

A decorative frame with floral and scrollwork elements surrounds the text. The frame consists of a central rectangular border with rounded corners, flanked by ornate floral flourishes at the top and bottom. The background is a dark, textured grey.

Go and....

Share the Story!



Goals for this Workshop

01 Our Stories

Quick Review from Last Meeting

02 Why We Share

Communications is a ministry

03 Congregational Stories

Each congregation is a library of stories



01

Our Stories

Practice doesn't make perfect; it makes better.





A quick review from last month

Faith Stories: A faith story is simply an encounter with God.

Tell about a time when you didn't think you could have made it through a situation if God had not been there to bring you through it.

Tell about a time when you felt God very close to you...right there present with you.

Tell about a time when you heard God speaking to you through another person or a situation.

Tell about a special time of prayer that you had with God.

Tell about a time when you were really worried about someone or something. How did you feel God's presence?





The Holy Spirit gives us opportunities every day to share our faith and/or to invite someone to meet Jesus in or through us or our congregation. Many of these opportunities are occasions for “planting seeds.” How and if these seeds grow is the work of the Spirit. However, we have the privilege of being the sowers.



How did your practice go?



Family/
Friends?



In the
Church?



On Social
Media?



02

Why We Share

Cuz Jesus Told Us To.



Jennifer Morrow

@jenniferemorrow

Me: *looking through a telescope*:
Wow, the universe is so beautiful
God: *placing hands inside black holes*:
Thanksssss, it has pockets



Throughout the gospels, especially in Mark, people regularly disobey Jesus. He tells them to not share their encounter with God but no one listens to him.



Sharing Stories: That's Communication!



Communicare

The root of the word “communication” in Latin is *communicare*, which means to share, or to make common (Weekley, 1967).



More than information

Communication is defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning (Pearson & Nelson, 2000)



It's a ministry!

When it comes to communication ministry, the spiritual gifts of faith, being able to convey the Gospel, encouraging and welcoming others, and being able to lead are essential.
(Social Media Gospel, 2015)

Proclaiming the good news of God in Christ through word and deed is one of our baptismal promises but that doesn't mean communications is everyone's spiritual gift. Being able to communicate in the church can be cultivated.



Jesus said to [Mary], “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

-John 20:17-18





Our Faith = Communications Framework



- ✚ Believing in a gracious and merciful God calls us to be gracious and merciful during [all] interactions in terms of content and tone.
- ✚ Believing in the power of the Holy Spirit inspires us to be open to whatever is revealed during [all] conversations about God's presence and our choices relative to faith and religious expressions thereof.
- ✚ Believing that Scriptures provides a foundation for ethical living calls us to use [all communications] as [a] tool to convey Scripture, not only by broadcasting verses but also by providing opportunities for their study and discussion.
- ✚ Believing in Gospel teachings calls us to model what we believe while using [communications] by offering helpful information, providing comfort, sharing joy, and engaging in conversations that build and unite, rather than tear down or divide the people of God.
- ✚ Believing in the grace available through sacraments calls us to encourage their receipt, support preparation for them, and invite others to witness their celebration.

Social Media Gospel (2015)





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Faith is a team sport: an Assembly of Believers



Where Two or Three are
Gathered

The Cloud of Witnesses

Living, Sharing, Engaging, and
Modeling the Christian Life

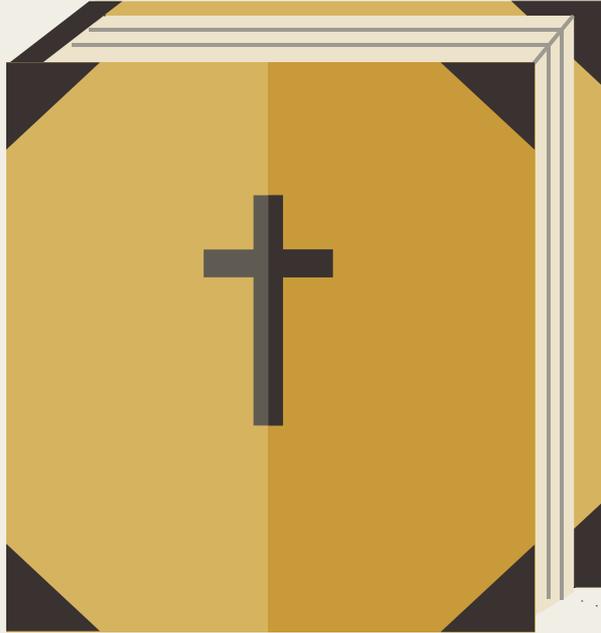
The people we tell our stories
too



✦

✦

A Library of Believers



The Bible can be described as not just one book but a library of stories stretching over hundreds of years.

The story you share is another verse, chapter, and page in the future God is bringing about.

But since you're a part of a body of Christ, your story is part of the library of stories that get to be told.





03

Congregational Stories

Story Matters





*Ogres have layers. Onions have layers.
You get it? We both have layers.*

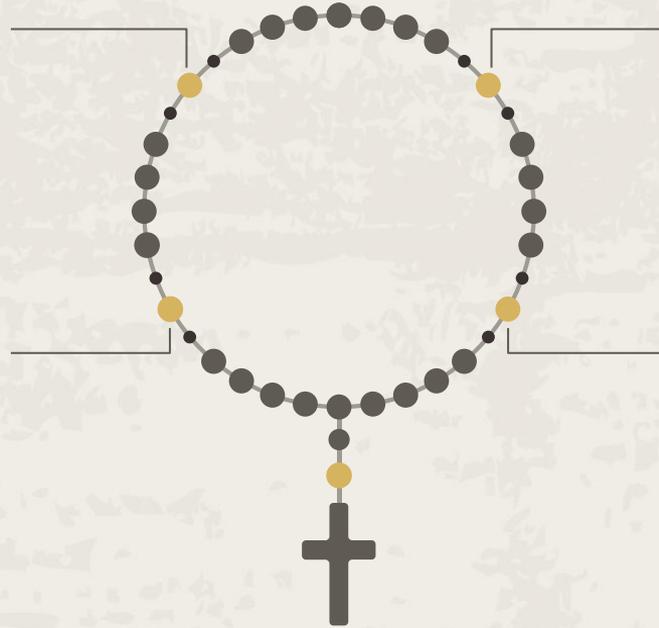
Story Matters: Practice and Grow

A Narrative Framework

The Congregation Story

Chapters and Verses

The stories we live out without realizing it



A Timeline

Looking Back to Look Forward

The Body of Christ

The B.o.C. can't be what it's supposed to be without you.

Your Story + Story Matters =
A Treasure chest of Stories To
Tell

So how?





Strategy

“We need to use social media because everyone else uses it” is not a strategy. Social media in and of itself is not a strategy. Social media [and all communications] is a tool that must be selected and used with purposeful forethought. Social Media Gospel (2015)



✦

Questions to Consider

The community that is here; the community that will be here; the community that isn't here yet

A

Who do we want to reach?

B

What do we want to happen as a result of using these tools?

C

What do we want people to know, learn, or experience about us, God, Jesus, faith, etc?



These are choices you get to make. Appendix A in Social Media Gospel has a good list to reflect on

✦





Questions to Consider



The congregational and personal stories shared should be easily identifiable by those who meet you for the first time. They should be specific enough to be meaningful while open enough to create space for new people to make this story into something new.







How to Share



Focus!

You can only do so much.



Look Alive

Whatever you do, use it.
Doesn't need to be perfect.



Website

Keep it up to date. Focus on smartphone users.



Worship

Livestream and do it well (audio is key)



Newsletters

A place where your library of stories can be revealed.



Pick 1 Social Media

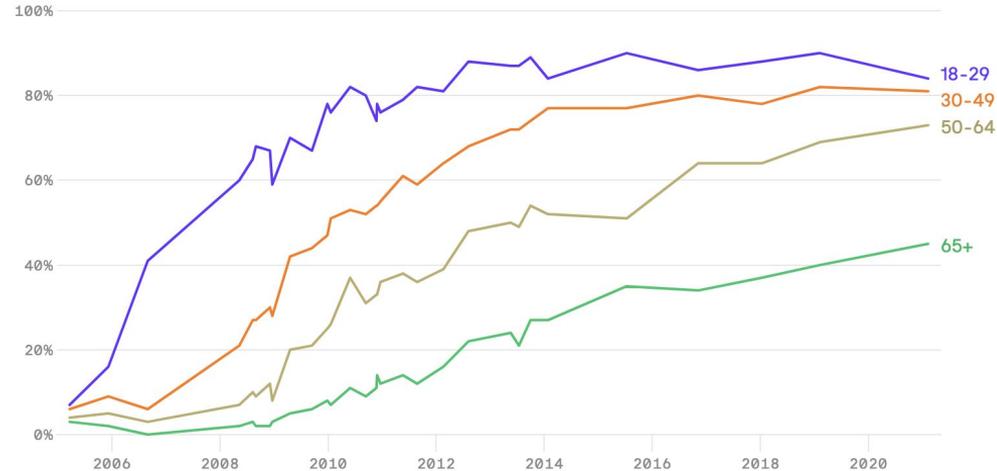
If there's only one of you, pick one Social Media to do well at.



Stories & Networks

Percentage of Americans who say they use at least one social media site, by age

Regular surveys of about 1,500 U.S. adults conducted 2005–2021



Reproduced from [Pew Research Center](#); Chart: Axios Visuals

From July 26, 2022

<https://www.axios.com/2022/07/26/gen-z-social-media-tiktok-discord-facebook>



Stories & Networks



- Unlike the early social networks like MySpace, Friendster and Facebook, **these communities don't start with friends**. They are created by people — often strangers — **with shared interests**.
 - Today, most conversations between real-world connections have moved to **private messaging**, and the richest sort of social networking is happening between creators and their communities.
 - Apps like Discord, Geneva and Telegram have become where creators feel they can best **develop personalized connections** with their fans, The Washington Post [reports](#).
- 
- 



Find Your Story And Then...





You will sound like a broken record and
that's okay.

A

Think Geographically

Physically, digitally, locally, nationally, and through the value of interdependence.

B

Think Generationally

Common refrain: “no one reads the bulletin, is at church during announcements, reads the newsletter, reads emails, etc etc.” People are everywhere so invest where ever your people currently are.

C

Content no longer king

Churches generate lots of content! Yet people connect to content that is authentic and relationship focused. Tell people you want them to be there - and mean it (beyond \$.)

D

Learning Styles

Seeing/Reading (visual)
listening/speaking (auditory),
Touching/Doing (kinesthetic)





Website Help



- ✚ The ELCA has partnered with Tithe.ly to help with your online giving, app, and website needs. Learn more by visiting <https://get.tithe.ly/elca> and check out an example at <https://churchofthesavior-lutheran.org/>
- ✚ Squarespace <https://www.squarespace.com/>
- ✚ For Worship and Livestream help
 - Quick thoughts: Video doesn't need to be amazing but the audio does.
 - It will cost money to do what you want to do.
 - Your tech team will dictate what you are able to do.
 - Worship includes those in the building, at home, and those worshipping at a different time.



Canva for Graphics



Canva <https://www.canva.com> is a web-based graphic generator.

They provide free pro-accounts to non-profits (including churches!)

To get a pro-account for your church, you will need your tax status documentation. You can get that by sending an email to 501c3@elca.org with your church's legal name, full street address and 9-digit Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). The ELCA's office of the Secretary will send you back 3 pdfs. Combine those pdfs into 1 file and use that document to apply for a Canva pro account at <https://support.canva.com/account-basics/nonprofit-program/apply-for-nonprofit/>.

Email Tools

✚ MailChimp <https://mailchimp.com/>



✦

Social Media to Be On Right Now

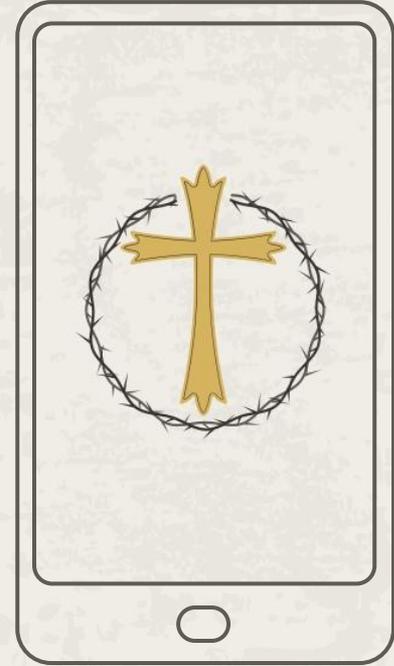
✦

Don't know where your people are? Make sure you are on Facebook and Instagram.

Know where your people are? Make sure you are on Facebook, Instagram, and where they are.

You're also never too old to be on TikTok. But be mindful that navigating the algorithm on every site will be tricky.

Don't be afraid to share your mistakes, bloopers, and earnest prayers. Only God is perfect.



All The People Smarter Than Me

Name	Website	What
Digivangelism	digivangelism.org/	Training, Resources, Workshops
Virginia Synod	vasynod.org/resources/digital-ministry-toolbox/	A2B for Digital Ministry
Faith-Lead	faithlead.luthersem.edu	Luther Seminary Resources
Practical Resources Center	www.prcli.org/	Based in NY and some free webinars
Pastor David Hansen	digitalpastor.org/	ELCA pastor devoted to sharing digital ministry



Get Inspired



Instagram: Messiah in Oakland <https://www.instagram.com/messiahoaklandnj/>, All Places Together <https://www.instagram.com/allplacestogether/>, Messiah in Schenectady(NY) <https://www.instagram.com/messiahschenectady/>

Facebook: Living Waters, Ringoes - <https://www.facebook.com/adminterry/>, Faith in Hillsborough <https://www.facebook.com/faithlutherannj>, Advent in NYC <https://www.facebook.com/AdventNYC>

Church website: Calvary, Cranford <https://www.calvarycranford.com/>, St. Paul East Windsor <https://www.stpauleastwindsor.org/>, Church of the Savior <https://churchofthesavior-lutheran.org/>

Feeding Faith Well: Wednesday nights on Gloria Dei Lutheran Church <https://www.facebook.com/gloriadeichatham/>





Spread the Good News!

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