

# Involving Congregations in Advocacy Now

## **Involving Congregations in Advocacy Now**

The Involving Congregations in Advocacy Now (I CAN) program is designed to equip clergy and lay leaders to:

1. Deepen their understanding of faith roots and Lutheran perspectives around advocacy,
2. Enhance individuals advocacy skills,
3. Equip individuals to develop an advocacy program in their congregation,
4. Be knowledgeable about advocacy resources and methods to obtain more in-depth information.

Participants - The target audience for this program is an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America member, who is committed to advocacy and speaking out for justice. The program will focus on the needs fo those who are oppressed and or live in poverty.

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## **BIBLICAL PASSAGES AND LUTHERAN REFERENCES**

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

Genesis 1:28 & 2:15 God blessed them, and God said to them. “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”...The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (NRSV)

Exodus 22:21-22 You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. (NRSV)

Leviticus 19:9-10 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God. (NRSV)

Deuteronomy 16:18 & 20 You shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes, in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall render just decisions for the people. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (NRSV)

Deuteronomy 24:21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. (NRSV)

2 Samuel 23:3-4 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on the cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. (NRSV)

Psalms 72:1-4 Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. (NRSV)

Psalms 82:1-5 God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?

Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. (NRSV)

Proverbs 14:21 Those who despise their neighbors are sinners, but happy are those who are kind to the poor. (NRSV)

Proverbs 31:8-9 Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (NRSV)

Isaiah 1:17 ...cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (NRSV)

Isaiah 10:1-2 Woe to the legislators of infamous laws, to those who issue tyrannical decrees who refuse justice to the unfortunate and cheat the poor among my people of their rights, who make widows their prey, and rob the orphan.

Isaiah 32:1-8 Some day there will be a king who rules with integrity, and national leaders who govern with justice. Each of them will be like a shelter from the wind and a place to hide from storms. They will be like streams flowing in a desert like the shadow of a giant rock in a barren land.

Their eyes and ears will be open to the needs of the people. They will not be impatient any longer, but they will act with understanding and will say what they mean. No one will think that a fool is honorable or say that a scoundrel is honest.

A fool speaks foolishly and thinks up evil things to do. What he does and what he says are an insult to the Lord, and he never feeds the hungry or gives thirsty people anything to drink. A stupid person is evil and does evil things; he plots to ruin the poor with lies and to keep them from getting their rights. But an honorable person acts honestly and stands firm for what is right. (TEV)

Isaiah 42:6 "I, the Lord, have called you and given you the power to see that justice is done on earth."

Jeremiah 22:3 Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who have been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place. (NRSV)

Ezekiel 16:49 This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. (NRSV)

Amos 5:21-24 I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. (NRSV)

Amos 8:4-6 Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit

with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.” (NRSV)

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (NRSV)

## NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. (NRSV)

Matthew 25:34-36 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 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, I was in prison and you visited me.” (NRSV)

Matthew 25:44-46 “Then they will answer him, ‘When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and we would not help you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you, whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.’ These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life.” (TEV)

Luke 1:46-53 And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (NRSV)

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

Luke 3:11 In reply he said to them, “whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” (NRSV)

Luke 6:27 “But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”

Luke 18:1-5 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.” For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.”

Luke 20:22-25 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, “Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?” They said, “The emperor’s.” He said to them, “Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (NRSV)

John 19:10&11 Pilate therefore said to him, “do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” (NRSV)

Romans 3:23 All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. (NRSV)

Ephesians 6:15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

1 Timothy 2:1-3 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. (NRSV)

James 2:15-17 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat you fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily need, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (NRSV)

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. (NRSV)

## ELCA CONSTITUTION

This church shall advocate dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs. (Chapter 4.02c)

This church shall study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world. (Chapter 4.03l)



## ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENTS

Abortion Greater social responsibility for the care, welfare, and education and families is needed through such measures as access to quality, affordable health care, child care, and housing. Sufficient income support for families needs to be provided by employers, or, in the case of the unemployed, through government assistance. As a society we need to provide increased support for education, nutrition, and services that protect children from abuse and neglect.

Caring For Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice Humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth.

God's command to have dominion and subdue the earth is not a license to dominate and exploit. Human dominion (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8), a special responsibility, should reflect God's way of ruling as a shepherd king who takes the form of a servant (Phillipians 2:7), wearing a crown of thorns.

This church will favor proposals and actions that address environmental issues in a manner consistent with the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability.

This church will support proposals and actions to protect and restore...the quality of: natural and human habitats, including seas, wetlands, forests, wilderness, and urban areas; air, with special concern for inhabitants of urban areas;

water, especially drinking water, groundwater, polluted runoff, and industrial and municipal waste; and soil, with special attention to land use, toxic waste disposal, wind and water erosion, and preservation of farmland amid urban development.

For Peace in God's World As citizens we are to seek to influence our nation's actions for peace among the nations. Sharing a common humanity with all people, we are called to work for peace throughout the globe.

Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them.

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture The Christ to whom the Church witnesses is the Christ who breaks down walls of cultural exclusivity (Mark 7:24-29; John 4).

Our advocacy will take place in partnership ecumenically, among corporations and local, state, and national governments. ...We will work for respect of cultures... We will speak against policy initiatives that discriminate on the basis of language.

This church will support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that guarantee to all persons equally: civil rights, including full protection of the law and redress under the law of discriminatory practices; and to all citizens, the right to vote;

We will advocate for just immigration policies and will promote international respect for human rights, and support the international movement to eliminate discrimination.

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All Based on this vantage point of faith, “*sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all*” is a benchmark for affirming, opposing, and seeking changes in economic life. Because of sin we fall short of these obligations in this world, but we live in light of God’s promised future that ultimately there will be no hunger and injustice. This promise makes us restless with less than what God intends for the world. In economic matters, this draws attention to: the scope of God’s concern—“for all”, the means by which life is sustained—“livelihood”, what is needed—“sufficiency”, and a long-term perspective—“sustainability” (p.3)

Government is intended to serve God’s purposes by limiting or countering narrow economic interests and promoting the common good. Paying taxes to enable government to carry out these and other purposes is an appropriate expression of our stewardship in society, rather than something to be avoided. Government often falls short of these responsibilities. Its policies can harm the common good and especially the most vulnerable in society. Governing leaders are to be held accountable to God’s purposes.

The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective In witnessing to Jesus Christ, the Church announces that the God who justifies expects all people to do justice. ...This church respects the God-given integrity and tasks of governing authorities and other worldly structures, while holding them accountable to God.

This church shall: work with and on behalf of the poor, the powerless, and those who suffer, using its power and influence with political and economic decision-making bodies to develop and advocate policies that seek to advance justice, peace, and the care of creation.

The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel. Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society. It is in grateful response to God’s grace in Jesus Christ that this church carries out its responsibility for the well-being of society and the environment.

## **BABIES IN THE RIVER**

An urban legend says:

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and the life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly jumped into the river and swam out to save the baby from drowning.

The next day this same villager was walking along the river bank and noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. The following day four babies were seen floating in the river and rescued. Then eight babies were rescued, then more, and still more.

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watch towers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. Each day the number of helpless babies floating down the river increased.

The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. Groups were trained to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Others prepared formula and provided clothing for the chilled babies. Many were involved in making clothes and knitting blankets. Still others provided foster homes and placement.

While the babies that were rescued from the river, now very numerous, could not all be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save as many as they could each day. Indeed, the village elders blessed them in their good work. Life in the village continued on that basis.

One day, however, someone raised the question, “But where are all these babies coming from? Who is throwing them into the river? Why? Let’s organize a team to go upstream and see who’s doing it.” The elders countered with: “And if we go upstream who will operate the rescue operations? We need every concerned person here.”

“But don’t you see,” cried the one lone voice, “if we find out who is responsible for throwing them in, we can stop the problem and no babies will drown. By going upstream we can eliminate the cause of the problem.”

“It is too risky.”

And so the numbers of babies in the river increased daily. Those saved increased, but those who drowned increased even more.

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# Advocacy: A Bible Study

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**Prepared for Lutheran Advocacy  
Ministry in Pennsylvania, May 2000.  
By Kim Kemmerling, Kayko Dreidger,  
and Craig Staller**

Materials needed: The leader of this Bible study will need the Bible Study Guide found at [www.lamp.org](http://www.lamp.org) and copies of the social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) mentioned in the Resources for Advocacy (p. 17) section for the members of the class. Participants are asked to bring their Bibles to each class.

Advocacy has a long history in the Jewish and Christian traditions, and finds its roots in the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament, there are many guidelines on how one should advocate and on whose behalf. This Bible study will attempt to highlight several important Biblical passages in order to raise an awareness of advocacy and to encourage Christians to be voices for the marginalized in our society.

This Study is designed for six sessions, with each session taking approximately 50 to 60 minutes. Participants in the Bible study are encouraged to read the Bible passages of the week to come and to reflect on them as they go throughout their week.

The leader is required to do some preparation prior to each session: survey the entire course prior to the first session, read the key verses for each week, and, if possible contact the local ELCA state public policy office or the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) for additional background information. (See Resources for Advocacy, p.17) The leader may need to omit some portions of the sessions to fit the time constraints of the class. The leader is encouraged to maintain an awareness of current events and public policy issues influencing the lives of the members of the congregation and their neighbors in the community.

During their time together, the study group is encouraged to take advantage of several advocacy activities that take place throughout their city. The best way to learn about advocacy is to do it. It is hoped that, by the end of the Bible study, the group will be able to incorporate aspects of this study into their personal daily lives. Advocacy will be a witness, a way of living the faith.

Following the sixth week, a Sunday morning service could be dedicated to the ministry of advocacy so that the entire congregation can become more informed and involved in this life-long vocation. The leader and participants in the study will need to coordinate incorporating this rite with the Worship and Music Committee of the congregation.

***To locate the complete bible study go to - [www.lamp.org](http://www.lamp.org) and click on Advocacy Bible Study.***

# THE 2 FEET of CHRISTIAN SERVICE †

Service means works of justice as well as works of mercy. In addition to the one-on-one caring for victims of injustice, service means working to change the situation that created the victims in the first place.

## DIRECT SERVICE

(Helping people  
survive their  
present crisis)

Food pantries  
Food baskets  
Clothing centers  
Visiting Elderly,  
Shut-ins and  
Prisoners  
Hospitality houses  
Volunteer work:  
Transporting  
elderly to church,  
doctor, grocery,  
drug store  
Tutoring  
Meals on  
Wheels

But you must  
move on to  
the next foot.  
You need both  
feet to walk.

## SELECT CHANGE

(Removing the  
causes of those  
problems)  
Political Action  
Voter registration  
Legislation:  
Write to  
legislators.  
Organizing:  
Get people  
together to  
work on a  
problem.  
Educate the  
congregation.

## WORSHIP SPACE NOTES

It is easy to forget that the uniqueness of our training is our faith basis. We are a holy people and the area we use is a holy space. Environmental cues can help remind participants of this connection.

When you design this space think of your participants and your focus. For example, if you are working on a children's advocacy issue you might:

- ▶ drape a table in a cloth with children's hand prints
- ▶ light a candle between pictures of children who might be the focus of your advocacy program
- ▶ consider some part of your devotions where people physically move toward the worship space and do/place something at the place (i.e. put a penny in a bank, light a candle etc.)
- ▶ have music connected to our faith roots
- ▶ consider placing a cross in the space
- ▶ consider having bread and wine chalice especially if your time ends with communion\*.

Other examples for a general advocacy workshop might include:

- ▶ each participant bringing an item that represents advocacy or an advocacy issue
- ▶ participants who come early choosing music
- ▶ a few participants doing a reading and each lighting a candle during devotions

As you plan your worship space, complete the worship space "activity."

A special note on music. Not all participants will necessarily enjoy your particular musical style. Some people pray with chant while others use popular music. Some like the old hymns while others only like folk hymns. Offer your group input to the choices in musical style.

\* Please remember, it is an ELCA policy to get permission to celebrate Eucharist outside of a congregation. Permission is granted by a Pastor of the Congregation (if housed in their building) or the Bishop of a Synod.

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## **SMALL GROUP EXERCISE**

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### **WORSHIP SPACE/ ENVIRONMENTAL SET UP/ ACTIVITY**

*Think of a workshop you might provide when you get home.*

Describe the group you are working with.

Describe the issue.

How large a space do you want?

Describe the design (candles, cloth, etc.)of the space.

How will you use this space in the workshop (i.e., devotions only or how else you plan on doing it)?

How will you use music? Who will pick what music?

## **Commissioning our Advocates**

As you return home and develop programs, you will become aware that it is the entire synod/congregation must embrace the ministry of advocacy. Individuals may come from a faith basis, but for a group to speak on behalf of their church, it is important to have endorsement at all levels. A Bishop/ Pastor must agree with the work, the synod council/ church council will say this is a necessary program and individual members will know and endorse the ministry. In this light it can be a meaningful experience for both advocates and the congregation/synod to publicly recognize this ministry with a commissioning service.

### **WHY**

Why would advocates who spend most of their time outside the faith community look for a public ceremony?

1. A ceremony is a place where the synod/ congregation publicly and officially accepts this new ministry as part of the life and call for this particular synod/ congregation. Remember, individuals may come and go, but if this is a congregational/synodical ministry, the responsibility for continuation is with a broader group of people.
2. A ceremony endorses, selects and calls forward those from the congregation who will work in this ministry on behalf of the church.
3. A ceremony allows for individual advocates to publicly reaffirm the “yes.” That is, they can publicly state they have answered the call that they privately made when deciding to take on this ministry.
4. A ceremony encourages the synod/ congregation to affirm, bless, and send forth these individuals while promising to keep them and their work in prayer.
5. A ceremony includes prayer for God’s blessing on this ministry.

### **Format**

The format can be arranged by your own group. In general a commissioning service would include:

- an opening prayer with a statement about the advocacy ministry
- calling forward those from the congregation who will do this ministry
- words of affirmation from the congregation/synod
- words of commitment from the members
- sending forth the group with a gesture from the congregation/synod (anointing, blessing, gift)
- closing prayer

### **Samples**

See A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship: Occasional Services. Augsburg Press  
Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation  
Commissioning of Missionaries





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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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### MY FAITH AND ADVOCACY

Much of our work is the same as when the League of Women Voters works with leaders on advocacy issues. The uniqueness of our work is our grounding in faith.

Each person needs to develop their own way of communicating faith roots.

Areas to bring to your presentation:

1. What are three reasons your faith brings you to advocacy?
  - 
  - 
  -
2. What Biblical passages inspire your work?
  - 
  - 
  -
3. Where do you look in church documents for grounding?
  - 
  - 
  -
4. How do you answer the people who say that church and state should not mix?
  - 
  - 
  -

## INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The ELCA CONSTITUTION contains the following direct references to advocacy:

4.02.c. “.....advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.”

4.03.1. “.....develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

16.11.E97.i. The Division for Church in Society shall “direct and implement this church’s public policy advocacy to national and international governmental bodies in consultation with other churchwide units, and coordinate its public policy advocacy to state governmental bodies.”

(Three locations and arrangements for this advocacy are listed: Washington, D.C.; New York; establishment, in partnership with synods and social ministry organizations, state public policy offices- currently there are 20 such offices plus several associated partner offices.)

16.11.E97.j. The Division for Church in Society shall “give expression to this church’s concern for corporate social responsibility, both in its internal affairs and its interaction in the broader society.”

(This function is exercised at the direction of the Church Council. An Advisory Committee gives counsel and advice. The work is undertaken ecumenically.)

The Division for Church in Society has implemented these Constitutional references by establishing a Department for Advocacy within which there are four sections: the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, the Lutheran Office for World Community, the coordination of the State Public Policy Offices, and the Corporate Social Responsibility function.

The most fundamental resource for implementing the advocacy of this church is ELCA social policy. This policy is expressed in this church’s social statements, messages, Churchwide Assembly actions on synodical memorials and voting member resolutions, and Church Council actions on synodical resolutions. Similar historical documents from the predecessor church bodies serve as a policy base in instances where the ELCA has not enacted policy, as long as predecessor body statements or policies are not in conflict with one another.

The document “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” delineates how policy is developed, and the roles of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Office of the Presiding Bishop, board of the Division for Church in Society, and staff of the division.

### **WHY IS THERE A BIENNIAL PLAN FOR THIS ADVOCACY MINISTRY?**

The biennial plan serves three major purposes:

- It functions as a management tool to assure that the division is giving comprehensive coverage to ELCA social policy commitments, coordinating adequately the work of the four sections within the division’s advocacy department, managing well the financial and human resources committed to this work, supporting the board in its program monitoring role and the Church Council in its program review and unit evaluation roles.
- It functions as an educational resource which describes the scope and particularities of ELCA advocacy, and the points of contact within the division for partners in implementing this church’s public policy and private sector advocacy. Accordingly it is shared with all synodical bishops and the Church Council.
- It functions as one benchmark for the division’s monitoring of the appropriate use of world hunger funds in its budget.

### **HOW IS THE BIENNIAL PLAN DEVELOPED?**

There are three converging initiatives that influence the issues addressed.

- There is the public sector’s initiative in taking up policy issues.
- There are the commitments made in ELCA social policy.
- There are initiatives of the ecumenical/interfaith community.

These converging initiatives disclose public and private sector policy issues which this church is called to address. An imperative is that there be ELCA social policy which calls for or permits such advocacy.

The plan itself is dealing with a constantly changing landscape of public and private sector issues. Some issues may become dormant. The plan can be interrupted by international or national crises not known at the time the plan was developed.

**FROM POLICY ACTIONS TO ADVOCACY MINISTRY** identifies the ELCA social policy action and then briefly describes anticipated advocacy ministry responding to those actions. Constitutionally, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Division for Church in Society has responsibility for:

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)**

Gives expression to the ELCA's concern for corporate social responsibility.  
Seeks to enable equitable care, distribution, and management of what God has created and entrusted to humankind.  
Works collegially in ecumenical partnership with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.

**LUTHERAN OFFICE FOR GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (LOGA)**

Witnesses for social justice on domestic and foreign policy issues facing the nation.  
Educates, informs, and enables effective interaction between the ELCA and the federal government.  
Represents the ELCA's positions within the arena of public debate.

**LUTHERAN OFFICE FOR WORLD COMMUNITY (LOWC)**

Advocates ELCA (and upon request, Lutheran World Federation [LWF] ) public policy views to the United Nations, related international organizations, and governments.  
Monitors world community issues and United Nations discussion, recommending actions consistent with ELCA policy.  
Assists ELCA members, congregations, synods, regions, institutions, and agencies of the church to understand and become involved in world community issues.

**STATE PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY**

Establishes, maintains, and coordinates (in partnership with synods and social ministry organizations) the activities of the ELCA state public policy advocacy offices.

# LUTHERAN OFFICE FOR GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



## History

The year was 1945. United States military service personnel were returning to live the hopes and dreams of post-World War II America. It was the year that the churches of the National Lutheran Council (NLC) moved from their wartime ministries to add another dimension of service.

As a ministry to those returning veterans, the eight ELCA predecessor churches began an official presence with the federal government in Washington, D.C. During those early years, the international aspect of church-state relations played a significant role as a succession of German church leaders conferred with State Department officials about the problems of German reconstruction.

**1948 marked a ministry turning point.** The NLC expanded its service to its participating bodies in order to keep them informed of important congressional activities and to channel information about the churches and their work to key government officials. Special relationships between the churches and the government developed around programs of relief and rehabilitation, and movement of refugees.

**The focus of the nation turned to civil rights** and racial equality in the 1960's. The Lutheran churches spoke out through their Washington office as staff worked with Lutheran legislators and ecumenical colleagues on civil rights and justice issues. At the beginning of the decade, the eight NLC churches merged to become The American Lutheran Church (TALC, then simply ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). The office now represented a two-church presence.

**From 1967 to 1987, the ALC and LCA were joined** by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the cooperative work of the Lutheran Council in the USA (LCUSA). The Office of Public Affairs continued the functions of representing the interests of the church bodies, analyzing public issues, informing government officials of church body positions, and planning and conducting seminars.

Since 1988, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) has served as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Washington, D.C. office for advocacy to the U.S. and foreign governments.

**LOGA seeks to enable effective** interaction between the church and the federal government. Through providing education and information, it

- witnesses for social justice on domestic and foreign policy issues facing the nation
- educates, informs and enables effective interaction between the ELCA and the federal government, and
- represents the ELCA's positions within the arena of public debate.

LOGA is a program area of the ELCA's Division for Church in Society, working in cooperation with others.



## The Mission Statement

Faithful to God's call, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs fulfills the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's witness for social justice on domestic and foreign policy issues facing the nation, and through it, the world. With a commitment to a prophetic vision which stands with the poor and the powerless, the office represents the church's positions within the complex arena of public debate. To achieve effective interaction between the whole church and the federal government, the office educates, informs and enables full involvement of the church in this ministry.

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## How Does The ELCA Engage in Advocacy?

**The** work of the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs is grounded in the Scriptures and Lutheran confessional writings. Its involvement in specific issues is based on social statements of the ELCA or social statements of the ELCA's predecessor churches when those statements are in agreement.

**Through** participation in the church's Advocacy Department, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs staff help to prioritize issues for the church's public policy activity. The Advocacy Department develops the ELCA Advocacy Plan for review by the Division for Church in Society's Board and Church Council, setting the direction for church wide advocacy efforts for a two year period.

**Included** in a sampling of issues currently addressed by the plan are an emphasis on

alleviating domestic and international hunger and poverty, human and civil rights concerns, various health care and disability programs, economic justice, Native American concerns, foreign aid reform and funding, the Middle East peace process, and U.S. immigration and refugee policy.

**The** staff of the governmental affairs office monitors these and other issues and becomes directly involved in efforts to support measures consistent with the Advocacy Plan when deemed timely and appropriate. Such efforts could include letters to members of Congress, contacts with the Administration, visits with House or Senate staff, appointments with Representatives or Senators, presentation of testimony before key committees, and phone calls to contacts in specific congressional districts or states to encourage their involvement on a particular issue.



# What is Advocacy?

- If you are a citizen,
- who has nothing personal to gain from the issue,
- and represents the interests of a person or group who is disenfranchised,
- you are an advocate.



## WAYS TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY

1. Develop relationships with your Senators and Representative. They especially value people who are genuinely concerned about issues and people.
2. Develop a relationship with the DC staffer and field (for Senators) or district (for Representatives) office staffer who handles your issues. Be able to offer them information or other assistance they need. If you want to be effective, don't just take the staffer's time. A grassroots activist with unique expertise can be extremely valuable to the staffer.
3. Assemble citizen groups to meet with your Senator or Representative regarding your issues. These can be either in the field or district office or the DC office.
4. Write letters to the editor. Praise good Senators and Representatives and point out policies you disagree with. Praise any legislators when they do something you support.
5. Raise your issue at Senators' and Representatives' town hall meetings. This helps to educate the elected official and the others present.
6. Write letters in your own words to your Senators and Representative.
7. Call DC or field or district office to express your opinions.

Note: These ways are all important; some will be more effective in certain circumstances - some in others. Remember, as an individual citizen you have the right and responsibility to be politically involved. Work with others to support policies which are important to those in whose behalf you are speaking.





## HOW TO VISIT A LEGISLATOR

A personal visit with your Representative or Senator, either at home or in your state/federal capitol can be anxiety-creating, exciting and rewarding. The following are some steps and tips to make such a visit most effective.

### BEFORE YOUR VISIT:

1. Make an appointment:
  - a. By letter or by phone, for home district office or the capitol office.
  - b. Confirm appointment by phone or mail.
  - c. Appointments with legislative aides are also valuable.
2. Brief yourself about your legislator:
  - a. General extent of the district.
  - b. Committee assignments.
  - c. Number of terms served.
  - d. Professional background.
  - e. Voting record on issues of your interest.
  - f. Views stated publicly on issues of your interest.
3. Define the objectives of your visit:
  - a. Is your objective to get acquainted, express general views, or discuss specific issues?
  - b. Limit the number of issues to be discussed.
  - c. Brief yourself on the facts surrounding the issue and your views on it.
  - d. Briefly outline your comments and/or prepare written summary.
4. Anticipate:
  - a. Appointment may start late.
  - b. Legislator may be in session and unavailable - Plan to either wait, meet with staff, make new appointment, meet legislator at place of meeting.
  - c. Lengths of meeting may range from ten minutes to an hour.
  - d. Going as a group has advantages, especially if representing a broad base of people and organizations. But, remember they are often in tight office space, so keep your group manageable.
  - e. Who (if group) will be spokesperson, introduce group, guide conversation, provide summary of issue, etc. Assign specific roles to each participant.

### WHILE YOU'RE THERE:

1. Introduce yourself, giving BRIEF information on:
  - a. Place of residence and that you are a registered voter.
  - b. Length of residence.
  - c. Church membership.
  - d. Occupation, student status, volunteer involvements, etc.
  - e. Voter/political involvement.
  - f. Group you are representing (if any).
  - g. Your experience and expertise relevant to the issue for discussion.

2. Set climate of visit:

- a. Be on time.
- b. Be positive and friendly - not argumentative.
- c. Acknowledge areas of agreement.
- d. Acknowledge areas of appreciation.

3. State reason for visit:

- a. Be concise, accurate, and specific.
- b. State position and recommendation on issue.
- c. Identify your position or that of group which you represent.
- d. Leave a written summary of your position (if available), reference material, calling card, but don't overwhelm them.
- e. Ask for related legislative materials: copy of bills, analysis of bill, brochures on Senate or House, etc.

4. During the conversation:

- a. Meet and write down names of staff person assigned your issue of concern.
- b. Don't let questions or comments derail your purpose.
- c. Admit you need to think more about a new point raised; ask if they will consider written response later, find out who to get back to.
- d. Ask specific questions; request specific responses.
- e. Explore options of attending committee meetings or hearings, visiting galleries, etc.

5. At the close:

- a. Make sure your 'ask' has been clearly stated.
- b. Review what will be done next (information to provide, etc.).
- c. Express thanks for their time and interest.
- d. Make no promises you can't keep.

**AFTER YOUR VISIT:**

1. Debrief:

- a. With members of group or another person about the experience.
- b. Determine possible next steps.
- c. Inform others about what learned.

2. Write letter:

- a. Thank legislator for visit.
- b. Summarize the visit, comment on what was said by all parties present.
- c. Identify follow-ups steps committed by legislator and self.
- d. Respond to points unaddressed in visit.
- e. Reiterate issue, position, and recommendations.
- f. Express intention to continue dialogue.
- g. Itemize names, addresses, phone numbers, etc. of all participants in visit.

**GOOD LUCK!**



## **MAKE YOUR LETTERS COUNT**

### **WHY WRITE**

1. You have something to say, an opinion to offer, a story to tell, a request to make, a question to ask.
2. Letters Influence: Frequently mail is light on an issue, thus making your letter very significant. If mail is heavy, yours may be very important to offset heavy mail with a different opinion.
3. Constituent communications are more influential than the media, government information sources, lobbyists, and many other forms of communication.
4. Your stories and pleas both change attitudes and votes, but also support and reinforce.

### **WHO TO WRITE**

1. Those officials you elected are always most responsive. Therefore, write your Senator, Representative, Governor, President.
2. Occasionally, the elected leaders within the Senate and House and the related committees also need to hear from you. Learn who those people might be for the issue that concerns you.
3. Members of the administrative or executive branch responsible for implementing the program or caring for the issue that concerns you.

### **WHERE TO WRITE**

Write to either the Washington, state capitol, or home district offices. As a constituent, your letter may get more notice at the district office.

### **WHEN TO WRITE**

1. Early in the session to raise the need for responding to a concern.
2. Later on to address specific legislation and the issues being debated.
3. As the legislation is being considered in committee, on the floor, or before the President or Governor for consideration.
4. Often enough to be known and respected - but not too often to be a pest. Get others to write to increase the chorus of voices on an issue.

### **WHAT TO SAY**

1. Spell name of official correctly. Use accurate title.
2. Write your own letter, not a form letter. Handwrite personally and neatly or type.



## HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Other than the front page, the letters to the editor section is the most read part of your local newspaper. On average, 80 percent publish most of the letters they receive. Members of Congress pay close attention to letters, particularly if their names are mentioned. When you write your letter keep in mind the following suggestions:

1. **Keep your letter short.** It is recommended the length of your letter be about 250 words. Periodicals have a limited space and often receive more letters than they can possibly publish. If there is less editing for the editor it is more likely your letter will appear.
2. **Get to the point.** Letters should always state the specific issue, and what action should be taken. Include the name and/ or number of the bill you are commenting on. Mention the name of your Senator/ Representative and what action you would like them to take.
3. **Write in simple language.** Many newspapers have the motto “the readers of this newspaper move their lips as they read”. They are looking for letters that are understandable by a variety of educational levels. Writing an intelligible letter need not be complicated. Do not be afraid to address sophisticated subjects, just remember a “ball is a ball as well as a sphere.”
4. **Be sure to be credible.** If you use a statistic, cite your source. Check the number of your bill through the legislator’s office or call the Senate and House Bill Status number (202)225-1772 to see if the number has changed.
5. **Be timely.** Letters to the Editor need to be written as soon as you are aware of an action. Periodicals that are published daily, such as newspapers, treat news as “new” for only a short time. Editorials will be printed if they are current or if they reflect what will be happening in the near future.
6. **Sign your letter.** Newspapers will not publish your letter without a signature, although you may request that your name be kept anonymous. In considering this option remember that letters that are anonymous are often not considered credible. Include in your signature your residence and/ or voting district as well.
7. **Send a copy of your letter to the LOGA office.** We will use your letter as a resource to encourage others to write and will also be able to note others who support the position of the ELCA.

*Another twist on this method is radio talk shows. Many of these call in programs have large listening audiences. It is good to have others with you to offer support and help should you get stuck on a question.*



## **TIPS ON TELEPHONING YOUR LEGISLATORS**

To find your legislator's phone number, you may use an online congressional directory or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Senator's and/ or Representative's office. Remember Senators are by State - Representatives by district (usually zip code + 4 will get you to the right one)

Remember that telephone calls are often taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment. If they are not present, leave a short message with all pertinent information.

After identifying yourself and where you live, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/ Representative (Name) that I support/ oppose (S.\_\_H.R.8\_\_)."

You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your Senator's or Representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call. Offer to provide further written information. Follow up with a letter.

Don't be intimidated. Remember you are a concerned citizen. You are talking to public servants who are there to help you and represent you.



## **I can't get to see my legislator-NOW WHAT?**

Legislators are extremely busy. They often don't have enough minutes in a day to meet with all of the constituents who wish to see them. Each Member of Congress has staff to assist him/ her during a term in office. Remember legislators have staff at both their home/ field office and where they meet. To be most effective in communicating with Legislators, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of key staff.

### **Commonly Used Titles:**

#### **Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff:**

The Administrative Assistant reports directly to the Legislator. They usually have overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Administrative Assistant is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

#### **Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant, or Legislative Coordinator:**

The Legislative Director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some offices there are several Legislative Assistants and responsibilities and interests of the member. An office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health issues, environmental matters, taxes, etc.

#### **Press Secretary or Communications Director:**

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the member, their constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands, and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or position on specific issues.

#### **Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary, or Scheduler:**

The Appointment Secretary is usually responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from Legislative responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. The Appointment Secretary may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

#### **Caseworker:**

The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There are often several Caseworkers in an office.

#### **Other Staff Titles:**

Other titles used in a congressional office may include: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager and Receptionist.

Remember these people are often young and want to make a difference. They are more accessible, yet still have a lot of influence. They may be extremely interested in your point of view to broaden and deepen their knowledge on an issue.

## **ATTENDING A TOWN MEETING**

Legislators often schedule public meetings to update constituents and monitor constituent opinions. Other times local activists organize a meeting to share ideas with their legislator.

Tips for participation:

- Be prepared (organized and practiced) to speak up.
- Call the Legislators district office ahead of time to know the schedule.
- Sit near the front so the Legislator can see you when you speak.
- Begin with identifying yourself, including your name, representation, and faith group.
- Take a friend for support (event if they don't speak).
- Be polite, brief, and specific.
- If you don't get an answer, ask it politely again.

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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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### SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

#### **Social Concerns Committee Members of St. John By the Gas Pump**

Roles: One person as committee chair  
3 additional persons as committee members

You are a member of the Social Concerns Committee of St. John by the Gas Pump Lutheran Church. You have made a name in the community over the years because of your Come-and-Get-It Food Pantry and Next-To-New Clothing Shop.

The Chair of the Social Concerns Committee is a member of the Church Council. Two members of the committee are on the food pantry's Board of Directors.

The food pantry started in the mid-1970's as an emergency ministry for victims of a local flood. Through the 1980's, however, it developed a steady clientele from three groups. One group comprises public assistance beneficiaries whose benefits do not stretch for the whole month. They generally come in clusters to the food pantry the week before the welfare checks arrive. The second group comprises low wage workers. Their wages do not make ends meet and they come in any time. The third group is varied in make-up, yet they are generally victims of fires in their homes.

You are aware of the fact that a proposal to increase the State Minimum Wage is now pending in the General Assembly. Although you have not taken stands on legislation in the past (on the philosophy that your role is to serve, not play politics), you have taken a positive vote on a proposal to advocate for the Minimum Wage Bill, which would raise the minimum wage 50 cents per year for the next five years. The majority of the committee reasoned that, in light of welfare-to-work efforts, minimum wage workers are not well served if the fruit of their labor amounts to depending on charity for their daily bread. The vote was not unanimous.

You have an excellent reputation for providing for the needy in your community. You have, in fact, been the subject of the feature articles in the local newspaper. Although the Social Concerns Committee and pantry Board of Directors had a picture of the food pantry taken with your state representative and senator when you got a commendation two years ago, you have never asked your Representative or Senator for any funding.

Your goal is to persuade your senator to support the Minimum Wage Bill. The Senator has not taken a position pro or con at this point. The Senator agreed to give you 10 minutes.

**Social Concerns Committee Chair:** When you spoke with your Pastor about the committee's action on the Minimum Wage Bill, she was not encouraging about visiting the Senator. She doesn't want the food pantry to lose its reputation for nonpartisan service. You responded to the Pastor that you want to be seen as caring about the total of your clients' lives, that sometimes just giving emergency food isn't enough, and that, for welfare-to-work to be successful, a minimum wage job just doesn't begin to make ends meet. Your Pastor responded that the business people in the congregation wouldn't be in favor of this legislation. You decided to carry through with the committee's recommendation and arranged the visit with the Senator.



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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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### SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

#### State Senator and Legislative Assistant

Roles: One person as State Senator  
One person as legislative assistant

You are in your fourth four-year term. Your career has been solid and unremarkable. You are Chair of the Senate Tourism Committee, which is more a tribute to your tenure than to your talents as a legislator or interest in tourism. Still you are no slouch. You have represented the interest of your constituents very well and pride yourself on constituent service. You have consistently won re-election by at least 15 % of the vote. Before being elected, you were a real estate broker.

In the last session of the General Assembly, you got a lot of heat for your vote against a senior citizen bill. You thought the concept was good, yet you were convinced the proposal was much too costly. For the first time since you came to the Senate, the opposing party has talked of fielding a strong candidate. You're not worried yet, just cautious.

The Minimum Wage Bill is one thing you don't need now. You don't want to alienate a group of voters in an election year. It seems that this legislation will force you to do that.

For the first time in 16 years, you appear vulnerable. If you misstep on the Minimum Wage Bill, your aggressive opponent may send you to an early retirement. You have the advantage of incumbency and a strong network of support built up over your previous terms. Your goal is to get re-elected.

You agreed to give the members of St. John By the Gas Pump 10 minutes of your time to talk about the Minimum Wage Bill.

**Legislative Assistant:** You have been on the Senator's staff since the second term. If there is a disagreement among the staff about a position, the Senator relies on your opinion to find the safe, center road.

Your sister is an active member of St. John By the Gas Pump. You and she do not talk about her church at all. Her spouse, your brother-in-law, is inactive and does not attend. He owns a dry-cleaning business with about twenty-five employees. He's complained to you often about his small profit margins and believes a minimum wage increase gives him two choices: lose profits or let some employees go.



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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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### TOUGH QUESTIONS ROLE PLAY

In many settings our advocates get questions that are hard to answer. We need to be ready to think on our feet and deal with these situations. In triads have the interviewer (heckler) pick a question. Have the “ELCA Representative” try to answer. A third person should coach both sides and give feedback afterwards.

1. “Isn’t ‘advocacy’ just another word for ‘lobbying’?”
2. “My church shouldn’t be involved in politics – what happened to preaching the Gospel?”
3. “What if I disagree with the positions of my church? Who’s speaking on my behalf?”
4. “People aren’t going to listen to what the church has to say anyway, so why bother?”
5. “The church has been taken over by left-wing Democrats, and isn’t really in touch with how I feel.”
6. “How can the church know enough about these issues to make any sense?”

Debrief the role you played. Did you feel comfortable asking/answering? Switch roles and try again..

## HOW TO START AN ADVOCACY MINISTRY

1. Pick an issue that your church/synod is already addressing through its social ministry programs.
2. Form a group to study and discuss the issue, using ELCA social statements, LOGA materials, newspaper articles, videos, or lectures by guest speakers. Consider inviting a staff member of your local *ELCA State Public Policy Office* or LOGA, an elected official knowledgeable about the issue, or people affected by the issue.
3. Join the ELCA Grassroots Advocacy Network to stay in touch with legislative developments. Members receive the Legislative Update newsletter six times a year as well as action alerts in their area of interest. Members are asked to express their views to their legislators by writing, calling, or visiting elected officials, writing op-ed pieces for their local newspapers, and educating and involving their congregations in phone trees and letter-writing campaigns. Check to see if your state has a *ELCA State Public Policy Office/Network* in order to obtain local information.
4. Form a telephone tree for quick communication when emergency action is needed. E-mail lists have become useful in disseminating information. Know how often your group reads their e-mail to see if this works for time sensitive alerts.
5. Draft a model letter for congregational use. Designate a Sunday when letters can be given as an offering in the offering plate. Be creative. If the letter is on food policy, consider writing on paper plates.
6. Educate parishioners about the issue by posting information on bulletin boards and publishing updates in your church newsletter.
7. Establish a relationship and share resources with your state *ELCA State Public Policy Office* and your synod social justice committee.
8. Find out who else is working on these issues in your community and join with them to form a coalition. Be sure to invite other congregations and people of other faiths to join with you in the struggle for justice.

*Adapted with permission from, ACTS News, A publication of the ELCA Social Ministries for Congregations Program (Winter 1998-1999 Vol. 4, No.1)*



## **ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN YOUR CONGREGATION**

Input creates ownership.

The size of the mission is always larger than the size of the ministry.

Advocacy only happens when the Spirit makes a ministry ready.

Advocacy is best demonstrated by behavior.

The gifts for this ministry are already present in most congregations and their communities, waiting to be discovered.

All the “players” need to be in the game for advocacy to be effective.

God does God’s best work in times of crisis.

Growth in ministry is a gift which requires a conscious choice.

Avoid single-factor analysis and one-dimensional response.

Prayer is productive work in visioning and planning.

Growing ministries give themselves away in mission.

Effective advocates will seek to model, embody and employ these principles in every situation.



## ADVOCACY IDEAS THAT WORK

- \* Have a lunch and letter, or coffee and communications time. Brainstorm regarding an issue that might be included in a letter. Write and address the letter.
- \* Designate a Sunday when letters can be written after church. Be creative. If the letter is on food policy, consider writing a campaign on paper plates etc.
- \* In developing a network, form a telephone tree for quick communication when emergency action is needed.
- \* Form a group to study and discuss information sent on issues and/ or the social statements of the church. After study, form a response.
- \* Form a group of persons interested in research and study of issues. Come up with several responses.
- \* Ask to meet with your congregation's Christian Education committee in order to include and advocate response to the issues addressed in the adult curriculum.
- \* Ask your Representative or Senator to speak to an adult forum. Have him/her express what he/ she sees as the most pressing concerns in the legislature and share yours. (State and National)
- \* Develop a bulletin board to display materials and newspaper articles related to advocacy.
- \* Invite a staff member of your local ELCA State Public Policy Office or ELCA Advocacy Department to speak to your group, congregation, forum, retreat, Social Ministry Committee, or church council
- \* Post advocacy/ justice information for others to read.
- \* Reserve time during Social Ministry Committee meetings to discuss an issue and ask for a response in terms of advocacy.
- \* Ask persons who make phone calls or write letters to either send you copies or let you know how many and on what issues during a particular time period. Send this information to LOGA.
- \* Include bulletin inserts provided by LOGA in your Sunday bulletin (available in the Legislative Update).
- \* Form a letter-to-the-editor writing group. Encourage WELCA circle meetings, Youth Groups, Adult Forums, and Congregational Council members to write letters to the editor as part of their witness.
- \* Sign up for the Legislative Update ([www.loga.org](http://www.loga.org))
- \* Send an e-mail to Lutheran World Relief at ([advocacy@lwr.org](mailto:advocacy@lwr.org)) to get on their list or visit their web site, ([www.lwr.org/action/advocacy](http://www.lwr.org/action/advocacy)).

# LUTHERAN OFFICE OF PUBLIC POLICY

1701 L STREET, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814 PHONE: 916/ 447-6666

Set up an Action Center or Letter Center  
before and after Church on Sunday and at other events.



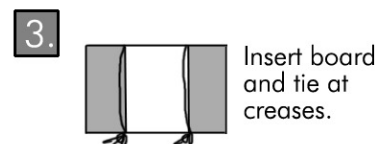
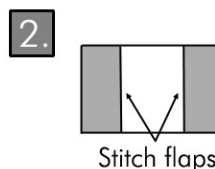
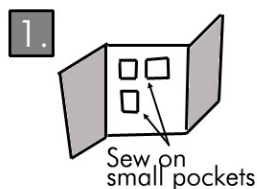
## Action/Letter Center Instructions

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Foam-core board or cardboard
- Cloth to cover with pockets sewn on (or skip cloth cover and glue pockets directly on foam core board.)
- Issue sheets
- Address lists
- Blank paper and envelopes
- Post cards
- Stamps
- Pen(s)
- Sample letters ("How-To")

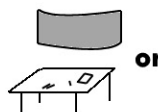
With cloth cover:

1. Cut fabric to cover entire front of board plus extra to fold over and stitch later to form pockets for board.
2. Sew pockets on front to hold items for display
3. Turn flaps back and stitch. Insert creased board into cloth cover. Tie cord or yarn at creased joints to add strength.



### Other options

Information on banner behind card table "writing desk"



or

Information on easel beside "writing counter"





## **BUILDING A NETWORK IN YOUR CONGREGATION**

Goal: To find \_\_\_ people willing to make a commitment to affect public policy from a faith perspective.

Some ways to discover these people:

- Use an advocacy Bible Study as part of adult curriculum.
- Approach individuals personally and ask them to become involved in an advocacy network. Visit with them after worship, after a meeting, or ask them to coffee or lunch.
- Have the church council designate an advocacy Sunday.
- Have a place designated after worship where individuals can join the grassroots network.
- Hold an Adult Forum on Advocacy. You might even want to write letters at the close.
- Give a talk on advocacy during worship.
- Lift portions of the Legislative Update to put in your church newsletter.
- Write an article about advocacy in your church newsletter.
- Have a minute for mission and explain the advocacy network, the work of LOGA or an issue during worship.
- Have “advocacy network” added to the time and talent sheet for stewardship.

## **CREATING A NETWORK**

### **Increase Your Impact - Create a Network**

A network can mean the difference between powerlessness and having an impact. It enables you to notify many people quickly when legislation is about to be voted on, or to reinforce a mail alert.

### **Telephone Networks:**

We recommend the following design. Person #1 receives a message and then calls two people. Person #10 receives two calls and telephones #1 to confirm that the message has been received. If #10 hears from only one side of the network, he or she only has a few people to call to find where the message got stuck.

This design asks for a very small commitment—only one or two phone calls per person. Note that each person on the chain is the contact for their congregation. Each person can create a network in their congregation.

### **Who Decides When to Send a Message?**

Call your person #1 when your representative or senators are key to the vote. If a local committee takes responsibility for starting messages, call the hotline numbers every month to keep track of what issues are “hot” in Congress. Decide as a group what issues your network will act on and whether non-legislative messages can be sent through the network.

### **How Often Should You Use the Network?**

Every 3-8 weeks. More often than this demands too much time; but without use, network members are likely to forget about it.

### **How to Create a Telephone Network in Your Congregation**

1. Talk to clergy and lay leaders before going ahead. Get official approval to use the copier, phones, or space.
2. Make public announcements, put up a poster, and put a notice in the bulletin. Then talk to people personally about joining the network. Don't expect that anyone will join the network because of an announcement, but do expect that people will respond if you invite them personally and tell them how limited and simple the network is.



## **Responsibilities of Telephone Network Members**

### **Person #1:**

- \* Send a copy of the telephone network to all members.
- \* Call hotline number every week.
- \* Call persons #2 and #6 with action message if appropriate.
- \* Receive a call from #10. Report calls and letters written by network members to legislators.

### **Person #10:**

- \* Call #1 when contacted by person #5 and #9.
- \* If you do not hear from one side of the network within two days of hearing from the other side, call up the network to find where the message broke down.

### **Persons #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9:**

- \* Call the next person on the network to pass on the message and say what you plan to do.
- \* Write your letter, call, ask some other people to write or call.

### **Person #2 or #6:**

- \* Take the place of #1 if she/ he goes out of town.

## **To Keep the Network Fun and Functioning...**

Have a social event as soon as the network is set up and every four months thereafter. Coffee hours or potlucks with a speaker or film and time for socializing are fun and enable us to build friendships and bring new people on to the network. It's much more fun to meet the people you call - in addition, it is more effective.

**NOTE:** On telephone listings with cell phones, voice mail, work phones, and answering machines; it is important to find out which number is the best. Where can a message be left that will be relayed?

Try to include a system of reporting back when the legislator was actually contacted.

## **Internet Networks:**

The same process as with the telephone networks apply, except it is only one person initiating the contact. There is a written trail to follow, so make sure what you put in the alert is accurate, up to date, and timely.

## ADVOCACY NETWORK

### Contact #1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #6

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #7

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #8

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #9

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact #10

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Backup # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

## **HOW TO DEVELOP AN INTERNET ACTION ALERT**

As email competes with telephones for a way of communicating, we have seen many effective as well as some not so effective use of this technology. The purpose of this mode of communication is to provide enough information so that an individual may take action on the issue.

- 1) Single alerts are one time e-mails sent out to gather the greatest number of sympathetic responders. Structured alerts are networks and list serves developed for a narrower audience attracting people interested in a particular issue or source of response. Your Internet Action Alert should always be structured and part of a larger issue campaign strategy.
- 2) All information on the Internet travels at the same speed. Make sure yours is authentic so that you don't give alerts a bad name. Provide ways of the recipient to get back to you (name, phone, email, URL, etc.) and make sure you have all of your facts straight.
- 3) Beginnings and endings are important. Have you ever received the 3 year old request to send email to some school? Make sure your information include all pertinent timing dates as to when a response is helpful and when it is no longer necessary.
- 4) Confidentiality is an issue for all of us in this information world. What you put in this alert may literally go round the world. Be careful of using names. Be aware of who receives your alert and be specific around recipients intentions to forward the material.
- 5) Now what am I to do? Present a simply, clearly defined step with rationale for recipient to take. Chain letter petitions are not helpful. Calls and letters to legislators are. Ask your people to let you know what action they took so that you can take time to review what happened after your alert was distributed.
- 6) Look before pressing send. It can help to print your alert before sending it. Is it clear, with a simple layout, and easy to understand. Is spelling correct? Use short sentences with simple grammar. Are there any words with double meanings? Have someone review your work.

The Internet is an exciting new tool to use in our advocacy work. Remember, this alone is not organizing an action. You need to have this as part of an overall strategy for responding to a need for advocacy.



## **PUBLIC POLICY INTEREST SURVEY**

This form could be used at an advocacy network or a follow up in a congregation to an adult forum. It is a good way for members to expand their horizons and/or for you to get a feel for members current involvement. You could do on the spot or have folks return it at the next gathering.

Adapt this to your locale!



## PUBLIC POLICY INTEREST SURVEY

1. I receive written Public Policy Information from the following sources:  

_____ LOGA	_____ ELCA
_____ LSA	_____ State Public Policy Offices
_____ LWR	_____ LIRS
_____ other (please specify) _____	
  
2. Our ministry currently uses the following to encourage our members to participate in public policy.  

_____ newsletter	_____ phone tree/calls
_____ special letters	
_____ other (please specify) _____	
  
3. In the past 6 months I have contacted my state/federal representatives by:  

_____ letter(s)	_____ phone call(s)
_____ visit(s)	_____ editorial in paper
_____ sign-on letter or petition	_____ e-mail/fax
_____ other (please specify) _____	
  
4. The news/list serve I receive on the computer are:  

_____ LOGA	_____ Families USA
_____ Sojourners	_____ E-wire
_____ newspaper	_____ The Grist
name _____	
_____ Planetcare	
_____ other (please specify) _____	
  
5. I would be interested in participating in a grassroots strategy that includes the following (check as many as you are interested in)  

_____ action alerts	_____ informal network working on behalf of an issue
_____ literature on advocacy	_____ formal network that I can regularly connect folks with who are interested in a particular issue.
_____ lobby day	
  
6. I currently work in the following kinds of coalitions:  

_____ congregations	_____ other groups engaged in same issue
_____ community organizations	_____ Lutheran agencies only
_____ other agencies engaged in like ministry	
_____ other (please specify) _____	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO CHOOSE ISSUES

The key is narrowing down to one issue. You cannot afford to be so overwhelmed by all the issues that need your group's attention that you throw up your hands and do nothing. Nor can you jump head first into every issue that comes along. Hopefully, by spending a little time thinking about which issues make the most sense for your group, you will enter into the ministry of advocacy with a deep commitment and ability to make a difference.

In deciding which issue to pursue, some local groups have created two or three tiers: issues to which they make a major commitment; those issues to monitor and make their voices heard when needed; and those issues where they will simply show their support.

### **Use the following questions to begin your issue search:**

What activity are our congregation/synod heavily involved in at this time?

How many people in our state/synod geographic area/community are affected by this issues?

Do our members have direct experience with this issues?

Can we make a difference if we get involved?

Can we make new friends? (i.e. Who else is working on this issue, who can we join?)

What are the Biblical mandates/Social Statement concerning this issue?

What messages can we communicate?

### **Remember A Good Issue:**

- ▶ Affects an organization and its constituency in a tangible way.
- ▶ Offers the opportunity to let many people be involved.
- ▶ Should be specific and winnable\*.
- ▶ Should encourage your organization to enter into a new level of commitment.

\*winnable – an issue that is vital may not be completely “winnable” but there are ways to setting realistic goals, such as keeping the budget the same or only 25 percent cuts.



## **A MODEL OF WHAT TO DO IF WE DO NOT AGREE**

### **Seeking to be Faithful Together**

**Give all a hearing...listen before answering**  
**John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13**

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ. We will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange, we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions surrounding the topic of disagreement.
3. State what you think you heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure everyone is understood.

### **Speak the truth in Love** **Ephesians 4:15**

4. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom you have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.
5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives. Name-calling, labeling trying to guess people's party affiliation is not appropriate.
6. Share personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand the concerns.

### **Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace** **Ephesians 4:3**

7. Indicate agreement with those of other viewpoints as well as disagreement. Then agree to disagree.
8. Seek to stay in community though the discussions may be vigorous and full of tension.
9. Commit to guidelines of grace, urging persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions. Be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience.
10. Include disagreements in prayers, seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

## CHANGING the WORLD through ADVOCACY

*One Hour Sunday school Lesson: Start with a devotion form the advocacy Bible Study or other materials in this manual.*

1. Pick an Issue

What do you see in your neighborhood that is wrong?

What issues cause you to care?

2. Learn about the Issue

What could change to help solve the problem?

Where is the system failing?

3. Come up with a Strategy

To whom do you need to talk?

What information do you need in order to go forward?

Where will you get help?

Who will do which tasks?

4. Implementing your plan

Make a time line with tasks and persons assigned.

5. Evaluating the strategy

How will you know if you change the world or at least made an impact in the situation with your strategy?

*End the session with commitments of moving forward. Who will do what. When will it get done and when will you meet to look at your progress. End with a prayer sending the group forward with the Lord's blessing.*





## **THE OPEN SPACE PROCESS**

- Description:** Open Space is a group process that encourages individuals to invite others to engage in a group discussion. It works best when used in between formal meeting times of the group.
- Purpose:** To surface the issues effecting our work together that members feel passionate about. These issues may or may not be part of the current agenda.
- Time:** May be ongoing throughout a day with 10 minutes at end to sign up and organize meetings or take a half hour to process a days work.
- Four Guiding Principles:**
- Whoever participates are the right people
  - Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen
  - Whenever it starts is the right time
  - When it is over it is over
- Lay of Two Feet:** If, during the course of the gathering any person finds themselves in a situation where they are neither learning nor contributing, they can use any means of mobility and go to a more productive place.
- Getting Started:**
- Identify your issue(s)
  - Know your passion(s)
  - Give a short title to the topic you have a passion for
  - Write your topic on a sheet of paper
  - Post your issue paper on the wall for all to consider
  - All participants are invited to state their issue(s)

All participants are invited to read all the issues and sign their names to the issue papers where they also have a passion. Those issue/papers with no signatures drop out of the process. The signatures on the issue/paper take responsibility for time/place to meet before the next meeting. This may be in person, on the phone or via e-mail.

### ***Some Observations of the Process:***

- ☐ The process is self-managed by the group
- ☐ The process allows the unspeakable to be spoken
- ☐ The process is extremely powerful when no one person has the answer
- ☐ The process does not work when a leader/convener tries to control it
- ☐ The process is one that builds community
- ☐ The process is most effective in situations where a diverse group of people deal with complex and potentially conflicting material in innovative and productive ways
- ☐ The process is most effective where there is time at the next meeting to bring any results of meeting back to the entire group

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### Problem Meeting Participants

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Ever been to a meeting and be really frustrated with one of the others there? Here are some usual problems you might encounter. Read each scenario and come up with some tips you might have for the facilitator.

*Ramblin' Rhonda- You've met Rhonda, she talks and talks and talks. The only trouble is, her talking is about everything except the subject. She often gets lost and many times uses far-fetched analogies which are hard for the group to follow.*

*Boxing Bill and Betty- These two members clash on everything. If Bill says the sky is blue, Betty says it's grey. Their clashing divides your group into factions.*

*Motormouth Michael- Michael not only constantly talks but he monopolizes the conversation to the exclusion of others in the group.*

*Dependent Donna- A leader can fall in love with Donna at first. She is the one who will listen to no one but the leader. She always asks what the leader thinks and keeps all the focus on the leader to the exclusion of the group.*

*Inarticulate Ian- A good intentioned soul, Ian has trouble putting thoughts into words. He can't convey his idea and really needs your help to get his idea on the table.*

*Silent Sally- Now Sally might have several reasons behind her silence. She refuses to talk but you are not sure if she is bored, indifferent, feels superior, timid or insecure.*

*Carl the Conversationalist- The side bars abound with Carl here. There are whispered conversations with another group member which may or may not have to do with what is being presented. It is very distracting to you and other group members.*

Look at your person.

What are some tips for dealing with this personality?

What are some ground rules you could establish to avoid this?

How would you phrase one response to this person to regain control?

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## Answers to Address Problem Participants

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### *Ramblin Rosemary*

- Restate any relevant points she makes
- Let her speak til you find one idea that you can use to transition back
- Refocus by asking the group (turning away) how they see it
- If she is way off, take the blame and say something I said must have led you off, now we are speaking about....

### *Boxing Bill and Betty*

- Emphasize points of agreement
- Minimize points of disagreement
- Ask that personalities be left out
- Bring another reasoned voice in before you loose control

### *Motormouth Michael*

- When he stops for a breath, thank him for his contribution and refocus  
    You've given us a lot to think about....  
    Let's get some other thoughts on the topic...
- Make a ground rule that everyone has a chance to address the topic before in depth analysis
- Ask him for one new point he wants to bring to the group

### *Dependent Donna*

- Point out that your view as leader is not as important as the view of the group
- Get some other opinion
- Give your opinion if appropriate and immediately ask others in the group to respond

### *Inarticulate Ian*

- Say, let me repeat that...
- Do you mean
- Put their ideas in a better language and have it make sense.
- Avoid saying What do you mean?

### *Silent Sally*

- Ask her for her opinion
- Compliment her sincerely, when she does speak for the first time

### *Carl the Conversationalist*

- Don't embarrass him
- Ask a direct question by calling his name and restating the last opinion expressed and ask his opinion of that
- Sometimes a glance or pause will bring him back

### *General*

- Ground rules ahead of time like two \sentences each can help
- Try to make sure all (especially silent Sally) buy into a decision and wont leave saying "they decided..."
- You as facilitator are the driver. It is your responsibility to get folks to their destination
- Post all ideas and have group decide on three to go forward
- Breaks enable the facilitator to have a private conversation with a difficult person
- Use a parking lot- a blank flip chart to put ideas that are not part of what we are doing now that need to be addressed in the future. This is where sidebar conversations can go.



## HOW TO USE RESOURCES

Everywhere you look statistics are in our world. One out of four children do this or, 75 percent of children do that. How do we look at these numbers and issues and make sense of them? How do we approach legislators and make an impact with good information? Should you pass on bad information, it will be a long time before you get called upon again or trusted by that legislator. So what is good and bad information?

### Bad Information

- ▶ based on anecdotes or guesses
- ▶ based on faulty statistics
- ▶ unclear and/ or sensationalized
- ▶ outdated information
- ▶ statistics without a source reference
- ▶ make comparisons (apples to oranges)

### Good Information

- ▶ states solid facts
- ▶ annotated statistics that can be understood
- ▶ up to date information (for most issues this is within a year)
- ▶ cites stories as personal and has solid grounding to develop a position
- ▶ states clearly who is responsible for information
- ▶ uses few acronyms (whenever used, the whole name can easily be found in the beginning)
- ▶ states specifically and clearly what you want the legislator to do or what position you are taking
- ▶ uses statistics which correlate to each other (apples to apples)



## **Social Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Social statements are major documents, adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, addressing significant social issues. Since 1991 the ELCA has adopted seven social statements. You can read and download these social statements by clicking on the links. For more information on what social statements are and how they are developed, go to “[Addressing Social Issues](#).” Need to download and print a statement? Use the “Print-Friendly” versions.

**Abortion** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1991 at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly

**Caring for Creation** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1993 at the third biennial Churchwide Assembly

**The Church in Society** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1991 at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly

**The Death Penalty** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1991 at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly

**For Peace in God’s World** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1995 at the fourth biennial Churchwide Assembly

**Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1993 at the third biennial Churchwide Assembly

**Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All** (Print-Friendly Version)

Adopted in 1999 at the sixth biennial Churchwide Assembly

To find these please go to - <http://www.elca.org/dcs/socialstatements.html>

## ABOUT WEB PAGES

More and more of us are using the Internet as a primary source of information and statistics around a variety of issues. Where do we start and how do we get the needed information, especially when it comes to understanding ELCA policies.

The first place to go is to the ELCA Web site [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) and LOGA Web site [www.loga.org](http://www.loga.org). You will find this a source of information about issues, links to resources both within ELCA and within like minded organizations. The division which houses advocacy work is the Division for Church in Society – [www.elca.org/dcs.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs.html).

Once you have checked out these ELCA sites, visit the other parts of the advocacy department:

DCS Advocacy Page	<a href="http://www.elca.org/dcs/advocacy.html">www.elca.org/dcs/advocacy.html</a>
DCS Advocacy Plan	<a href="http://www.loga.org/advocacyplan/AdvocacyIndex.html">www.loga.org/advocacyplan/AdvocacyIndex.html</a>
Corporate Social Responsibility	<a href="http://www.elca.org/dcs/corp.html">www.elca.org/dcs/corp.html</a>
Lutheran Office for World Community	<a href="http://www.elca.org/dcs/lowc.html">www.elca.org/dcs/lowc.html</a>

### State Public Policy Offices

California	<a href="http://www.lutheranpublicpolicyca.org">www.lutheranpublicpolicyca.org</a>
Colorado	<a href="http://www.logmco.org">www.logmco.org</a>
Michigan	<a href="http://www.lssm.org">www.lssm.org</a>
Minnesota	<a href="http://www.lcppm.org">www.lcppm.org</a>
Nevada	<a href="http://www.lamn.org">www.lamn.org</a>
New Jersey	<a href="http://www.concentric.net/~logmnj/">www.concentric.net/~logmnj/</a>
New Mexico	<a href="http://www.logmnm.org">www.logmnm.org</a>
New York	<a href="http://www.lsa-ny.org">www.lsa-ny.org</a>
Pennsylvania	<a href="http://www.lamp.org">www.lamp.org</a>
Washington	<a href="http://www.loppw.org">www.loppw.org</a>

Look toward our partners in advocacy:

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	<a href="http://www.lirs.org">www.lirs.org</a>
Lutheran World Relief	<a href="http://www.lwr.org">www.lwr.org</a>
Lutheran Services in America	<a href="http://www.lutheranservices.org">www.lutheranservices.org</a>
Women of the ELCA	<a href="http://www.elca.org/wo">www.elca.org/wo</a>

Visit other ELCA divisions by going to the main ELCA site at [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) and look through the selected topics.

One area to move to would be our full communion partner churches. You can visit their Web sites:

The Episcopal Church	<i><a href="http://www.ecusa.anglican.org">www.ecusa.anglican.org</a></i>
Moravian Church	<i><a href="http://www.moravian.org">www.moravian.org</a></i>
Presbyterian Church (USA)	<i><a href="http://www.pcusa.org">www.pcusa.org</a></i>
Reformed Church in America	<i><a href="http://www.rca.org">www.rca.org</a></i>
United Church of Christ	<i><a href="http://www.ucc.org">www.ucc.org</a></i>

Next you can move on to government web sites and then onto non-profit organizations which may have similar positions to the ELCA.

Now you are ready to further explore the web. Expanding your search yet knowing how this fits with ELCA thought can get complicated. Using a search engine (such as yahoo, alta vista, or google) can bring lots of information. It may or may not answer your question and it may actually present opposing viewpoints to ELCA positions.

How do you evaluate if the Web site is in keeping with an ELCA position? Remember that statistics can be used in various ways to support differing positions.

When you go to a web site:

1. Determine why the site was developed. What is the motivation behind placing this information on the Web? Do we have an ELCA Social Statement that supports this position?
2. If you don't know or can't determine a position, do a search to see what others say about the group. Look at the labels others attach to their work or position. Remember to check the LOGA Web site to see if they are a link in the issue section.
3. Look at the language used. For example, is it gun control or anti-gun campaigns, tax relief or tax cuts? Some of the language should give you a hint as to the position.
4. If you are still confused, phone or write LOGA or your state public policy office.



## WEB SITE RESOURCES

Our lives have changed with the World Wide Web at our fingertips. The amount of information available is staggering. With so much out there it is often hard to know what sites to trust.

*Research can always begin at:*

- ▶ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)
- ▶ Division for Church in Society, ELCA: [www.elca.org/dcs](http://www.elca.org/dcs)
- ▶ Advocacy Department of the Division for Church in Society, ELCA: [www.elca.org/dcs/advocacy.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs/advocacy.html)
- ▶ Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, ELCA: [www.loga.org](http://www.loga.org)

*In addition you may want to search the following sites.*

Administrative - government information: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

Alliance for Children and Families: [www.alliance1.org](http://www.alliance1.org)

Bread for the World: [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

Census Bureau - Poverty: [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html)

Center for Community Change to the Welfare Group: [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities - Click Federal Welfare on side panel: [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

Center on Law and Social Policy: [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org) Review their monthly publication

Child Trends (Studies Children, Youth and Families): [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

Children's Defense Fund - Click on fair start: [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

Coalition on Human Needs: [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)

Disarmament and peace voting records: [www.clw.org](http://www.clw.org)

Economic Policy Institute: [www.epinet.org](http://www.epinet.org)

Environment: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Environmental legislation - how members voted: [www.lcv.org](http://www.lcv.org)

Families USA (Health Care): [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)

Federal Statistics: [www.fedstats.gov](http://www.fedstats.gov)

Food Research and Action Center (Hunger Policy): [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

House contact and legislative information: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

Institute for Research on Poverty - University of Wisconsin, Madison: [www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp](http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp)

Joint Center for Poverty Research - Chicago and Northwestern Universities: [www.jcpr.org](http://www.jcpr.org)

Library of Congress legislative information - <http://thomas.loc.gov>

National Association of Child Advocates: [www.childadvocacy.org](http://www.childadvocacy.org)

National Center for Children in Poverty - Columbia University:  
<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>

National Governor's Association - Click Welfare Reform: [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)

National Low Income Housing Coalition: [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

New York Times service which connects you with the site to write your member:  
<http://congress.nw.dc.us/nyt>

Senate contact and legislative information: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

State Policy Documentation Project: a joint project of the Center for Law and Social Policy and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities regarding welfare reform: [www.spdp.org](http://www.spdp.org)

Third Annual Report to Congress, Department of Health and Human Services:  
[www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opre/annual3.doc](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opre/annual3.doc)

Urban Institute - Click welfare reform - also on logo, Assessing the New Federalism:  
[www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org) and [www.federalism.urban.org](http://www.federalism.urban.org)

U.S. Congressional Budget Office: [www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)

Welfare Information Network: [www.welfareinfo.org](http://www.welfareinfo.org)



2. What one area do you want to improve? This may be a skill you need to refine or use more often, an approach you want to change, an attitude or assumption that interferes with your effectiveness.

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**One Area for Improvement**

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As you and your fellow triad members discuss your self-assessment, take notes above on their feedback.

3. Write below the plan you devise to support yourself in working on the area that you have identified for improvement.

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**Development Plan**

► What I Will Do

1)

2)

3)

► Support from Triad Partners

1)

2)

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**SMALL GROUP EXERCISE**

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**Icebreaker**

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### **SCAVENGER HUNT/ FIND SOMEONE WHO/ HUMAN TREASURE HUNT**

**Purpose:** An exercise to get the group up, moving, talking and laughing. Depending on the statements you choose, may be used to “break the ice” with a “stuffy” group.

**Skill development**

**area:** Self-disclosure, communication skills.

**Group size:** 10-50

**Group type:** Mixed. May be colleagues or strangers.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Have a handout sheet for every participant (in their workbook or separate copies).

**Room**

**set-up:** Open area large enough for your group to mill around.

**Instructions:** Find someone in this room (not counting yourself) who can answer “yes” to a statement. Have them write their initials in the blank next to their statement. The first person to find someone for all statements, wins. If the group is large, say you can only initial a paper once.

**Notes:** Ahead of time, **select 10 or more statements** from the list on the attached handout. Create your own version. *Processing points: Which were the hardest or easiest to ask? Which didn't you ask, and why? Did this exercise challenge any stereotypes for you?*

Of course, you may initial anyone's paper who asks you. Watch the time and movement in the room, and don't let this drag on more than 20 minutes.



## ICEBREAKERS

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### HANDOUT

#### SCAVENGER HUNT/ FIND SOMEONE WHO/ HUMAN TREASURE HUNT

**Find someone who answers “Yes” to the following statements.....**

**And get their INITIALS:**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Has a red car   | _____ |
| 2. Likes their body just the way it is                             | _____ |
| 3. Flosses their teeth every day                                   | _____ |
| 4. Has a tattoo somewhere  | _____ |
| 5. Is a former Peace Corps volunteer                               | _____ |
| 6. Went to a Lutheran College/ University/ Seminary                | _____ |
| 7. Has training experience   | _____ |
| 8. Loves opera   | _____ |
| 9. Owns a Fleetwood Mac album from the first time they were famous | _____ |
| 10. Has been to Asia   | _____ |
| 11. Knows how to apply for a hunger grant                          | _____ |
| 12. Knows someone with HIV infection                               | _____ |
| 13. Likes cold pizza in the morning                                | _____ |
| 14. Wears a seatbelt every time they're in a car                   | _____ |
| 15. Listens to National Public Radio                               | _____ |
| 16. Has visited the DCS Advocacy Department web pages              | _____ |
| 17. Has answered a “Personals” ad                                  | _____ |

18. Went to school in another country \_\_\_\_\_
19. Has been to Washington, DC \_\_\_\_\_
20. Exercises 4 times a week \_\_\_\_\_
21. Has been on Native Lands/Reservation \_\_\_\_\_
22. Can speak a language other than English \_\_\_\_\_
23. Has been on TV \_\_\_\_\_
24. Has a politician as a family member \_\_\_\_\_
25. Invites both black & white friends to parties \_\_\_\_\_
26. Has talked to their children honestly about poverty \_\_\_\_\_
27. Has ever been homeless \_\_\_\_\_
28. Has experienced natural childbirth \_\_\_\_\_
29. Has visited Appalachia \_\_\_\_\_
30. Has been to the Mexican border communities \_\_\_\_\_
31. Has a family member living in poverty \_\_\_\_\_
32. Has a family member who uses drugs \_\_\_\_\_
33. Has had a physical exam in the last twelve months \_\_\_\_\_
34. Knows about Socially Responsible Investing \_\_\_\_\_
35. Knows their body fat percentage \_\_\_\_\_
36. Has run a marathon \_\_\_\_\_
37. Plays a musical instrument \_\_\_\_\_
38. Gets at least 8 hours of sleep a night \_\_\_\_\_
39. Is a gourmet cook \_\_\_\_\_
40. Knows the name of their Senator & Representative \_\_\_\_\_



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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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## Icebreaker

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### DID YOU KNOW?

- Purpose:** This exercise can either be done as a fill in the blank or a mixer (like the scavenger hunt).
- Instructions for fill in the blank:** If you find yourself in fixed seating with no movement flexibility, use this as a fill in the blank. After sharing the answers, find out who knew the most answers.
- Instructions for mixer:** In preparing the exercise, pick as many of these as apply to your situation. Develop others that are particular to your locale. The method for a mixer is to prepare a list and leave a space for individuals to initial after an answer. Everyone is to mill around asking, Do you know the answer to #5, to #4? If the answer is “yes”, the person initials it. The person with the most initials, wins.
- Alternative Instructions for fill in the blank:** Have a flip chart available to write answers. Inform the group that you will ask a question. When they answer it, they will need to say their name then give the answer. This works with a shy group who might not like to get up and mingle.
- Note:** In your preparation, make sure you have the answers available to you. Some are in this manual, others you will have to search out.
- Hints:**
- The U.S. Secretary of State is Colin Powell.
  - The Chief Justice is William Rehnquist.
  - The three branches of Government are legislative, executive, and judicial.
  - The last say in a pardon: U.S. president in federal pardon and governor in state pardon.
  - There were two impeached Presidents, Andrew Johnson and William Clinton. Both were impeached, but neither were convicted.
  - George Bush is the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the U.S.
  - The UN Secretary General is Kofi Anan.
  - Bible references to poverty - See Faith chapter.
  - Advocacy is mentioned in social statements anywhere they talk about the church’s responsibility in society.
  - The phone number at LOGA is 202-783-7507.





***DO YOU KNOW?***

- Your Secretary of State \_\_\_\_\_
- Your Representative in the U.S. House of Representatives \_\_\_\_\_
- The Chief Justice of the United States \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the next year we will have a senatorial election \_\_\_\_\_
- The three branches of government \_\_\_\_\_
- Your town's mayor (if you have none, your area's highest elected official) \_\_\_\_\_
- Who has the last say in a pardon \_\_\_\_\_
- How many presidents have been impeached \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the number of the current president \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is the UN Secretary General \_\_\_\_\_
- Your state's governor \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is U.S. representative to the UN \_\_\_\_\_
- The name of the poverty staffer for your senator \_\_\_\_\_
- The name of a grassroots organization to present on local poverty issues \_\_\_\_\_
- Where in the Bible there is a reference to poverty \_\_\_\_\_
- Where advocacy is mentioned in an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) social statement \_\_\_\_\_
- Your state's welfare director \_\_\_\_\_
- How HUD is managed in your area \_\_\_\_\_
- the phone number of the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) office \_\_\_\_\_



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## SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

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## Meeting Starter

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### QUICK TAKES

**Purpose:** These introductions can be done with a large or small audience. They are designed to give each participant someone to know and share something with, and they are used when you have a tight agenda and you want to move on quickly.

**Skill development**

**area:** Self-disclosure; empathy with the feelings participants may have entering a legislative office for the first time. May be used at network meetings.

**Time:** Aim for fewer than 10 minutes.

**Materials:** None.

**Room**

**set-up:** Participants have to be able to interact with one other person in the room.

**Instructions:** We're going to introduce ourselves to the person sitting next to us, so please pick your partner for this exercise. If there's an uneven number of us, would the person without a partner please join me here? **For any of these options, the leader keeps time and must remind the partners to switch after 2 minutes, and to end.** Now (leader selects one option):

- ❖ Look through your wallet or purse or anything on you and find two things that describe you. Take turns, and for 2 minutes apiece, tell your partner your name, and what these two things you're carrying say about you/ your life.
- ❖ Tell your partner your name. Then for two minutes each, please share with your partner why you do the work you do (or what's changed in your life since you began doing advocacy).
- ❖ Tell you partner your name. Then, for two minutes each, talk about the last good book you read or good movie you saw. Why did you like it?

Notes to  
leader:

Keep an eye out for the person left out or sitting alone, and just quietly be his/ her partner. Be strict about the time, and be sure to give the second group speaking its full two minutes. When you are all done, use the same introduction pattern to introduce yourself to the whole group or have the partner introduce you to the whole group.



## **WRAP-UP**

### **Perspective**

Two of the obstacles to the transfer of learning from a workshop to home are the lack of support for the new way of doing the work and job stressors that go unmanaged. Either of these two obstacles prevent people from practicing what they have learned or cause their new practices to deteriorate rather quickly.

For advocacy, these obstacles loom large. Advocacy can be a lonely fight. Often the problems seem insurmountable and obstacles are faced at every turn. When one issue is tackled there are three more waiting for attention. The intensity of the issues and the relationships developed have injected new meaning into the term “burn-out.”

These activities address the issue with an “ounce of prevention.” Participants will assess their advocacy skills and develop a plan for working on—and gaining support for—an area that needs improvement. You will need to develop activities which fit your time, audience and space. If you meet on a regular basis, you may split or adapt these to be done over time.

### **Plan Commitment**

Find a partner. (Tell partners that:)

- ▶ You will have about 10 minutes in total to share your selected plan for going home, highlighting the specific first steps needed;
- ▶ Spend about 5 minutes for each partner, then switch;
- ▶ Exchange phone numbers at the end of your dialogue and contract for a specific time to contact one another to check-in on progress toward your plan.