



ELCA POVERTY MINISTRIES

Jesus told his disciples that feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the prisoners are like doing those things for the Son of God. With this lesson, we engage in poverty ministries.

The poverty ministries of the ELCA, part of the division Church in Society, are outlined below:

HIV and AIDS

In 1988 the ELCA Church Council affirmed a message committing the church to care for those affected by AIDS. Though treatment and education have increased, the number of infections worldwide still grows. Since the largest growth is among people do not have access to treatment or education, HIV and AIDS are not just a health concern, but also an issue of justice.

The webpage www.elca.org/aids contains information about HIV and AIDS, ways to minister to those dealing with HIV and AIDS, worship materials, and information about World AIDS Day.

Community Organizing

Community organizing is a way for congregations and their communities to address issues of poverty and justice in their own neighborhoods. Rev. John Heinemier defines faith-based organizing as, “the intentional and disciplined putting of the diverse peoples of a city in relationship across all racial, economic, denominational and neighborhood lines for the purpose of making that city ‘work better’ for the good of all” (www.elca.org/organizing).

The webpage www.elca.org/organizing provides resources to assist congregations in organizing to address issues beyond their own walls and becoming a powerful force in their communities.

Granting Hope

Granting Hope, funded by the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, is a collection of domestic hunger grants available through the ELCA. Congregations seeking to address issues of hunger can use the resource at www.elca.org/grantinghope

to read stories about other grant recipients, learn about the grants, and apply.

Community Development

Community Development Services provide outreach to recipients of domestic hunger grants as they are engaged in community development and redevelopment programs. Many of these recipients are small, congregation-based programs addressing important needs but with very small budgets and little infrastructure. They need some assistance to address the need over the long-term and improve their services.

Poverty Ministry Networking

One common error by people concerned about addressing poverty is that low-income communities do not have any assets. This is clearly not the case, and one important asset is the people. There are people assets but they need support and training. Poverty Ministries Networking works with leaders in low-income communities to upgrade their ability to provide leadership in their communities. Training includes topics such as fundraising skills, nonviolence, community organizing, etc. to equip these leaders.

FEATURED RESOURCE

- ELCA Church in Society - www.elca.org/churchinsociety

MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.

“The rich and the poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all.” PROVERBS 22:2

ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 132,000 baptized people in 184 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

The Bridge is a monthly publication of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. For more information, contact the synod office:

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