



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Advocacy 101 for Young Adults

WHEN
FAITH
MEETS
PUBLIC
POLICY

prepared by
ELCA Hunger
Advocacy
Fellows
2019-20

in conjunction with
ELCA World Hunger
and ELCA Advocacy

A LOOK INSIDE

FOR WHOM IS THIS ADVOCACY 101 GUIDE INTENDED?

This young-adult-centered advocacy guide can be used by individuals or by groups such as college campus ministries, seminary student groups or Bible study groups for parents and young professionals. It is designed for people who find their home in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Other Christian denominations may also find this resource insightful, and certain sections can speak across faith traditions and age groups.

HOW IS IT STRUCTURED?

This guide is split into five sections, each with activities and an audio component, and could be completed over the course of five group sessions. Some activities may need slight modification if used virtually. Four of the suggested audio components are interviews, each four to seven minutes long, and are transcribed in the following appendices. The guide juxtaposes educational information, practical applications and the personal experience of advocates in light of the Lutheran conviction to love our neighbor through advocacy.

WHO WROTE IT?

This guide was written, compiled and designed by the 2019-2020 Hunger Advocacy Fellows, three young-adult advocates, with the support of ELCA Advocacy and ELCA World Hunger.

The ELCA World Hunger Fellowship provides equitable employment opportunities for young people to work in faith-based advocacy for one year. Fellows go on to many different professions and continue to be change-makers in the church and the world.



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WHAT DOES POLICY HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

Government may feel distant from us, but in fact our everyday lives are structured by it.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

In the morning, you drive to work on the freeway, stopping at a gas station to fill up. After work, you drive across a bridge to get to the state university, where you are taking general education courses. At the end of your day, you and your partner decide to eat a bite and walk in your neighborhood. At home after dinner, you shower before turning off the lights and getting some sleep.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF POLICY?

Ponder the role of government in this hypothetical day. Some ideas:

- Transportation infrastructure — roads, freeways, public transit — is built and maintained by governments.
- Gas, food and medicines are regulated for quality and authenticity by the Food and Drug Administration.
- Employers are accountable to certain legal standards of professional conduct.
- Schools, community colleges and state universities receive government funding.
- If we choose or can marry, we have access to special legal rights and privileges.
- Some of us are protected by the social safety net, which includes Medicaid, tax breaks and supplements to pay for food or housing.
- We may benefit from public utilities such as gas, water and electricity.

TO GET YOU THINKING ...

How might your day be different without these policies and public systems? Or with different policies and systems in place?



LISTEN TO...



JEANINE HATCHER

talk about her legislative advocacy to help herself and others get access to needed medication.

(Transcript: Appendix C)

<https://bit.ly/ELCAadvocacy101-Listen-Hatcher>

Policy is created by people like you and me.

GOOD, BAD OR BOTH?

Governments and policies can be a force for good in the world. But they can also create, sustain and embed injustice in our cultural fabric, sometimes intentionally.

Not all government policies and programs work in our favor or benefit us; in fact, many policies or lack thereof harm people and the planet. Some of us are disproportionately affected: people of color, Indigenous people, people with differing immigration statuses and people coping with socioeconomic injustice.

A DIFFERENT DAY IN THE LIFE

Maybe construction of the freeway you're driving on destroyed your grandparents' neighborhood. Or maybe you're living out of your car because of rent increases at your former apartment. You may have difficulty accessing social services due to your immigration status or differing language capability. Perhaps your power goes out regularly or your neighborhood feels unsafe and neglected. You may not be able to attend college due to lack of access to scholarships or rising in-state tuition rates at public universities.

THINK ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY:

- What injustices do you see in your community or your own life?
- How do government policies influence this injustice?

WHO IS THE GOVERNMENT ANYWAY?

Governmental entities can feel distant and out of touch, but at the end of the day, people create governments. In the United States, we elect representatives to act in our interest and on our behalf in making decisions. What kind of systems are we creating together? How can we use our experiences to influence decision-making in our communities?

POLITICS (NOUN):
from the Greek *polites* (citizen) and *polis* (city);
organizing decision-making power and responsibility for a large group of people

SKIT: A DAY IN THE LIFE

An alternate activity is available in Appendix A.

1. Divide into two groups. With your group, spend 10 minutes creating a short skit that shows “a day in the life.”
2. Discuss how policy is directly or indirectly involved in your skit. What would the day have been like without those policies?
3. Each group performs its skit for the other group, facilitating discussion and feedback afterward.
4. During feedback, the audience group can suggest a twist. The water is contaminated; cars are illegal; everyone must say “that’s that” at the end of a sentence — silly or serious, anything goes. The other group performs the skit again, adding this twist.
5. Following the skit, facilitate a discussion on how the twist affected the situation depicted. What made life better? Worse?



STRIVING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: OUR STORIES INTERSECT

So you are starting to see why government and politics matter in your life and the lives of others. But what does this have to do with the gospel?

CALLED TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

At baptism, we are welcomed into community and called to live God's love in the world. Lutherans make a promise at baptism: to strive for justice and peace throughout all the earth. We aren't just waiting for heaven. We are called to love our neighbor in the present. Here. Now. And one of the ways we do that is through government.

GOVERNMENT IS A GIFT

God gives us government as a way of securing peace and freedom in the world. When structured by justice and operating with fairness, governments help each of us and our neighbors live safe, healthy, full lives in community.

Because of human nature, the world cannot be perfect. But it can be just. God calls us to take seriously the world as it is. We can be realistic about how far we are from God's vision, but we also have real possibilities for peace and equity.

A REFORMING TRADITION

From the 95 Theses onward, Lutherans have been known as reformers. Martin Luther himself was a dedicated advocate, not just in the church but in the public sphere as well. Luther argued for education for all, not just the wealthy, as was the custom in his time. An active citizen, he exhorted the church to hold public leaders accountable.

ADVOCACY IN THE ELCA TODAY

The ELCA takes God's call to public life seriously. With input from the entire church, including young adults, the ELCA develops social teaching documents to guide engagement with public policy and social issues. These social statements and social messages are rooted in Scripture, Lutheran theology and the experience of Lutheran ministries, programs and projects in the United States and throughout the world.

"Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society."

—ELCA social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991)

my neighbor's story

my story

God's story

WHAT IS A SOCIAL MESSAGE?

Social messages are topical documents adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to the church and society.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL STATEMENT?

Social statements provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life, and are voted on by the Churchwide Assembly.



LISTEN TO...

THE REV. GUY ERWIN,
FORMER BISHOP OF THE
SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA
SYNOD

discuss Lutheran theological
groundings for advocacy
(Transcript: Appendix D)
<https://bit.ly/ELCAadvocacy101-Listen-Erwin>



SCAN ME

TELLING STORIES

To paraphrase the English poet John Donne, no one is an Island. We are all connected, unable to live in isolation because our actions ultimately affect others. My story, your story and God's story aren't separate; they intersect and run together.

Faith-based advocacy means acknowledging this intersection and taking steps to love our neighbor through how we respond to social injustices and inequities.

ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT SAMPLER

- *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019)
- *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (2013)
- *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (2003)
- *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999)
- *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993)

ACTIVITY: MISSION STATEMENT

1. As a group, reflect on the values you hold as people of faith. From these values, write a shared mission statement.
2. Based on your mission statement, name some issues and policies you think you should prioritize. What are your theological and secular groundworks for these choices?

Option: Make the writing more interactive! Sitting in a circle, go around the group, each person adding a word or value until your mission statement is complete.



INTERRELIGIOUS COLLABORATION

“Our context, whether understood locally or globally, is multi-religious. Our Lutheran vocation both shapes and is shaped by our engagement with religious diversity.”

—“A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”

WHO'S WITH ME?

The purpose of interreligious (also referred to as “interfaith”) work is to encourage dialogue and mutual respect among people of different faith traditions. Many important narratives are shared by different religions. Love of neighbor, care for creation, and social and family ties are important in many faiths.

FROM TOLERANCE TO COLLABORATION

In interreligious collaboration we choose to move beyond tolerance. “Tolerance” implies a kind of inequality and unwilling coexistence, whereas collaboration highlights the benefits of recognizing our distinct traditions. Religion reporter and professor Gustav Niebuhr wrote that beyond tolerance lie respect and recognition, not just for individuals but for the faiths to which they are committed.

COLLABORATION — WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Achieving interreligious collaboration requires unrelenting dialogue and a commitment to religious diversity. An interreligious lens to policy work is a powerful one! National and global changemakers such as Interfaith Immigration Coalition and the UN Commission on the Status of Women are built on the framework of inclusivity and dialogue for those of differing faith traditions.



COLLABORATION (NOUN):
the action of working with someone to produce or create something

“Awakening to faith is not a one-time event, but a continuously unfolding reality. The journey of faith is not a race, but a marathon of love that each person walks at a different pace.”

- A. Helwa, *Secrets of Divine Love: A Spiritual Journey Into the Heart of Islam*



SCAN ME

LISTEN TO...



ROBERTA OSTER, VIRGINIA
INTERFAITH CENTER
COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR

discuss interfaith collaboration in
practice (Transcript: Appendix E)
[https://bit.ly/ELCAadvocacy101-
Listen-Oster](https://bit.ly/ELCAadvocacy101-Listen-Oster)

collaboration

tolerance

ACTIVITY: GUESS THAT TRADITION

Resources for this activity can be found in Appendix B.

- Each group will be given strips of paper with verses from different religious texts or oral histories.
- Match each text to one of the belief systems given.
- When finished, check your group's answers. Did you match them?

Get curious!

- What made you think the text and faith tradition matched?
- Did any texts seem unfamiliar?
- Why?



ADVOCACY 101

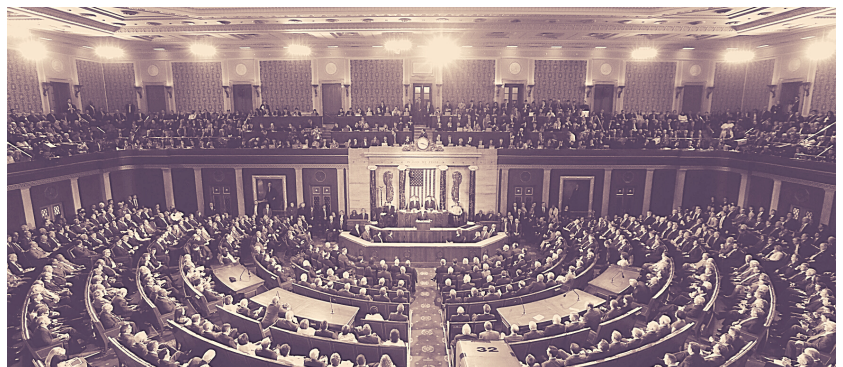
GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. government consists of three distinct branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial. When advocating, you can interact with all elements of these branches. However, in advocating as a young adult, you will likely be interacting with your elected officials in the legislative branch more than anyone else.

States, counties and cities also have governing bodies, providing an opportunity for advocacy closer to home. You may even consider running for local office!

WHO REPRESENTS ME?

In the federal government, each state has two senators and a number of representatives; the latter figure is based on state population, which is determined by the census every 10 years. You can look up your representatives by entering your street address at www.congress.gov/members.



YOUR STORY MATTERS TO LAWMAKERS.

They are elected to represent you in decisions that affect your everyday life and the lives of your loved ones, your neighbors and your environment. Even if you cannot vote, there are many ways to engage in advocacy with and for your community.

WHAT DO I FOCUS ON?

Advocacy groups focus their efforts mainly on bills, which go through a process of review and amendment that can sometimes change them completely. For example, a bill limiting carbon emissions may be comprehensive initially but lose its teeth as amendments exempt certain businesses from having to comply.

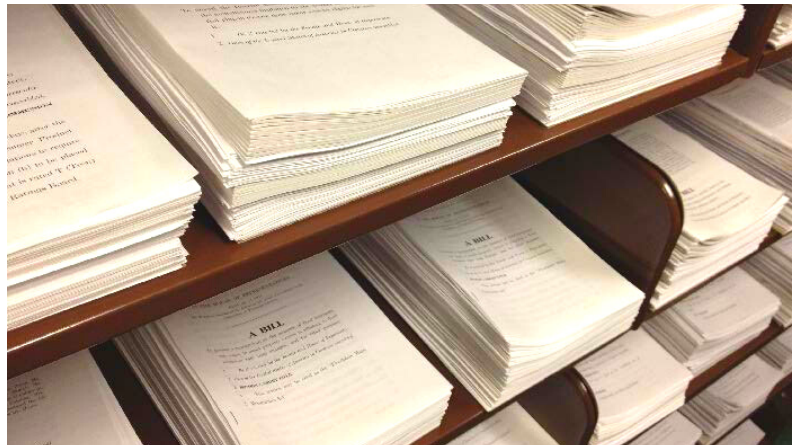
@ELCAADVOCACY

works for change in national and international public policy to create a more just and peaceful world.

Follow on    Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for Action Alerts!

HOW DO I FOLLOW LEGISLATION?

To stay informed, you can track bills and issues yourself, but there are advantages to joining an advocacy group that reflects your values. Advocacy groups follow bills closely throughout the legislative process, staying up-to-speed on amendments, timelines and important players. Advocacy groups issue timely action alerts to notify members when a bill needs their support.



CIVICS 101 PODCASTS
FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC RADIO
Eager to learn more about the
legislative process?
Find the podcast at
civics101podcast.org

LEARNING ABOUT POLICY

THOUSANDS OF POTENTIAL PIECES OF LEGISLATION, CALLED BILLS, ARE INTRODUCED EACH YEAR.

In addition, policies get made through administrative rulemaking, which bypasses Congress. Policies are tested in courts, where they may be struck down, upheld or clarified.

**ELCA.org/advocacy/signup
for Action Alerts and updates**

ACTIVITY: REPRESENTATIVE REPORT CARDS

Advocacy groups often create scorecards that rate legislators on a set of priorities. These scorecards inform the general public and hold representatives accountable.

1. Individually or in pairs, go to <https://myreps.datamade.us> and type in your street address.
2. You will see your representatives; choose one and go to their website.
3. Take notes on who they are, look at the legislation they've introduced and notice how they communicate through their website. To what resources do they link?
4. Create a report card/scorecard. The Children's Defense Fund shares a report card that can be used as an example at <http://cdfactioncouncil.org/reportcard>. Score your representative on each category you've chosen.
5. As a larger group, ask three or four people to share highlights from their scorecards. What was positive? What was concerning?



SHARE YOUR STORY

Stories are powerful bridge builders between people. Your stories matter, whether from your own life, your faith community, your school, your friends or even people you value but may not know well.

WHAT'S AN ELEVATOR SPEECH?

An elevator speech is a speech of 30 to 40 seconds – the time it takes to ride an elevator with someone – that draws that person into further conversation or connection. When time is limited, it's a way of foregrounding who you are and what you care about. To get your point across succinctly, try using a “me/you/we” format. Always end a lobbying visit with an “ask,” requesting that your legislator commit to a vote or an action, so that later you can hold them accountable.

me Who am I, and why am I here?

ex. As a young person, I am concerned about the climate crisis at hand and the lack of meaningful political action on plastics usage.

you What do I want you to do?

ex. As your constituent, I am asking you to support the bipartisan Recover Act to improve recycling infrastructure around the nation.

We How can we work together?

ex. I hope that we can work together to pass this bill. Can we count on your “aye” vote?

ACTIVITY: SPEED LOBBYING

1. Individually, take a moment to reflect on an issue you care about.
2. Develop an elevator speech using the “me/you/we” guidelines above. Practice your speech with a partner.
3. Form two lines, each facing the other, so that each person has a partner. Line one consists of advocates and line two consists of legislators or their staff.
4. Greet your partner as if they're actually an advocate, legislator or staff member. The advocate shares their elevator speech, and the legislator responds positively to their ask. Do this again with the next person in the opposite line.
5. For the third round, follow the same model, but this time the legislator will respond neutrally or negatively to the ask. Advocates will revise their ask until they get a “yes.” Hone your persuasive powers!
6. Move on to the next person in the opposite line, speed dating style, and repeat the encounter.
7. After another round or two, the lines switch roles and the process continues.
8. United again, reflect as a group. Was the process easy? Awkward? How did the legislator react to you? What worked, and what didn't?



SCAN ME

LISTEN TO...



REGINA Q. BANKS,
DIRECTOR OF THE
LUTHERAN OFFICE OF
PUBLIC POLICY -
CALIFORNIA

and former legislative staffer talk
shop on effective lobbying.
(Transcript: Appendix F)
<https://bit.ly/ELCAadvocacy101-Listen-Banks>

SO WHAT WORKS?

In a survey of congressional staff, between 88% and 94% of respondents said that in-person lobbying and individualized emails and postal letters have some positive influence on issues. Over 50% of respondents said that in-person visits have a lot of positive influence. So your voice can make a difference. And many voices together have more power.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual visits with lawmakers are becoming popular. Learn more about virtual visits at bit.ly/virtualvisitselca.

TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT

What have you learned so far? Did you change your mind about anything? Do you agree with the perspectives of your representatives? Is there proposed legislation on an issue that you care about?

ACTIVITY:



Take action

This can be done individually or as a group on one action item.

1. Look up ELCA Advocacy Action Alerts at ELCA.org/advocacy/actioncenter.
2. Choose an action alert, read it, and discuss it with a partner.
3. Draft a letter or a phone script, depending on your comfort zone.
4. Send the letter or make the phone call.
5. Consider scheduling an in-person visit when your representative is in-district.



ADVOCATE.

APPROACHING LEGISLATORS MOST OFTEN TAKES THE FORM OF WRITING LETTERS, MAKING PHONE CALLS AND PAYING IN-PERSON VISITS.

In addition, voting, signing petitions, peacefully protesting, testifying at committee hearings, writing letters to the editor and sharing on social media can influence the public as well as lawmakers.



Take it further

- Research interfaith advocacy groups in your area and sign up for alerts.
- Engage your church, friends and volunteer organizations.
- Engage in local advocacy.

Acknowledgements

WITH APPRECIATION

We are grateful for the contributions of Regina Banks, the Rev. Guy Erwin, Jeanine Hatcher and Roberta Oster, who offered their perspectives through voice recordings. We also thank staff members at ELCA Advocacy and ELCA World Hunger who provided guidance and feedback throughout the creation of this guide.

WITH OUR ENCOURAGEMENT

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Raise your voice.
Tell your story.

APPENDIX A:

Guidance for the "Day in the Life" Skit

For this activity, ask participants to base the skit on their own personal experiences and avoid scenarios based on stereotypes or what they think someone else experiences — even someone they know well. Portraying another person's culture or lifestyle requires extensive consultation and reflection to be respectful and truthful, particularly in the case of people who have been historically marginalized for their race, class, gender, sexuality or religion.

WARM-UP

If time permits, enable participants to warm up and develop some trust/comradery before beginning a creative activity such as this. Theater and improv games, which can be found online, are a great resource, some taking just two or three minutes. The main point is to get folks moving and speaking freely.

SAMPLE ROLES

Narrator: Introduces the characters and scenes and describes the action.

Main character: The person whose storyline is the focus.

Supporting actors: Participants may play multiple supporting roles, including friends, family members, teachers, coworkers — people the main character might interact with during the day.

SCENARIO OPTIONS

Leaders may choose to give participants all options or limit them to just one.

- Depict a day in real life, morning to evening. Some moments will require more or less detail. The day could be a good day, a bad day or any other kind of day.
- Act out a dream "day in the life." What would you do, who would you meet, where and how would you travel within the constraints of current technologies?
- Show the simultaneous unfolding of several different stories side by side (i.e., Person 1 wakes up, rolls out of bed, brushes teeth and sits down for breakfast while Person 2 sleeps, snoozes after the alarm, then jumps out of bed as Person 1 is headed out the door. They meet up in class, then part ways again, etc.)

If pressed for time, give each group a portion of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) and have them perform the shorts sequentially.

TECHNIQUE

Participants can consider miming, dancing, using props, making costumes and adding musical elements.

APPENDIX B:

Interfaith Activity

SIKH:

- Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan, Bairo: "Thou O Lord art my father, and thou my mother. Thou art the giver of peace to my soul and very life."
- Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak, Sri Rag: "Come my sisters and dear comrades! Clasp me in thine embrace. Meeting together, let us tell the tales of our Omnipotent Spouse (God). In the True Lord are all merits, in us all demerits."

SHINTO:

- Kojiki/Nihon-gi: "Death is the ultimate impurity."
- Kojiki/Nihon-gi: "The kami have a duty to look after humanity, and humanity should look after the kami."

HINDU:

- Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 5, 12: "The disciplined man, having relinquished the fruit of action, attains perfect peace."
- Chandogya Upanishad, 8.1: "The little space within the heart is as great as this vast universe. The heavens and the earth are there, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars; fire and lightning and winds are there; and all that now is and all that is not: for the whole universe is in Him and He dwells within our heart."

SERER:

- Tradition: Monday is the day of rest.
- Tradition: There are three layers of cosmogony: the invisible world, the nocturnal world and the terrestrial world.

ISLAM:

- Quran 99:7-8: "Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."
- Quran 5:48: "For each of you [communities] We have established a Law and a Way. And had God willed, He could have made you one community. But in order that He might try you by that which He has given you [He has made you as you are]. So vie with one another in good works. Unto God you will all return, and He will inform you of that about which you differed."

APPENDIX C:

Transcription of Jeanine Hatcher Interview

Hi, my name is Jeanine Hatcher. I live in New Haven, Michigan. I was diagnosed with Lupus SLE in 2005. Shortly after COVID-19 hit here in Michigan, I went to refill my medication, hydroxychloroquine — also known as Plaquenil — only to discover that there was none available on the market. With a little bit of research I found out that after it was discovered that Plaquenil could be used to treat COVID-19, the government had pulled it off of the market so that it could be used for these patients. But that left people like me, with Lupus, and others, like folks with arthritis, without a way to get the drugs that we need to maintain our health.

In my case, without my medication, my heart and my lungs would soon fail as they became inflamed, and so naturally, after panicking for a minute because I couldn't get my medication, I began to do some additional research by first contacting the Lupus Foundation of America to find out what was going on and what were they doing about this problem. I discovered that the Lupus Foundation of America had partnered with the Arthritis Foundation and have been advocating with the government to make sure that this drug remained available for people like me. So I joined a letter-writing campaign through the Foundation, and I also contacted, through my church, the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran [Church in] America and asked them if they could help with advocating on behalf of folks like me. And of course they said, "Sure," and we got some advice around how to launch a letter-writing campaign, and letter-writing campaigns is a way to contact our state representatives and congresspeople, urging them with what our demands were. And we had patterned our letter after the letter that the Lupus Foundation was recommending. So we crafted letters to also go to the president, as well as our representatives, and our representatives here in Michigan, including our governor.

As a result of our letter-writing campaign, the bishop here in Southeast Michigan also reached out to his colleagues, encouraging them to also join us in the letter-writing campaign, which resulted in our governor issuing a cease-and-desist order to doctors and pharmacies because they were beginning to hoard the drug in addition to the government commandeering most of the medication for COVID patients. Currently, through all of these advocacy campaigns that were going on around the U.S., the drug became available again, and the Lupus Foundation of America is still monitoring. There is still some challenges with ample supply being made available, and so this is being monitored across ... state by state across the United States. The other challenges that were happening was for folks who were on Medicaid being able to order enough supply, and I am happy to report that in most states, the Medicaid rules were relaxed, so that everyone could have ... could get at least a 90-day supply to have on hand during this pandemic.

APPENDIX D:

Transcription of Bishop Guy Erwin Interview

This is Bishop Guy Erwin of the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.* I serve as the leader of my synod, which is a group of about a hundred congregations, and part of my job as bishop is to help focus the opinions and teachings of our church in a way that both instruct our members and also influence the society around us. We call this advocacy: when we stake a position and reiterate it and clarify it for the sake of those we hope to help and within the context of our larger political society. As Americans, we are accustomed to a participatory democracy in which we all have a voice and a vote. And we Lutherans believe that we as Christians are obligated to use those tools, that voice and that vote, for the good of our neighbors.

Our Lutheran understanding of advocacy for others is based in the idea that we do it for others; it's part of [the] way of loving God to express that love in our care for the other people around us — not just our families and our friends, but everyone whose life intersects with ours, so including the whole of society. In Martin Luther's day, 500 years ago, this was a smaller society than we live in today, probably a village or a small town or even just a set of farms. But in our modern world, much more deeply interconnected globally, our responsibility for one another has extended as our world has shrunk. Because of this we are constantly asking the question: How can we help? What does our life do to impact the lives of others and how can we improve them?

We do this because, of course, we are commanded by Jesus to love God and to love our neighbor. And as Lutherans we take this commandment, this Great Commandment, and we focus it specifically on our neighbor in some particular ways. Martin Luther himself wrote about this in a very simple but very powerful way in his Small Catechism. Some of you may have read it already; if you haven't, I recommend it to you. It's really only a few sentences, but it has a powerful message of love for us and our duty of care for our neighbor. Luther begins by looking at the Ten Commandments — those are familiar to most of us — and he turns them around in a way and makes them more than just prohibitions of certain forbidden actions, but actually makes them a positive commandment to look out for and help our neighbors.

Let me give you an example. The Fifth Commandment, as Lutherans number them, is "You shall not murder." Luther repeats this and simply adds a sentence to it, answering the question, "What does this mean?" Luther says we are to fear and love God so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs. So, this is not just about not killing people; it's about actually making sure that their lives are better. We help and support our

neighbors. That's the opposite of killing them; that's the positive command that God gives us in this commandment. We interpret it too narrowly if we simply use it as a way to prevent our violent impulses. We need to channel them for good.

I think it's very easy from here to take the step from here to public advocacy for our neighbor's benefit, that if we support our neighbor in all their life's needs, among those things will be the way that we live together as a society, and the way that our political decisions, at every level of our political life, impact the lives of others. So we vote not only in our own self-interest; we advocate for laws and changes to laws not only because they help us but because they help our neighbor. This is a way in which we keep that fifth commandment.

Many other commandments have a similar vein: the commandment against adultery Luther turns into a command to faithfulness in all our dealings, to keep our promises. The commandment against stealing, the Seventh Commandment, means that we should be honest with each other; in our business transactions we should be straightforward, we should not deceive other people. These are simple. But they take a lifetime to learn, and I commend to you the study of Martin Luther's Small Catechism as a way to focus your life, a life in faith, into a life that can be of service. This is a rewarding thing, and it is what God intends for us in life.

I urge you and I encourage you to consider how loving God does mean loving your neighbor, and how that command has not just a personal and internal impact but also a social one. It impacts how we live together as partners, as families, [as] neighborhoods, as communities and even as nations. And as you think about your role in the larger society, consider your neighbor, because it is your neighbor you are called to serve.

** Recorded during Rev. Erwin's tenure as bishop; he now serves as president of United Lutheran Seminary.*



APPENDIX E:

Transcription of Roberta Oster Interview

I'm Roberta Oster, and it's my pleasure to talk about what "interfaith" means to me. Every faith tradition has sacred texts which I find enriching. For me, the term "interfaith" means learning about and connecting many different faith traditions. I was raised in the Jewish faith and am deeply connected to my traditions and teachings, but I have so much to learn from other faiths.

One faith does not have all the wisdom, and certainly not all the answers, so my interfaith work involves being intentional about reaching out to widen my circle of knowledge and relationships. I learn so much from the teachings of Jesus, the prophet Muhammad, the Buddha — I read a great deal. But reading sacred texts is still different from hearing and experiencing pastors and imams in their own houses of worship talk about their teachings. So reading and praying together makes the ideas come alive, and helps me to connect with different ways of seeing the world. It is so much more meaningful when I attend services with other faith traditions to receive these gifts of knowledge.

And on the question of "Why is being intentionally interfaith important to you?," I would say my interfaith connections enrich my life. For example, I've been a member of the First African Baptist Church choir for the past four years. I have learned wonderful gospel songs and have experienced the joy of singing together with my choir in fellowship with a shared love of God. I also listen to Pastor Waller's sermons and learn about the teachings of Jesus, which I would never hear in my synagogue. Those teachings offer powerful lessons and moral guidance.

I also attend services at the Church of Latter Day Saints, where I have been to baptisms and Christmas services and family events. I've been to services at the Al Mansour Mosque in northern Virginia, and when I travel, I attend services at cathedrals and synagogues in any country I'm in. But I also like to go to people's homes — maybe people who don't have traditional church-based practices — and study with them as well. For example: I practice yoga and learn a great deal from my guru, who shares lessons of the sacred text of the Bhagavad Gita. So for me, all of these texts and services and people bring me new ideas and perspectives. When I learn how the Baptists or the Yogis view the world, my worldview is enriched.

So I was asked, "How has this impacted your work and your life?" Being interfaith has impacted my life because I have developed my own knowledge base. I have been blessed to have relationships with people outside of that circle that I was born into. I have been invited into countless other houses of worship, homes, parties and community gatherings. And it has impacted my work directly because I work at the [Virginia] Interfaith Center for Public Policy. Our organization brings people together from all different faith traditions and people of good will to advocate for justice.

Since I'm already living an interfaith life, I'm very comfortable talking to and working with people of all faiths. I've learned to respect our differences and find our shared values about welcoming the stranger and treating all people with dignity and respect.

As for the [last] question, "What can others do to encourage interfaith efforts at the advocacy level?," I have a couple of ideas. The first is about food! I would say the simple answer is: have parties, events, educational and film screenings and FOOD. It's always a great way to invite people to enjoy a meal together. Bring children together to play — bring toys of different traditions! It's a way to open the door and make new friends.

To share different faith traditions, you can ask if you can be invited to other people's services. For example, the Virginia Interfaith Center organized an interfaith seder last year, and my choir from the First African Baptist Church sang together with the Jewish choir from Temple Beth-El in Richmond, Va. We had Muslims and Sikhs and Buddhists and people of goodwill, and it was an amazing and inspiring opportunity to look at the whole Exodus story and escaping from slavery and apply those lessons to so many different faith traditions that have also suffered and continue to suffer from that kind of bigotry and cruelty.

So when you're dealing with a person, it's even more powerful, and I'll share a story. I remember when Jase Hatcher first started working at the Interfaith Center and she asked me if she could come to services at my synagogue. And it was such a joy for me to share my traditions with Jase. And she enjoyed learning about our faith. So that brought us closer together, and I also learned about her traditions. So, it's a way to just enrich everybody's life — but especially during these times of upheaval, when police are murdering Black and Brown people, and so many people are suffering from the insidious culture of white supremacy.

We need to reach out to all faith traditions — people who care about justice. We need to be inclusive — to come together and work together, supporting our neighbors, supporting immigrants, supporting the love of community. So in terms of advocacy, I think we can have some concrete change here, because legislators have a great deal of respect for interfaith leaders.

So when a group of faith leaders from different traditions show up in their garb, legislators listen. They listen, of course, because it is self-serving (they are going to reach more voters by being nice to these priests and rabbis), but also those kinds of meetings hit them in the heart.

Many legislators have their own spiritual practices, so when an educated faith leader comes in to share information about policy, it will bring new voters to the table and it will effect change. And I think one last thing is that faith leaders bring a moral voice to policy issues, and frankly, it's hard to argue with a moral message. When people say, "We need to pass this law because it's the right thing to do," that's what interfaith advocacy work does. It often opens the eyes of legislators who have blinders on. So I say, let's open those blinders! Thank you very much.

APPENDIX F:

Transcription of Regina Q. Banks Interview

My name is Regina Banks, and for the last 14 years I've had the opportunity to work as a policy advocate and analyst, both in the California State Legislature and for private organizations that lobby the California State Legislature and the federal government. And today, I have the honor of serving as the director of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California. I'd like to talk to you a little bit today about the legislative process, how to get involved and what you can do to help make a difference.

The first item I would love to be able to tell you is: legislators and their staff are really just people. They get up in the morning and put on their pants one leg at a time. I promise you, there is nothing special about them other than they put their name forward to run for public office. They're not any smarter, they're not any nicer, they're not any better — they just have a job. And that job is to work for you and the betterment of our community. So if you hold that in your head, you'll be much better off in any conversations that you have.

In your typical legislator's office you're going to have the person whose name is on the door, then you'll have someone who is the admin scheduler. That person is very important because you don't see the person whose name is on the door unless the scheduler puts you on the schedule. Then you have somebody who runs the legislative program, and then you'll have legislative aides who work under that person who have specific areas that they work on, such as education or taxation or the budget. I want to really stress that if you walk into an office and you're given an appointment with a staffer, you have in no way failed. In fact, often it's more convenient, easier to get and a better move to talk to the staffer, who the legislator is going to hand that issue off to anyway. So always treat those conversations just as importantly as you would when you're talking to the person whose name is on the door.

I have a little mnemonic trick that I like to use when I'm dealing with legislators and their staff, especially when I know I'm not going to get a lot of time. And that is "I/you/we." You give a brief introduction about who you are and something about you that is relevant to the conversation that you are going to be having with the legislator. You talk about that person on the other side of the conversation from you, and then "we," what we can do together. Make sure that the end of that "we" is an "ask," something that the legislator or the staff member can say yes to right then and there. So for example, if I were to walk into a legislator's office and ask them to vote yes on ACA 5, I would say: "Hello, legislator, my name is Regina Banks and I'm the director of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California, and my organization believes strongly in racial equity and justice, and we feel past laws have hindered the state's ability to do that effectively. We know that your office also agrees with

racial equity and wants to do the best for the small businesses that are owned by women and minorities and disabled veterans in your area. So, we think that it would be a great idea for you to vote 'yes' on ACA 5. Is that something that you can do today?"

Now, that took all of about a minute and a half. I could stretch that out and we could be there for 45 minutes, or I could talk a little faster and it would take 45 seconds. But the essence of the conversation is there: Who I am, who they are, what we can do together, and something they can say "yes" to at the moment.

I also want to let you know that this is not transactional. Transactional interactions are: "I only come to you when I need something." "Anytime you see my name in your in-box, you know I'm about to be upset about something." You call and rant and rave at the staff because that legislator has [done] something wrong. The best relationships are built when you contact that legislator when you have something that you'd like for them to do and you also contact them when they've done something right: "Thank you very much for your vote." "I appreciated your words on the floor yesterday." "Your staff was very helpful when this issue came up for us personally." That's how you build relationship. And as I said in the beginning, these are just people, so if they're used to having a good interaction with you, then they'll come back to you and they'll listen to you again.

The last thing I'll say is that none of this can be done alone. The work that we do here at the Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California is always done in coalition, and coalition is always stronger. When I used to work in the legislature, often enough the most important thing about a letter that came into the office was not what it said but whose logo was at the top of that letter, how many people had signed on, how many different organizations agree with a position or disagree with that position. And it's in some ways a cold numbers game. And if you're looking for coalition amongst yourselves, look in your schools, in your church groups and your sports teams, your extracurricular activities. That's a coalition. And that is a great place to start.

So, build yourself a coalition, understand that the people you're talking to are just people, get engaged in any way that you can and never underestimate that your one voice can make a difference.



APPENDIX G:

Resources and Opportunities to Connect

YOUNG ADULT SERVICE YEARS

- Border Servant Corps
- ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)
- Lutheran Volunteer Corps
- Urban Servant Corps

ADVOCACY AND FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE ELCA

- Abide — ELCA Young Adult Ministry
- AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities)
- Lutheran Office for World Community at the United Nations; elca.org/lowc
- Peace Not Walls

NATIONAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

- ELCA Advocacy; elca.org/advocacy
- Interfaith Immigration Coalition
- Poor People's Campaign

STATE PUBLIC POLICY OFFICES AND AFFILIATES

- Delaware-Maryland Synod; demdsynod.org
- Faith Action Network; fanwa.org
- Florida Council of Churches; floridachurches.org
- Hunger Network Ohio; www.hungernetohio.com
- Kansas Interfaith Action; www.kansasinterfaithaction.org
- Lutheran Advocacy — Minnesota; www.lutheranadvocacymn.org
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona; lamaz.org
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry—Colorado; www.lam-co.org
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry—New Mexico; www.lutheranadvocacynm.org
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania; www.lutheranadvocacypa.org
- Lutheran Advocacy Team—New York [in development]
- Lutheran Engagement and Advocacy in Nevada; leanforjustice.org
- Lutherans Engaging in Advocacy Ministry (New Jersey); www.leannj.org
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy—California; lutheranpublicpolicyca.org
- Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin; www.loppw.org
- Social Justice & Advocacy Ministries — NC Synod ELCA; www.facebook.com/NCSynodSJA
- Southeastern Synod Advocacy Policy Council; www.elca-ses.org/advocacypolicycouncil
- Texas Impact; www.texasimpact.org
- Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy; www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org



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God's work. Our hands.