Church of the Presentation

Taizé, France Pilgrimage

May 22-30, 2027

Applications are due no later than Sunday, November 29, 2026

Destination

The Taizé Community, a monastic community in the Burgundy region of France, was founded in 1940 by a young Swiss man named Brother Roger to shelter refugees during World War II and promote reconciliation and unity among different Christian denominations. Today, the Taizé community comprises approximately 80 brothers from diverse Christian traditions and geographical backgrounds. Each year, tens of thousands of teens and young adults from around the world travel to Taizé to share in prayer, silence, service, and fellowship. They then bring the ethos of unity and peacemaking back to their own lives and communities. For further information about the week in Taizé, see page 5.

Who can apply?

Any Presentation parishioner who will be between the ages of 18-35 by May 21, 2027, may apply. Non-parishioners may apply, but preference will be given to Presentation parishioners. Each applicant must provide the following by Sunday, November 29, 2026:

- Completed basic information form
- A typed letter of intent, about 500-700 words in length
- A copy of the photo page of your passport that expires no earlier than November 31, 2027
- A deposit of $500 towards travel costs which must be submitted by personal check, payable to Church of the Presentation, memo "Taizé Pilgrimage"
- A summary of your availability between December 2026-May 2027
- The COMPLETE PACKET (that is, pages 3 and 4 of this document, as well as the letter of intent and trip deposit) is due by Sunday, November 29, 2026.

Dates & Cost

Pilgrimage Dates: ***Saturday, May 22 – Sunday May 30, 2027***

Fundraising Dates: To be determined in partnership with other Church of the Presentation mission trips. *Each missionary is expected to participate fully to the extent of their availability in the joint fundraising projects.* *Availability will be collected as part of the application.*

The overall cost of the trip is anticipated to be approximately **$2900.00 per person, which cost includes the non-refundable deposit of $500.** This overall cost will include transport to/from the parish to/from the airport, roundtrip airfare and luggage fees, and housing and meals in Taizé. Every effort will be made to subsidize this overall cost through individual letter writing campaigns by each participant and through mandatory team fundraising events.

Who from the parish will be accompanying & coordinating the pilgrims?

Our Pastor, Fr. Anthony Randazzo (who is a friend of Brother Émile of Taizé), Music Ministry member, Melanie Haubert Cheplic, and a youth ministry staff member will be fellow pilgrims with the group of young adults on this pilgrimage and will offer guidance and coordination support prior to and throughout the trip.

Letter of Intent

This letter will help us to understand why you want to go on this pilgrimage and what you hope to obtain from this experience. Please be detailed and specific in this letter.

What commitments are required for this pilgrimage?

There are several required elements of the Taizé pilgrimage. Formation and community building meetings and events are *critical* to the group's formation and success for the week. It is *essential* for the group to develop a level of trust that will empower a good working relationship, beginning prior to the trip. These events also help the team leaders to assess each team member's ability to handle the physical and emotional challenges of living in a potentially uncomfortable environment.

Given the potential that a portion of the team may be made up of college-aged students and others, who may not be in the area of Church of the Presentation for regular formation meetings, there is a high likelihood that most of the mandatory meetings will be hybrid – in person and by Zoom. For this reason, **it is imperative that applicants fill out the availability section of this application so that as many in-person events as possible may be offered.**

Through the course of the formation meetings, the group will work together on team building activities, fundraisers, and lessons about the Taizé community. There will be opportunities to participate in cultural sensitivity training, explore Catholic Social Teaching, and cultivate a deeper personal relationship with Christ so as to be better able to become a servant as he was.

****Dates for formation meetings and fundraising events will be provided after applications are submitted. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to coordinate dates as efficiently as possible.*

When will I find out if I have been accepted or have been put on the waitlist?

All completed applications that are turned in by **Sunday, November 29, 2026** will be considered for this pilgrimage. **Applicants will be advised of their acceptance by December 13, 2026, at which time, you will be required to confirm your participation and your $500 deposit will become non-refundable**. Any applicant whom we are unable to accept at that time will be kept on a waitlist in the event that space becomes available.

What are the next steps to take if I am accepted for the pilgrimage?

Once an applicant receives notice of their acceptance and confirms their participation, medical paperwork, waiver forms, and additional information will be addressed at the first meeting (Exact date TBD). If you have any questions about any follow up information, please contact Marianne Strayton: mstrayton@churchofpresentation.org.

Fundraising Events

As an individual, all participants will have an opportunity to fundraise through a letter writing campaign, for which guidance will be provided. As a group, we will plan as many fundraising events as possible in partnership with other Church of the Presentation mission trips. By March 30, 2027, the total amount of funds raised by each participant, through both individual fundraising and group fundraising, will be assessed. Each participant will then be ***personally responsible*** for the balance of the trip costs. Participation in fundraising events is **mandatory**.

> EXAMPLE: If 10 people are going, and our trip receives $12,500 from the group fundraising events, then each participant would be credited $1,250.00 towards the cost of the trip. **The remaining $1,650.00 would then need to be personally contributed or fundraised by each pilgrim by March 30**.

Church of the Presentation

Taizé, France Pilgrimage

May 22-30, 2027

Applications are due no later than November 29, 2026

APPLICATION FORM (please print)

Name_____Date of Birth_____Sex_____.

Address_____City_____State_____.

Email_____Phone_____.

Please provide by separate confidential email to Marianne Strayton mstrayton@churchofpresentation.org information concerning any medical condition and requested accommodation that you may require during the pilgrimage (*this information will be held confidential; the ability to make appropriate accommodations once at Taizé will be subject to the ability of the Taizé community and outside of the control of the Church of the Presentation*)

_____..

You must include the following:

❑ **Letter of Intent**

- Why do you want to participate in this pilgrimage/service trip? What do you hope to obtain from the experience?
- What gifts, talents, motivations, and interests can you offer that would enhance the experience for the group?
- If you have been on a pilgrimage or service trip before, what experience/expertise can you bring to the group? Why do you wish to do another service trip? How do you see yourself growing more deeply this year?

❑ I have attached a copy of the photo page of my passport, which has an expiration date after November 31, 2027
OR I will provide a copy of the photo page of my passport by February 25, 2027.

Availability (Please complete in the box below the questions.)

1. What dates will you **be able to come to the parish** for formation/fundraising events?
   - ⇒ College students, **list the dates you will be home for any breaks** between the date of your application submission and trip departure on May 22.
2. List days of the week that work best for you for in-person and/or Zoom meetings.
3. Describe the likelihood of you being able to travel back to the parish for the weekend. That is, when there is a weekend fundraising event or formation experience (such as a team retreat), knowing attendance is mandatory, what is the likelihood that you will be able to return and attend?

Please describe availability December 2026-May 2027:
1.

2.

3.

Statement of Agreement

By signing this form, I am agreeing that all of the information I have supplied is accurate and truthful. I am stating that I have read through and understand the entire application process and further agree that by applying for this pilgrimage:

Please initial all the following:

_____ I completely understand that I am personally responsible for the overall cost of the pilgrimage/service trip ($2,900), which may be reduced through individual and group fundraising and that if selected, my $500 deposit will be non-refundable and applied to the overall cost of the pilgrimage/service trip .

_____ I am committing to participating in mandatory formation and fundraising activities.

_____ I further understand that if I have not submitted by **February 25, 2027**, a copy of my valid passport (***which expires no sooner than November 31, 2027***), I will not be eligible to go on the pilgrimage and all raised funds, including my deposit, would be non-refundable.

Applicant Signature_____Date_____.

Instructions for Submission:

Please send or bring in the completed application packet to addressed to:

Church of the Presentation
Attn: Marianne Strayton - Taizé 2027
271 W. Saddle River Rd.
Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458

Or, email a digital copy of *all* required documents to mstrayton@churchofpresentation.org. If emailing the packet, you will receive confirmation that the documents have been received.

Taizé Programme

From its beginning, the community has been inspired by two aims: to live in communion with God through prayer and to be a leaven of peace and trust in the midst of the human family. A stay at Taizé is an opportunity to seek communion with God in prayer, singing, silence and reflection. It can be possible to rediscover an inner peace, a meaning to life and a new impetus. Experiencing a simple life shared with others reminds us that daily life is the place where Christ is waiting for us.

Some young people are looking for ways of following Christ with their whole lives. A stay in Taizé can help discern this call.

It is difficult to convey in words the life and atmosphere of the youth meetings in Taizé. Please see the website taize.fr, social media accounts,and other multimedia articles to get a better feel for this.

- Each day, brothers of the community or a sister of St. Andrew introduce a Bible reflection, followed by a time of silence and sharing in small groups.

- In the afternoon, workshops help to deepen the relationship between faith and life in the areas of work, social questions, art and culture, the search for world peace.

- Young adults who wish can spend the week or the weekend in silence, to take time to listen to how God speaks to them in prayer, in the Bible or through the events of their life.

Worship at Taizé

Three times a day everyone gathers with the community in the church for prayer with songs, a scripture reading and silence. It will not be like any kind of church service most young people have been to before and for most people this is the most inspiring and significant part of being in Taizé. During the worship there are simple chants in a wide variety of languages. You don't need to know these in advance as chant books are available and your group will learn them throughout the week. After the worship in the evening the chants go on for some time and there are brothers from the community available to talk to people who wish to.

Morning prayer ends with the distribution of communion, for those who wish to receive.

The midday prayer is the shortest.

There is a Eucharist service on the Sunday morning.

A Typical day at Taizé (Monday- Friday)

8:15 am	Morning Prayer, then breakfast
10 am	Bible reflection, sharing, practical work
12:20 pm	Midday prayer, then lunch
2 pm	Song practice
3:15 pm	Bible reflection, sharing, workshops
5 pm	Tea
5:30 pm	Meetings, practical work, workshops
7 pm	Evening meal
8:30 pm	Evening prayer, then vigil with songs in the church or free time
9:30 pm	Free socializing & game time at 'Oyak'