

Synod Council Advocacy Committee report – September, 2020

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40 NRSV)

Since the last report to Synod Council, the Advocacy Policy Council has reinstated a monthly schedule of ZOOM meetings, in order to check in with activity across the Synod, as well as planning for upcoming Advocacy work.

Here are some highlights of activities for advocacy learning and action, as well as the activity of the committee, its members, and advocacy efforts across the Synod, of which I am aware or have participated.

- Rev. Rick Barger is leading the committee through rewriting a Mission Statement.
- Pastor Gordon Myers from Memphis – spearheading connecting the Synod and Advocacy efforts with the Poor Peoples’ Campaign
- Racial Justice Webinars have been hosted by congregations:
 - Epiphany in Suwannee, GA, with Pastor Chris Hermanson moderating; Pr. Tiffany Chaney spoke on racism awareness, and I spoke on Advocacy practices for addressing systems of racism and white supremacy.
 - Pastor Mike Bovingdon, at Good Shepherd in Douglasville, and Pastor David Helfrich, at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, in Marietta, had special guest Elana Meyers Taylor, Olympic Medalist and child of Good Shepherd, speak to her experience with racism as a child, as well as in her experience as an elite athlete.
- Tools and resources for congregational advocacy continue to be developed and shared the on Synod Advocacy web page, and Facebook.
- I participated in training and have been certified as a Creation Cares Ambassador through ELCA Advocacy and Lutherans Restoring Creation
- I participate in monthly State Public Policy Office calls—Lutheran advocacy offices across the country—to stay updated on legislation and policies that the church is addressing.
- A scheduled September convocation on the Opioid Crisis, at Tennessee Wesleyan University, in partnership with Episcopal/Lutheran/United Methodist representatives had to be postponed due to the pandemic.
- The ELCA World Hunger Gathering, that was scheduled to be held in our Synod, in Nashville, has been switched to a Virtual Gathering. I am serving on the planning committee for that event, scheduled for January 20-23, 2021.
- Inspiritus and the Advocacy Policy Council are partnering to present an “Advocacy 101” training webinar, led by Graham Younger of the Georgia Faith in Public Life office on – 9/28.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Matt Steinhauer

Action Item:

See Exhibit F.6