

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. – Matthew 25:35

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever browsed through the section on ELCA World Hunger on the churchwide website? If so, you may realize the vastness of our church's outreach to alleviate hunger in our communities, nation, and world. We belong to a denomination that is dynamic in its response to the living word, which calls us to care for one another in our strength and vulnerability.

ELCA's 2016 Priority - This year, our larger church is lifting up the work of ELCA World Hunger and its ministries internationally in more than 50 countries and here in the United States through community development, networking, education, and advocacy.

ELCA World Hunger and Advocacy - "We believe that government and elected officials play an essential role. We encourage funding that helps people who need food, housing and healthcare, and we urge protection of the land and waters that people rely on for food and livelihood. By speaking with and on behalf of those who are hungry through advocacy, ELCA World Hunger works to change the systems that perpetuate poverty."

What we do - The Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW) is an ELCA advocacy ministry addressing hunger and poverty by seeking systemic change. We directly contact legislators as well as assist people of faith to find their own authority to advocate. We also serve as an educational resource for congregations and church leaders. LOPPW does all of this in partnership with the Greater Milwaukee Synod and five other synods with congregations in Wisconsin and with major support from ELCA World Hunger.

LOPPW Priorities - Many problems fall under the umbrella of hunger and poverty. In Wisconsin, LOPPW focuses on human trafficking, issues directly related to food such as FoodShare, prison reform, care for God's creation, and the problem of money in politics. We also support the ELCA's federal efforts in areas such as immigration.

Accompanying New GMS Hunger Team - LOPPW staff is grateful for the openness of Bishop Jeff Barrow when LOPPW offered to accompany the synod in creating a new synod team, and to Rev. Dr. Sandy Chrostowski for working together on initiating the team. The director was invited to give a brief presentation and sit on a panel on social justice at Lead and Learn. Two members of the hunger team, Tom and Gail Osterfield, also had a table at the event.

Interns and Resources – Intern Kyle Kretschmann, a UW-Madison graduate in economics, worked on a resource on how money distorts politics, especially for those experiencing poverty, and he will help organize candidate forums. For one semester, we welcomed Intern Genevieve Baldwin from the UW-Madison's STREETS Program to help develop and design a congregational resource on human trafficking.

Advocacy Day in Wisconsin – We were pleased to be a part of People of Faith United for Justice, which held its biennial Advocacy Day before the state budget was passed. More than

700 people, including Bishop Barrow participated in the event.

Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. - LOPPW's director met two grassroots leaders, Melissa and Marquitta Smith of Hephatha Lutheran at the D.C. advocacy gathering and accompanied them and bishops on their visits to congress people and the offices of our two state senators.

Most Recent Results - End of the Legislative Session in February, 2016

Human Trafficking

The assembly and senate passed a significant anti-trafficking bill LOPPW supported. AB 737 contains about 2/3 of the Safe Harbor bill, including sex trafficking added to the definition of child abuse, a mandate that law enforcement report suspected child abuse by non-caregivers to DCF, and additional funding to support victims of sex trafficking.

Food Security

We stood against AB 222 that would require recipients of FoodShare to use a photo ID. It passed the assembly several months ago but recently stopped in the senate (for now).

Prison Reform

We supported SB 280, which would return first time, nonviolent 17-yr old offenders to the original juvenile justice system. An amendment was added in February but the bill is on hold.

We supported SB 322 that would increase compensation for wrongfully imprisoned persons and provide assistance for them after their release. The bill recently passed in the assembly but has been referred to the Joint Committee on Finance.

Care for God's Creation

We spoke against SB 432, which would streamline corporations' ability to privatize public utilities and diminish our public voice in the process. We had concerns about costs, especially for people in poverty, and water safety. The bill died in the senate (for now).

Thank You! Thank you for choosing your church and its larger mission in the world to support with your time, talent and financial gifts. We appreciate your focus on ELCA World Hunger in 2016 and your synod's support of LOPPW. We are grateful for the leadership of Bishop Jeff Barrow and the synod staff. And we are fortunate to have Ms. Venice Williams and Rev. Jay McDivitt as your representatives to the LOPPW Advisory Council.



Left: Rev. McDivitt (middle) at Advisory Council Retreat



Right: Ms. Williams speaking on The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Body and Soul Community Center (LOPPW's director led workshop on human trafficking)

Yours in Christ,

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Check us out at www.loppw.org for resources and to sign up for Action Alerts

Also find us on Facebook by searching LOPPW