



**YOUR
MISSION SUPPORT
GIFTS AT WORK**

OCTOBER 2023 Mission Support Memo

STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

Encounters With Christ

A story from our Northeastern Minnesota Synod, a reflection by Karen Kretschmann

As you read this story, what connects with you?

Who have you shared with recently about a Christ encounter?

It was a typical fall day in northern Minnesota when I pulled up in Grand Rapids on Oct. 14. Yet the day started in awe. We were gathering for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod's "[Walking Together 2023: Encounters With Christ](#)" storytelling event at Zion Lutheran Church, a place of welcome and beauty. The sanctuary glowed with sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windows. The rear of the sanctuary was open to gorgeous quilts for the World Hunger auction that showed the talents and dedication of so many who lovingly created them. The morning started in the sanctuary, where we shared what we love about worship and what we were grateful for, and then moved into song and biblical story reminding us that we *are* walking together in ministry and sharing our gifts.

This was the second annual "Walking Together" event focused on storytelling and experiencing encounters with Christ. Such encounters happen in many places and ways in our personal lives, our communities and our wider church, yet we are often hesitant to tell our stories. This day, over 85 eager folks from the [Northeastern Minnesota Synod](#) and greater church spent time telling stories of our combined work in our congregations and communities and exploring new ways to engage in storytelling. The atmosphere was alive, folks were curious, and leaders felt energized.

Throughout the day people could grab a special coffee from the Zion Brewtifik Coffee Cafe, eat a VLM cookie, sit in a comfy chair in the gathering space, or even sit in prayer in the sanctuary. There was "follow the yellow [brick road]" signage to help guide you through the building, plus an abundant, delicious lunch with warm pasta, fabulous salads and buttery bread (the leftovers become the Sunday meal at the local homeless shelter). This event could only happen because of Mission Support, which funds the work of our director for evangelical mission, synod support teams, and this synod's incredible staff, who worked faithfully to offer such a gathering.

"Walking Together: Encounters With Christ' provided the framework for the speakers and participants alike," says Julie Lepisto, coordinator for the Mission Interpreter (storytelling) Ministry in the Northeastern Minnesota Synod. "I was struck by the many ways we encounter Christ in our daily lives and in the different people who were openly sharing their experiences. Christ is alive in each one of us as we serve others in our ministries. What a joy to share those stories."

Encounters with Christ are often not what we expect. In Christ, God goes straight to the heart of the matter, inviting us to address questions we may not have known we had and revealing to us solutions that we might not have dreamed of on our own. These encounters change us and compel us to go out and tell others about the work God is doing in and through us and our congregations.

ENGAGE WITH US

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

“Learn to Construct a Narrative Budget for Your Community: Step by Step”

You’ve heard about narrative budgets. You’ve probably even seen some examples or a demonstration explaining what they are, how they’re assembled and why they work to convey your community’s impact. But maybe the process is still too confusing or daunting for you.

If so, this webinar is for you.

On Monday, Nov. 27, the Rev. Tim Brown, director of congregational stewardship, will lead a webinar going step by step through how to create a narrative budget. Bring your current (2023) budget and pieces of your projected (2024) budget, and get ready to do some work in real time to start the narrative budget process. Over the course of 45 minutes (with plenty of time for questions), this webinar will prepare you to present a narrative budget for your next annual meeting. Pastors, council members, stewardship teams and all other interested parties are welcome to attend.

Narrative Budget Step by Step

Monday, Nov. 27

6:30-7:30 p.m. Central time

<https://elcafoundation.zoom.us/j/81310420337?pwd=NVhnWUQ5RGI2dkYwOFR1SVdVeis0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 813 1042 0337

Passcode: 327160

GRATEFUL

We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate on events with our synods and regions. In September our Oregon Synod invited us to be part of its Day of Learning, then in October we partnered on the “Walking Together” event with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod. This time of collaboration allows us to learn of the many incredible stories happening across our church. So who wants to be the next synod to partner? We'd be honored to work together with you in planning, supporting and leading in whatever way meets your synod's need. Feel free to contact any of us to begin planning!

In deep gratitude,

Victoria Flood, Senior Director for Congregation and Synod Support

Nick Kiger, Director for Mission Support

Karen Kretschmann, Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement

