

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER



STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

JANUARY 2026 Mission Support Memo

Bridge-builder for Justice

A story from the [Delaware-Maryland Synod](#)

As you read this story, what inspires you?

How is your congregation acting for justice?

Within the quiet rural town of historic Frankford, Del., you will find a dynamic welcoming congregation of deep faith that is appropriately named [Community Lutheran Church](#). Members make inclusivity a reality and proclaim: "All are welcome to the worship life of this congregation, including access to the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and all are welcome and encouraged to join in our congregational life and ministries. As part of celebrating all people as we are created, we commit to the work of anti-racism, social and economic justice, and to making inclusivity a reality for our community."



This is what recently drew Dayna Feher to join Community and what attracts so many to this place of faith. It's a place where all engage in awareness, education and action that draw them into the community to be bridge-builders for justice. Dayna is a lifelong Lutheran who had been searching for a church that practiced her values of equity, inclusion and social justice. Then she heard about Community: "*When I first started coming to Community Lutheran, I was blown away by the mission statement, by the outreach this congregation already does, and finally by the joy I felt in finding a church that speaks to me, to my sense of justice, and to my wanting to do something to help others and to make a difference — I can do that in this church!*" That is why Dayna felt safe inviting her granddaughter and her partner to Community's pride service. They were welcomed, accompanied and experienced a place of "proud allies." The two women said they "*would like to come back again sometime.*"



Community is deeply part of the community. It has an active feeding pantry, a grassroots English-language learning class, a partnership with an Elim Spanish-speaking church that offers services on-site, an LGBTQIA+ outreach and full inclusion support team, veteran support initiatives, active advocacy and harm mitigation, deep care for creation and so much more.

Over the last year, members worked with the [Delaware-Maryland Synod](#) to more clearly define their values. The Rev. Carla Christopher, assistant to the bishop for justice ministries, came for a month to help define a justice and strategic plan. She was so drawn to Community that she accepted a call as lead pastor, alongside the Rev. Karis Graham, a mission developer supported by ELCA exploration funds, and the Rev. Earl Janssen, consulting pastor.

Community is living into building bridges. It's a place where welcome, wonder and grace are lived out. It's a ministry of multiple forms but a place that lives like Jesus in all it does. It's a place that supports not only worship, Bible study and educational endeavors in the building but seeks to develop new ministry in new ways and new places, living out the grace and love of Jesus in the world. They believe that "together, we'll bridge differences and build an inclusive and dynamic faith community." Be a bridge-builder church!



ENGAGE WITH US

Property Development 101 for Synods

Do you have questions about property development in your synod? Join us for a conversation with a church development expert to learn the basics of real estate development and how to be a resource for congregations interested in such an opportunity. This webinar is intended for synod staff who have a desire to increase their understanding of property development.

Thursday, Feb. 12, 1 p.m. Central time

Join us by registering here:

<https://community.elca.org/church-property-webinar---property-development-101-for-synods>

GRATEFUL

We are extremely grateful that you have accessed our Mission Support Memos throughout last year. Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry has called us to remember that connections are vital to Jesus' work among us and across this church. In uncertain times, our stories knit us together, connect us to a world beyond ourselves, and help us to see Jesus in our actions and prayers. We hope you see how this memo is an important resource that also makes clear how we support each other in so many ways. Thank you for connecting in this way and feel free to share your stories by connecting with us at missionsupport@elca.org. Blessings.

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

