support, storytelling and stewardship workshops; assisting to rebuild or refresh Synod Mission Support and Stewardship Tables; and more. Each of these connections allows us to be church together and to share how Mission Support is vital to our work across the ELCA. Invite us to your synod — we are eager to connect!

In gratitude,

Victoria Flood, Senior Director for Congregation and Synod Support

Nick Kiger, Director for Mission Support

Karen Kretschmann, Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement

