

# STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

## Celebrating Partnerships to Share the Gospel

For the Rev. Laura Strietelmeier, the last worship service of her seminary internship at Salem Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, was filled with laughter and tears.



The congregation sang a song composed just for the intern by their pastor, the Rev. Mary Lou Baumgartner. “She didn’t miss any of my foibles,” remembers Pastor Strietelmeier with a laugh.

She was also presented with a handmade scrapbook that occupies a special place in her office at Hope Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, where Pastor Strietelmeier accepted a call in August 2009. Bursting with photographs and loving notes from members, the scrapbook is a tangible reminder of the place where she “lived and grew and served.”

Says Pastor Strietelmeier, “What an overwhelming gift to receive at the end of a year in which you have poured so much of your heart into your work and so much of other people’s hearts have been poured into you.”

Pastor Strietelmeier is one of a dozen interns Salem has welcomed under the leadership of Pastor Baumgartner.

Acknowledging that the congregation faces financial challenges, Pastor Baumgartner says, “What we aren’t able to give in mission support we can do by making an investment in future leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).” An ELCA Horizon Internship grant funds the interns’ salary and benefits.

Both pastors note that Salem’s presence in the Vistula neighborhood of Toledo is contingent upon a network of financial support from all expressions of this church.

“Salem is of absolute importance to this church,” said the Rev. Marc Miller, assistant to the bishop, ELCA Northwestern Ohio Synod. “It’s in places like Vistula where the presence of God can often be most strongly felt.”

Pastor Strietelmeier says, “At Salem I learned about the value of shared partnerships helping us to proclaim the gospel. Salem wouldn’t be here without the support and generosity of the ELCA and its members.”

For more *Stories of Faith in Action*, visit [www.elca.org/stories](http://www.elca.org/stories).  
Do you have a story to share? E-mail us at [stories@elca.org](mailto:stories@elca.org).



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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