



ADVOCACY IN SERVICE TO OUR NEIGHBOR

Letter-writing

Our ministry of advocacy is a public witness to God's love for our neighbor, ourselves and all creation. Advocacy in service to the neighbor is one way to express your congregation's love and community presence on "God's work. Our hands." Sunday.

The "[God's work. Our hands.](#)" [Sunday Toolkit 2022](#) contains great ideas for action. This reference page expands on those ideas for writing to an elected official.

Letters of thanks

In an era when public service is often maligned and vocation to government service often disparaged, Lutherans can lean into our tradition of affirming public service.

Christians ... exercise their calling by being wise and active citizens. For some, this may include service in public office. Along with all citizens, Christians have the responsibility to defend human rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life. They are to recognize the vital role of law in protecting life and liberty and in upholding the common good.

—From the ELCA social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (p. 5)

"Vocation to government service is one concrete way to love the neighbor that deserves support from the church," [wrote](#) the Rev. Amy E. Reumann, ELCA senior director for Witness in Society. To signal our commitment to working with federal or local elected officials for a more peaceful world, consider sending a word of thanks.

Start by identifying elected officials in your area.

- Use www.govtrack.us/ to find federal officials, or
- Use openstates.org, among other lookup tools, to find websites and social media for state and federal leaders.



But don't stop there. Spend some time on the officials' online platforms to school yourself on the role they play in governance. For example:

- What committee(s) does this person serve on? What does the committee do?
- What legislation has this person championed?

Use the template attached, the lawmaker's webform or email, or another method of your choosing to personalize and send your word of thanks.

PLEASE let the advocacy staff at ELCA Witness in Society know that you reached out to your lawmaker. You can contact them using the "[In-District Activity Form](#)" or email washingtonoffice@ELCA.org.

Tips for other letters

In previous years, we have offered prompts on such current policy issues as housing, hunger and the environment for letter-writing on a day of service. No such prompts are provided this year, but your letters still matter!

Andrew Fuller, ELCA program director for housing and human needs, shares the following tips:

*With members of Congress now receiving an overwhelming amount of generic petition correspondences by email, unique and personalized messages from their direct constituents carry more value, priority and influence than ever before according to surveyed congressional staff. Taking time to write your own message, including **local stories**, district-level **statistics** and **personal faith values**, demonstrates to lawmakers that this is an issue you care about, and that it warrants their concern.*

Use the letter template or another method, and help us amplify what we do together by reporting your action with our "[In-District Activity Form](#)" or an email to washingtonoffice@ELCA.org. Thank you!

Other ideas

Don't forget to check the toolkit for other possibilities such as reaching out to an ELCA-affiliated state public policy office, responding to an Action Alert, shaping your advocacy action around congregation direct-service activity, and encouraging civic engagement.

"As the people of God called and sent to the world, our public testimony is always an opportunity to proclaim a hope-filled witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, the God who calls us to do justice," writes Reumann. Thank you for your advocacy, and have a wonderful "God's work. Our hands." Sunday!



[Month] [Day] [Year]

TO: [Use proper title and full address; if not sure, find tips online including emilypost.com/advice/official-forms-of-address]

RE: [Indicate topic, bill number and subject as appropriate]

Dear [use proper address]:

My name is [you!] and I am [identify district connection].

[Begin by clearly stating your strongest point or position. Include a personal story or experience to illustrate why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your neighbors and your community.]

[Ask for a response if one is desired. Be sure to include your name and address on both your letter and any envelope used.]

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE

[Print your name]

[Include your address]

Test out your letter writing on the following blank page!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

