

## Ministry Focus: *Advocacy*

### Thoughts from Bishop Jim:

*As Lutheran Christians we recognize that God's work in the world takes many forms. God dares to use imperfect institutions - like government and the organized church - to make necessary things happen! Luther understood the church's engagement with the government on behalf of the neighbor to be a mark of the Christian life. I'm grateful that our church engages in advocacy at the state, national and international level as a way to speak for and with our neighbors, as together we seek policies and legislation that will improve the lives of the most God's most vulnerable children.*

### Mission Moment: Lutheran Day at the Legislature



Every February, Lutherans and other people of faith gather at the Colorado State Capitol for the annual Lutheran Day at the Legislature. The day typically starts with breakfast with legislators and other speakers, who illuminate the realities of public service and share expert tips on the best ways to get involved. From there, participants walk a short distance to the State Capitol, where they find their legislators on the chamber floor or in their offices. A multitude of Christians advocating with their leaders all at once? Martin Luther and the reformers would be proud!

Advocacy is one way in which we live out our call to be a public church grounded in neighbor love. And it doesn't just happen in places where we have an 'official' ELCA state public policy office, like Colorado and New Mexico: everyone across the Rocky Mountain Synod, from Wyoming to Utah to El Paso, can exercise their faithful voice with their representatives at all levels. What issues are most affecting you, your neighbors, and your community? We can harness the power of God's call to love our neighbor by listening well and speaking out to the public officials that entrusted with serving us all.

**Hymn:** ELW 710 *Let Streams of Living Justice*

### **Prayer Petition:**

*God of compassion, whose Son became poor for our sake: Help us to see the face of Christ in those who are poor, and in serving them to serve you. Give us generous hearts so that those living in poverty may have adequate food, clothing, and shelter. By your Spirit move us to affirm the dignity of all people and to work for just laws that protect the most vulnerable in society, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

### **Activities and Embodied Prayers**

#### **Look up your elected officials**

You can find the contact information for the people who represent you at the local, state, and national level. Know your representatives and stay in touch with them! <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

#### **Communicate with the people who represent you**

You can make a difference by communicating with the people who represent you. Check out this introductory video from ELCA Advocacy for tips on engaging with elected officials:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aGGvy7Dt9o>. Then, gather with your congregation, neighbors and friends to decide how you want to make your voices heard as people of faith. Find more resources on ELCA Advocacy at <https://elca.org/Resources/Advocacy>.

#### **Pray for the community**

Offer your prayers for people in your community, especially those who are experiencing hunger, poverty, homelessness, sickness, imprisonment, loneliness, and other realities. Pray also for advocates as well as your elected officials, those who have the power to make decisions affecting many people's lives.

#### **Advocacy Events**

For Colorado and New Mexico, mark your calendars for the Bishop's Legislative Luncheon in New Mexico February 6 and the Lutheran Day at the Legislature in Colorado February 27.

#### **Prayer board**

ELCA Advocacy is specifically focused on policies that impact people living in poverty, those that are food insecure, and .... Create a board in your sanctuary or narthex and invite people to write their prayers for those most vulnerable. Include local organizations who you partner with or are working for justice in your area.

### **Offering Connections (to include in the offering portion of worship)**

**January 5:** As the ELCA, we are members of and support the work of the Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of Lutheran bodies currently working on issues of gender justice as part of their shared witness

**January 12:** Your gifts support the work of our ecumenical partnerships: Colorado Council of Churches, New Mexico Conference of Churches, and the Wyoming Interfaith Association

**January 19:** A portion of your mission support goes toward the advocacy work done through our 13 state public policy offices, including two in the Rocky Mountain Synod.

**January 26:** Your offerings support our on-going theological discernment on public policy and social concerns, reflected in our Social Statements and Social Messages.

## Community Conversations: ELCA Social Statements

In the ELCA, Social Statements are teaching documents that assist members in their thinking about social issues. They are meant to aid in communal and individual moral formation and deliberation. Social statements also set policy for this church and guide its advocacy and work in the public arena.

“Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice” was passed in 1993. In the 25 years since then, our understanding of the environment and the crisis we’ve created has only deepened, and so has our advocacy engagement. The theology articulated in the statement remains potent and relevant as ever. You can find this statement and all of the ELCA’s social teaching documents online in English and Spanish, along with accompanying study guides, Bible studies and other resources: <https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation>.

Don’t forget to check out the ELCA Advocacy resources page too, where you’ll find a list of creation care organizations, a study on hunger and climate change, and more: <https://elca.org/Resources/Advocacy>.

### Looking Ahead:

**February:** Campus Ministry

**March:** Ecumenical Life

**April:** Our Life Together as an Interdependent Church

**May:** Faith Formation

**June:** Social Ministry Organizations

**July:** Congregational Life

**August:** Educate, Equip, Enact (3E)

**Christ's  
Church**  
*better together*