

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER



STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

NOVEMBER 2025 Mission Support Memo

Connection as Stewardship

A story from the [East Central Synod of Wisconsin](#),
written in collaboration with the Rev. Jenn Pocket

As you read this story, what inspires you?

How are folks in your synod stewarding connections?

Is there going to be food? The Rev. Tauna Roth, pastor of [Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fremont, Wis.](#), loves gathering with people to eat a meal — yes, at the communion table, but also in her home or out at a picnic. Pastor Tauna serves in our [East Central Synod of Wisconsin](#). As pastor of Immanuel and dean of the Appleton Conference, she has consistently shown what it means to steward relationships, community, collaboration and God's abundant gifts. This is why she has received the Dr. Richard Lee Peterman Stewardship Award, an annual award from the ELCA's Congregation and Synod Support team and stewardship ministry, celebrating our churches' abundant and creative forms of stewardship,.

At the heart of Pastor Tauna's ministry is her commitment to leading from abundance. She cultivates connections by drawing people together around fellowship, study and authentic conversation. From guiding colleagues through a study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship* to gathering a conference on immigration and legal rights to creating spaces where pastors can learn, laugh and eat, she embodies stewardship as the careful tending of relationships. Her leadership reminds us that the church is most alive when rooted in hospitality and shared joy. Pastor Tauna's stewardship is also expressed in her everyday life: in her family, her garden, her uninhibited joy and her love of good food. She uses these gifts not for herself alone but as a means of building up the community.



Pastor Tauna has long been interested in connecting with a variety of colleagues, churches and communities. When she and her husband, the Rev. Erik Roth, were serving in the Iron Range of Minnesota, she loved the freedom of doing pulpit supply for more than a dozen area congregations. She got to see different churches and meet new people and felt a real freedom to share truth and connections. She would arrive on Sunday, offer the leadership and sermon, and, to her amazement, see her words and ideas reflected in the service's song and prayer. "Liturgy brings it all together," she says.

Since coming to the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, she has found joy in serving as dean of the Appleton Conference and ensuring that its collegial gatherings are full of conversation, connections and, yes, food. Last spring, pastors gathered to confront the difficulties of contemporary ministry. While Pastor Tauna's synod colleagues worried about logistics, she asked if there would be food — not out of personal need but out of a deep understanding that meals create space for connection and healing. She made sure there were sizzling burgers and brats and all the fixings. Through her vision, what might have been just another meeting became a holy moment of fellowship and encouragement.

Through her many years in lay leadership and pastoral ministry, she has stewarded the opportunity to gather for "table ministry," believing that when we gather to eat, we share ideas and consider new perspectives. She reminds us, "Jesus feeds people before he does ministry." Let's do the same and live with a spirit of generosity, just like Pastor Tauna.

ENGAGE WITH US

Christmas Eve as a Missional Moment

Most communities of faith get a surge of people attending worship at Christmastime. How can we take advantage of these influxes of people and introduce new worshipers to our mission? How can these larger services serve as stewardship-of-mission moments? **On Monday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m. Central time**, explore how services with more visitors than normal can be an opportunity to reach more people with the mission of your congregation. There's no need to register — just attend!

<https://zoom.us/j/98746930641?pwd=Z67GR8PwDBUpAeaMYzquhfAfRwiwPd.1>

Meeting ID: 987 4693 0641 ; Passcode: 355408

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GRATEFUL

We are grateful for all the opportunities that we, the Congregation and Synod Support Team, have had to gather and connect with synod staff and other synod leaders. It has been a great joy to be invited to fall convocations, council retreats and first-call theological education gatherings to share, listen, teach and learn. Gathering with and among synods in this way keeps us connected. If you would like to learn more about how the Congregation and Synod Support Team can engage with your synod, please reach out to us. We would love 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

