

'Our Lutheran Life': Toolkit for story submission

"Our Lutheran Life" invites ELCA members to tell contemporary stories inspired by the Reformation about how the power of God's grace plays out in the complexities of daily life, relationships, work and school. Your story is welcome, whether it addresses complex questions, heals suffering or recounts times of joy.

These stories will narrate how Lutherans move in today's society as Christians connected to the world around them, seeking to live out their faith for the next 500 years and beyond.

Create and submit your story using the recommendations provided here.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Anniversary Communications team will listen to every story to ensure it fits within the story theme and guidelines. Due to the number of anticipated submissions, there is no guarantee as to when your story will be posted. However, we will make every effort to include all stories that fit within the theme and specifics provided.*

What you need:

As you plan your story, we encourage you to consider the following points for capturing an engaging story:

1. Identify what story you would like to tell and how you want to tell it: written, audio or video. Use the guide below for tips on providing a quality recorded story.
2. If you choose to record a video or audio story, we welcome stories in whatever style you are able to provide. Some folks like to simply record a story – like what you would post on Facebook. Others like to submit something with photos or music. Whatever the case, all stories are welcome.
3. If you plan to submit a recorded story, pick a method that will create a clear recording. These include: a recent smartphone (2015 or newer) with a good camera; a personal, hand-held digital camera; or a laptop with a camera using Skype or a related program.
4. If you submit a written story, please keep it to a maximum of 1,200 words. Also, be sure to send at least one photograph that can be posted with the story.
5. Submit your written story AND a completed [ELCA Release Form](#) and photo(s) to 500@elca.org.

A guide to recording your story

Like any storyteller, you want your story to have an impact. To help you achieve that, consider the following recommendations:

- Think about the story you'd like to tell. Write a few bullet points as a reminder of what you'd like to say, including using the [StoryCorps prompts](#) at ELCA500.org/resources/more/ (Reformation anniversary storytelling projects).
- Practice your story out loud before recording.
- Set your device securely and directly in front of you or near your face. Consider using a tripod or stand, if you have one. Or, have someone record the story for you.
- Keep the recording under five minutes. Keep in mind that audiences often lose interest in stories longer than three minutes.

A guide to recording your story (continued)

- When you start recording, introduce yourself and let us know where you're from. Example: "Hi, I'm Jane Doe, and I attend Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington."
- When you record, speak at your normal pace. After recording, have someone listen to the recording to ensure it's easy to follow.
- Re-record your story if you have spoken too fast, the sound is garbled or there is too much background noise. If it is a video file, check for clarity of the video.
- Most of all, have fun!

Audio:

When choosing to record an audio file, it's easiest to use the audio recording app on your smartphone. Simply hit the record button, record your message and save the file. Then submit your story via [ELCA.wetransfer.com](https://www.elca.wetransfer.com) or the [ELCA500 Facebook](#) page's message feature.

If you're a bit of techy and want to edit your file, consider downloading the TwistedWave Audio Editor app (it costs \$9.99). This app lets you record your story and edit out unwanted sounds, background noise and change the volume for optimal quality. You can also add the "Our Lutheran Life" theme music. [Click here](#) to download and save the music file.

Once the file is complete, submit it **with** a completed [ELCA Release Form](#) via [ELCA.wetransfer.com](https://www.elca.wetransfer.com) or the [ELCA500 Facebook](#) page's message feature. We encourage you to also submit a photo of yourself so we can post it with your story.

Video:

You can use your smartphone camera to record a video. It's easy – simply hit the record button in the video mode, record your story and save the file. Then, submit it via [ELCA.wetransfer.com](https://www.elca.wetransfer.com) or the [ELCA500 Facebook](#) page's message feature.

If you're a techy and want to edit the video, download a video editing file from the internet. You can also add the "Our Lutheran Life" theme music. [Click here](#) to download and save the music file.

Then, edit your file, save and send it **with** a completed [ELCA Release Form](#) via [ELCA.wetransfer.com](https://www.elca.wetransfer.com) or the [ELCA500 Facebook](#) page's message feature. We encourage you to also submit a photo of yourself so we can post it with your story.