Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



November 2026 Mission Support Memo

STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

Taizé: Reinvigorating faith

A story from our Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod

As you read this story, what inspires you?
How is your synod supporting young adults?

Companion synod relationships blossom in exciting and varied ways. The Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod's partnership with the Lutheran Church in Great Britain offered an opportunity for some young adults to take a joint trip to Taizé, France. What started out as a good connection instead saw the Spirit at work, changing Eli Farrow during his time in Taizé. He was so deeply inspired that he has already started a monthly layperson- and young-adult-led, Taizé-style service at his congregation. Explore Eli's story in his own words:

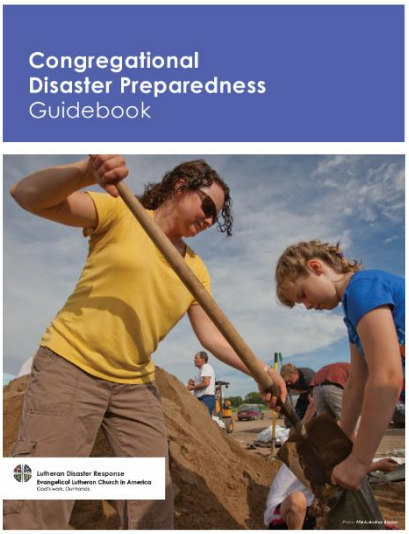
> *This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Taizé, France, and it is an experience that I know will stay with me for the rest of my life.*
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> *Taizé opened my eyes to just how much bigger the world is than what I know. During my time there, I met young people from countries all over the world, speaking different languages, coming from different cultures and bringing with them very different understandings and expressions of Christianity. Despite all those differences, we were able to worship together, learn from one another, share our stories and discover how much we actually have in common.*
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> *That experience challenged me to rethink many of the assumptions I have carried about faith and Christianity. It reminded me that there is no single way to experience or express faith, and that listening to Christians from different backgrounds can deepen rather than diminish our own faith. Being surrounded by so many people who were seeking God in their own unique ways was incredibly eye-opening.*
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> *More than anything, Taizé reinvigorated my faith. The prayer, worship, conversations and community made the entire trip deeply faith-building. I returned home with a renewed excitement about my relationship with God and a greater desire to continue learning from Christians who see the world differently than I do.*

I am incredibly grateful to the synod for making this opportunity possible and for investing in young people by helping send us to experiences like Taizé. Supporting young people in opportunities that allow them to encounter faith, community and the wider church is an investment that can have an impact far beyond the trip itself. I sincerely hope the synod will continue supporting opportunities like this for years to come. For me, Taizé was truly life-changing, and I hope to make the journey an annual part of my faith journey. I came home with a deeper faith, a broader understanding of the world and a renewed appreciation for the incredible diversity of the church.

ENGAGE WITH US

"Congregational Disaster Preparedness Guidebook"

The purpose of this guidebook is to help congregations take some basic and important steps toward resiliency and intentionality in response to disaster so that they will be better able to serve their communities when disasters strike. Use this full guide to create a comprehensive disaster plan and prepare your church to respond.



Explore the resource

GRATEFUL

We are deeply grateful for all the opportunities that we, the Congregation and Synod Support team, have had to gather and connect with synod staff, synod leaders and congregations. It has been a great joy to be invited to fall convocations, council retreats, first-call theological education gatherings and stewardship conversations to share, listen, teach and learn. Gathering as a church 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.

In gratitude,
Nick Kiger, Interim Senior Director for Congregation and Synod Support
Karen Kretschmann, Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement