

ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod • Church Together Ambassador

As a Synod Assembly voting member for your congregation, we are inviting your partnership and leadership in celebrating the stories of our life together. Once again, we are commissioning leaders in each congregation to serve as Church Together Ambassadors. This could be you as your congregation's voting member; it could be another leader who is gifted and excited about telling our stories; or it might be that your previous ambassadors would like to continue. Engage this ministry in whatever way works for your community!

What does it mean to be a Church Together Ambassador?

- Ambassadors will serve as an **advocate of our shared life and witness** as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America until we meet in Assembly in 2020.
- Ambassadors will **receive monthly materials** containing stories and insights about why our life as church together matters; these materials will highlight ministries of our congregations, partners, synod and wider church. Each month will focus on a specific aspect of our life as church together. For example, in June we will focus on our life as Public Church. Here's what the toolkit will include:
 - Thoughts from the Bishop
 - Scripture connections
 - Mission Moment story
 - Mission Moment image
 - Mission Moment video as possible
 - Hymn suggestion
 - Prayer Petition
 - Offering Connections for each Sunday of the month connect how our shared resources allow us to engage in this particular area of ministry for the life of the world!
 - Questions for small group conversation
 - Ideas for potential speakers/preachers/study tools
- They will seek ways to **share the stories of your congregation's ministry and witness** with the rest of us as they **network with other Church Together Ambassadors** in exploring additional avenues for passing along the energy and enthusiasm generated when we gather in Assembly.

In coordination with your pastor/deacon and congregational leadership, Ambassadors will make sure that these **stories and insights are shared with their congregation**, ideally in worship, but also through other communication channels, through faith formation opportunities, etc.

Opportunities for Engaging the Toolkit:

- Share the monthly story as a “mission moment” during worship
- Share the monthly written story or video during the offering
- Include the Offering Connection in the bulletin or on the screen during the offering
- Include the Bishop’s reflection and/or monthly story in your monthly newsletter or weekly e-news.
- Forward the digital version of the toolkit to your ministry’s email list.
- Share the reflection, story, video, and/or offering connections through your social media channels
- Use the Bishop’s reflection and mission moment story as the devotions for your council or other committee meetings.
- Invite a guest preacher or adult forum leader to learn more about the month’s theme.
- Use the story and discussion questions in an adult forum or Bible study group.
- Consider how to share the story or talk about the theme in a children’s sermon.

Monthly Themes:

- **May:** Faith Formation
- **June:** Public Church/Social Ministry Organizations
- **July:** Congregational Life
- **August:** Educate, Equip, Enact (3E)
- **September:** Leadership
- **October:** Candidacy
- **November:** New, Renewing, and Mission Congregations
- **December:** Glocal Church
- **January:** Advocacy
- **February:** Campus Ministry
- **March:** Ecumenical Life
- **April:** Our Life Together as an Interdependent Church



Ministry Focus: *Faith Formation*

Thoughts from Bishop Jim:

When I offer my teaching on Claiming Our Gifts, I like to remind folks that we are not the type of Christians who believe that there is an "arrival point" in the life of faith. Rather we are people committed to lifelong growth as disciples, recognizing that there is ALWAYS something new to learn and experience about the God we meet in Jesus! Luther himself was passionate about providing tools for lifelong learning, offering everything from the Small Catechism to Table Talks. While our particular practices for faith formation may change over time - intergenerational models are popular now, for example - our hunger for Spirit-inspired faith discovery will always be part and parcel of our DNA as the ELCA.

Mission Moment: *Faith Lutheran Golden*



FAITH Lutheran has had a Vacation Bible School program for many years. Years ago, we started having conversations around why we do VBS and how do we help kids live into the mission of FAITH, which is *Changing Lives Through the Power of Jesus, so that they can go out into our world and be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus*. One answer is that we want to always share the love of Jesus with kids and help them know how much they are loved by an amazing God. In this process, we changed the name of VBS to Kids Camp. It sounds a little different, but that's just what we wanted to do with Kids Camp...make a difference.

Through our youth group's relationship with Joshua Station, an organization that provides a two-year transitional housing program for people experiencing homelessness, we dreamed of including Joshua Station kids in Kids Camp. We now rent vans to transport kids at Joshua Station to and from Kids Camp. We even have some volunteers from there each year! It's a great and growing relationship we love.

None of this could be done without the tremendous support and outpouring of love from the community of Faith Lutheran Church. This is an intergenerational event with people ages 12 to 85 working in the week leading up to and during the week of camp. We have grown from serving about 45 kids each summer to almost 300. The kids love the stories, games and projects, but they also love learning that they can share the love of Jesus with others and make a difference in their world.

The best part of all of this is that we do this in partnership with other churches in Golden! We have developed relationships that encourage congregations to support one another across denominational lines and work together to be the hands, feet and voice of Jesus in Golden.

Mission Moment Image:

Kids Camp kids put together Birthday Bags for the JeffCo Action Center, one of the many hands-on projects the kids do during their week.

Hymn: ELW 661: I Love to Tell the Story

Prayer Petition:

We pray for staff and volunteers across this church preparing for Vacation Bible Schools and Day Camps. Grant them patience in planning and joy in playing. We pray for all outdoor ministries, especially Rainbow Trail and Sky Ranch, preparing to welcome our youth and young adults. We pray for the youth who will attend camp this summer, that they may experience the love of God through these ministries.

Embodied Prayers:**Chalk Blessing:**

With a piece of chalk, decorate the sidewalk and entrance to your building; offer this or a similar blessing: *May the feet that walk in and out of these doors this summer know that the love of God goes with them, the love of this community envelops them, and the presence of Christ sustains and renews them. Amen.* Post a picture with the hashtag **#HolyChaosWelcomeHere** and tag the Rocky Mountain Synod!

Soil

With the dirt and seeds provided at Synod Assembly, plant a flower in your garden or flower pot with dirt from Sky Ranch and Rainbow Trail. With those gathered, pray together:

God of creation, bless this soil. Add its richness to our ground and remind us of the growth that happens as our youth travel to summer camp, our counselors bring camp to congregations and ministries, and all are nourished by the blessing of time in your beautiful outdoors in mountain, plain, and stream. Amen.

Offering Connections (to include in the offering portion of worship)

May 5: Your gifts help support our 2 outdoor ministry sites, Rainbow Trail and Sky Ranch

May 12: Every 3 years, over 30,000 youth and adults gather for the ELCA Youth Gathering. Your offerings help support the staff who work to organize this event!

May 19: Your generosity has made possible the Rocky Mountain Synod Youth Council. Thank you for supporting and equipping our youth and young adults!

May 26: Our ELCA Churchwide Office produce resources for adult faith formation and Bible studies, made possible through your regular offerings.

Community Conversations:**Read one or more of the following texts:**

2 Timothy 1: 3-14

Romans 12:1-3

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

Video

Watch a clip sharing one story of the impact of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp: <https://vimeo.com/220492801>
(start at around 1:00 and watch until 5:30)

Community Questions:

- Did you go to camp or attend VBS as a youth? What do you remember? What foods, smells, songs, or activities bring you back to those memories?
- What other places, people, or events shaped your faith as a youth or adult?
- If you were heading to camp next week, what is the first thing you would do?
- How have you seen camp, Vacation Bible School, or day camp shape the youth and young adults in your congregation?

Pray:

Close with a prayer of gratitude for the memories and gifts from camp, Vacation Bible School, and day camp. Pray for camp staff and campers.

Just for Fun:

Brew and serve Rainbow Trail or Sky Ranch coffee. Serve camp snacks like trail mix or s'mores.

**Christ's
Church**
better together