

Having Tough Conversations

It is important to find common ground upon which to start having tough conversations. Below are our Seven Points of Agreement, developed at our first Advocacy Gathering, which seek to find a healthy place to start potentially devise conversations. In the end you still may not agree; but you both will be changed. Just taking the time to listen to another person's story helps you understand why they feel as they do. You may not change your opinion; but you will be better informed.

Seven Points of Agreement:

- 1. No one should go hungry**
- 2. No one should be a victim of slavery**
- 3. We incarcerate entirely too many people**
- 4. All children deserve equal access to a quality education**
- 5. Our Current immigrations system is broken**
- 6. All people are of equal value**
- 7. We should care for God's creation**

Every generation has to grapple with human sin. We are imperfect people engaged with political systems that are both beneficial and flawed.

Interconnectedness of Social Issues

It is important to remember that all social issues are connected to each other in some way. For example, 80% of all people in prison or on probation in Georgia did not graduate from high school. If a student is not up to grade-level reading by the end of the third grade, the odds are that they will not graduate.



Next Steps

- Follow our Facebook page: *Southeastern Synod Advocacy Team*
- Check out our Advocacy Manual on the Southeastern Synod website under the resources tab
- Ask our Southeastern Synod Hunger Advocacy Fellow to speak to your church or to help you learn more about an issue in your area
seshungerfellow@gmail.com
- Write your representatives, stay up to date on legislation, and go to lobby days at your state's capital.
- Donate to ELCA World Hunger.

ELCA Southeastern Synod Advocacy



Created in the image of God, we are dedicated to forming Public Policy that represents our unique vision of God's creative redemptive work in the world.



Lutheran Advocacy

“As the ELCA, we believe God is calling us into the world to serve together. Through our direct service, we aid immediate needs before us. Through our advocacy work, we impact systemic, long-lasting change.” - ELCA Advocacy Office in D.C.

In our very first social statement, “The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective,” , our church committed to “work with and on behalf of the poor, the powerless and those who suffer, using its power and influence with political and economic decision-making bodies to develop and advocate for policies that seek to advance justice, peace and the care of creation.”

WHY ADVOCACY?

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and public life. We serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs and protect creation. When we, as ELCA members, lift our voices together to influence policies that advance the common good, we further God’s work in our world.

Luther actually called Christians to challenge structures. In the Large Catechism Luther portrayed God as standing by those who are disenfranchised and told Christians to do the same. “They should be alert and resolute enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce in order that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed, and in order that they may not themselves be charged with other men’s sins.”

Lutherans have promised in their Baptismal Covenant to “live among God’s faithful people. To hear the word of God and Share in the Lord’s supper. To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. To serve all people, following the example of Jesus. To strive for justice and peace in all the earth .”

SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD ADVOCACY

In January 2015, five of us met at the synod office to discuss a path forward to do state advocacy in Georgia. We decided to begin small with three ‘Ready Benches’, Immigration, Human Trafficking, and Criminal Justice. *A ready bench consists of 4-5 people who build a network of other people who are ready on a moments notice to take action on pending legislation.*

That June at Synod Assembly, four people from Tennessee wanted to create two ‘Ready Benches’, Healthcare and Criminal Justice.

In January 2016, we had our first Annual Advocacy Gathering; and we were off to the races. ELCA Advocacy took notice; and we began receiving World Hunger grants to help expand our ministry.

Later that year, things were going so well, we decided to expand to all four states and added our Advocacy Policy Council, two people from each state, myself and a member of synod staff. We had our first meeting at Lutheranch in January 2017. God has richly blessed this ministry; and we continue to grow and change lives across the synod.