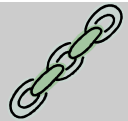


"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery," (Galatians 5:1).

"The King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me,'" (Matthew 25:40).

What is human trafficking?

- **Human trafficking is economically the second largest and fastest growing illegal trade in the world.** (Polaris Project)
- **Human trafficking is a criminal activity** in which people are recruited, harbored, transported, provided, bought, received, or kidnapped and are **exploited** through **fraud, force, or coercion** into situations like sexual slavery, forced labor, organ trafficking, or child soldiery (adapted from U.S. and UN definitions)



January 11 is Human Trafficking Awareness Day

A True* Account of Human Trafficking the U.S.

I am 18-years-old, from a suburban middle-class family in the Midwest, and I was trafficked. One day after seeing an ad for a modeling agency visiting my hometown, I stopped by their casting studio where I met a well-dressed couple. The woman told me I was very beautiful--just the kind of model they were looking for. They invited me to travel with them to Chicago. I was flattered, but since I knew my parents wouldn't let me go, I didn't tell them. The next day the couple bought me a makeover and took pictures of me. We went to Chicago. When we arrived, they dropped me at an apartment building where someone met me and told me I had just been sold.



I was forced to work as a prostitute in the apartment with six other girls. The first time I refused, but my captor beat me so badly that I didn't refuse again. We were paid little, were followed when we went out, and were not allowed to make calls. Sometimes we were driven to houses where groups of men were waiting for us. I was in constant pain and lived in fear because I didn't know my surroundings. I was also becoming addicted to the drugs provided to us.

Eventually, a man who worked at a convenience store we sometimes visited started suspecting something. He asked questions, but I always brushed it off or changed the subject because I feared for my life. In the end, he called a trafficking hotline, and we were rescued from our captor.

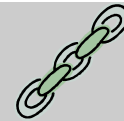
*(*This is a true story. All situations and experiences here have happened.)*

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Why does human trafficking happen?



The Trafficked

Vulnerabilities, like poverty, gender inequality, lack of education, ethnic discrimination, war and armed conflict, domestic abuse, materialism, sexism, and high demand for women and children for sex, are contributing factors.

The Traffickers

High profit, need for control, and low to negligible risk of legal repercussion and prosecution permits this illegal industry to flourish.

The Consumers

People who place high demand on cheap goods (i.e. food, clothing) and services (i.e. housekeeping, childcare) and may unknowingly contribute to the demand for human trafficking.

How can you help stop human trafficking?

- **Observe National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11/** Continue to lift up the topic in your congregation throughout the year.
- **Pray.** Plan an observance or vigil at your church.
- **Educate your congregation.** Host an informational fellowship and invite other congregations, local organizations, and civic leaders to the event.
- **Inquire about the legal and social situation in your community.** Join advocacy organizations that address the issue. Support law enforcement agencies that combat trafficking and social agencies that provide essential services.

See something. Say something.

Look for these and other signs of human trafficking:

- *evidence of being controlled*
- *inability to move or leave jobs*
- *signs of physical abuse*
- *fear or depression*
- *no forms of identification*

If you suspect trafficking or want more information, contact the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center** at 888.3737.888 (toll free) or by email at NHTRC@PolarisProject.org.



For additional worship, youth specific, and general resources, visit the Women of the ELCA website at www.womenoftheleca.org and the ELCA Justice for Women website at www.elca.org/justiceforwomen.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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