

Feeding Our Neighbors – How English Lutheran Church Can Help

(Taken and adapted from [Wisconsin Council of Churches](#))

As we approach November, those who serve hungry people in their communities are bracing. The federal government shutdown and its refusal to use contingency funds mean that about 700,000 people in Wisconsin will not receive their November SNAP (known as Foodshare in Wisconsin) benefits.

Our Christian faith is filled with stories of feeding people. The feeding of the multitudes is the only miracle outside the resurrection that is present in all four Gospels. Whether it was 4,000 or 5,000 people (though there were probably also women and children who were not included in those numbers), we see Jesus devising ways for people to be fed. Even when his disciples suggested it was too difficult, Jesus knew the importance of nourishment and worked miracles, so people didn't suffer. As we see multitudes of people in our community losing access to food benefits on top of already growing need, we are invited to follow in Jesus' footsteps and get creative about feeding our neighbors.

Here are some ways we of English Lutheran Church can help address the growing needs in our community:

- Give cash to Wafer and the Hunger Task Force. These organizations can buy more food with cash donated to them versus people simply donating grocery-type items.
- With Halloween on Friday, invite your children to collect money for a food pantry during trick or treat.
- Consider a reverse Advent calendar to collect food. Rather than getting a treat each day, consider donating food (or cash) to a pantry.
- Volunteer to make a meal for those who use the Warming Shelter in downtown La Crosse this winter.
- Volunteer at Trinity Lutheran Church's Monday Night Ministries.
- Collect large cans of cranberries, green beans and fruit punch to help with the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner in La Crosse.

What are other ideas that you have to help our neighbors?

Jemar Tisby, bestselling author and historian, recently wrote, "SNAP benefits won't go out in November. People of conscience all over the nation are already coming together to fill the gaps and fill stomachs. My concern is that we won't talk enough about how it's not supposed to be this way. We'll be working so hard we'll kind of forget that we shouldn't be working this hard. We don't need more survival tactics; we need systems structured to treat people with dignity." We invite you to pair feeding your neighbors with advocacy and contact your elected officials.

You may be aware that legislation has changed the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funding formula. States are now required to pay 75% of administrative costs instead of sharing those costs with federal government 50/50. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has estimated \$69.2 million in GPR is needed to implement these changes in Wisconsin's FoodShare program in this biennium and has made a request to the legislature for that funding.

Several food security, health, and human rights organizations in the state have come together to ask the state legislature to fully and immediately support DHS's funding request as a part of AB387/SB390, the "budget correction" bill.

Please consider letting our elected officials know that their constituents are concerned about food insecurity.

Feeding Wisconsin also has a petition to let members of Congress know that SNAP cuts will harm members of our community.