

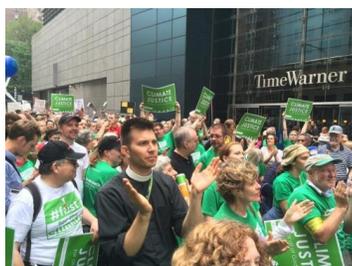


- + People's Climate March + U.N. Climate Summit
- + Campaign Finance Reform + Election Resources
- + Advocacy efforts at the state level throughout the U.S.

Washington, D.C.

Stacy Martin, ELCA Advocacy Office

www.elca.org/advocacy



People's Climate March – On Sept. 21, more than 400,000 activists joined together in New York City in what is being called the largest climate march in history. The People's Climate March called on world leaders to support a global climate change agreement and to act on climate change with over 2,700 events in more than 150 countries. In partnership with The Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, and the Metropolitan New York Synod, hundreds of Lutherans assembled for the march.

The U.N. Climate Summit – The weekend of the People's Climate March, ELCA Environmental Policy Director Mary Minette attended an interfaith conference on climate change at Union Theological Seminary. Following the summit, a delegation of more than 30 faith leaders created an interfaith statement on climate change at an event sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The interfaith statement was presented to the U.N. secretary general during the U.N. Climate Summit later that week. ELCA Advocacy also joined several other climate events in New York sponsored by the ACT Alliance, including strategies on addressing climate disasters, which included as a speaker a Lutheran pastor from New Jersey speaking about Superstorm Sandy recovery, and limiting climate change with low-carbon development strategies.



Campaign finance reform – On Oct. 1, Advocacy Director Rev. Stacy Martin joined a panel of faith leaders, activists and academic experts to discuss the moral and religious dimensions of the question of money in public life and governance. Sponsored by the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, the conference included speakers such as Kathy Saile, the associate director for government affairs at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and interfaith partners from across the religious spectrum.

Preparing for midterm elections – Election Day is one month away, and ELCA Advocacy is sending out resources and guides on how to promote civic engagement in Lutheran congregations throughout the country. The electoral process is one way in which we live out our affirmation of baptism to “serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,” and “to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.” Share our [Called to be a Public Church Guide \(2014\)](#) to learn more about ways you can take action in your community. Tell your friends to “Take the Pledge” by signing our [Voter Pledge Form](#) online, and find more information on our [Action Alert Page](#).

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California

Mark Carlson, Lutheran Office of Public Policy

www.loppca.org

On Sept. 30, Gov. Jerry Brown completed his review of hundreds of bills passed by the Legislature after completing its two-year session. As attention shifts to direct democracy in the form of ballot propositions, the Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California is disappointed that the DISCLOSE Act, requiring more transparent information on large original-source funders of ballot measures, did not pass. LOPP-CA is part of developing strategy for the DISCLOSE Act next session. Among other bills of interest signed were measures that dealt with stronger incentives for electric cars in lower and moderate-income communities, groundwater management, equalizing penalties for possession of crack and powder cocaine, a ban on most plastic grocery bags, and a waiver of birth certificate fees for homeless children and youth.



Firearms – As the ELCA Conference of Bishops participated in a prayer revival in Chicago, LOPP-CA was cheering enactment of a “gun violence restraining order” bill adopted in response to the Santa Barbara tragedy. This bill allows law enforcement and family members to seek a temporary court order removing guns from a person who is a danger to themselves or others.

As the election approaches, LOPP-CA is focusing energy on support for a \$7.5 billion water bond and Prop. 47, a criminal sentencing reform initiative supported by the PICO community organizing network and many other community and civil rights groups, seeking remedies for mass incarceration and “The New Jim Crow” racial disparities.

Colorado

Peter Severson, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – Colorado

www.lam-co.org



Hunger – The Hunger Free Colorado Summit took place on Sept. 8, featuring Sister Simone Campbell of Nuns on the Bus and NETWORK, the Roman Catholic social justice organization. Her exhortation about developing a social justice “for the 100 percent” was powerful and resonant.

LAM-CO has been connecting more intentionally with campus ministry groups. Director Peter Severson visited both University of Colorado-Boulder and Colorado State University this past month. Additionally, the Strengthening Colorado

Families & Communities Summit took place in Keystone on Sept. 15-16, sponsored by the Colorado Department of Human Services-Office of Early Childhood. LAM-CO was able to participate in several discussions around the formation of a Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Plan for 2015-2020.

Transportation – LAM-CO has been partnering with Iliff School of Theology and the Office of the Auditor for the City of Denver to oppose the Colorado Department of Transportation’s proposal to widen Interstate 70 in vulnerable community areas in north Denver. A meeting with Iliff faculty and students and community representatives has led to the creation of a faith community petition that will be delivered to C-DOT in response to the Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

The Rocky Mountain Synod Theological Conference (Sept. 22-25 in Colorado Springs) led to great networking with pastors, ministers and other leaders in the synod. Congregations have been faithfully supporting Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Colorado and New Mexico for 30 years!



Minnesota

Tammy Walhof, Lutheran Advocacy – Minnesota

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New name – Lutheran Advocacy – Minnesota replaces Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota (LCPPM) as our name. The Policy Council voted unanimously for the change, and feedback on the new name has been very positive from partners, supporters, participants and others.

Legislative policy development – Tammy continues to be deeply involved in the policy shaping process with the Homes for All Coalition. She is also active with A Minnesota Without Poverty, which has just started thinking about policy options and directions for the 2015 session. The Clean Energy and Jobs Campaign narrowed their focus to two policy objectives for 2015. Tammy is thinking about the materials needed for Lutheran churches to be ready for the key objective, focused on improving the Minnesota Clean Energy standard to 50 percent renewable energy by 2030.

Education and awareness raising – Tammy has been working closely with the Minneapolis Area Synod and the Alliance for Sustainability to find leaders to build a synod chapter of Lutherans Restoring Creation and is beginning outreach for a similar St. Paul effort. On Sept. 30, Dr. David Rhoads came to the Twin Cities and met with potential leaders for LRC. Tammy has been in various churches talking about the key themes of hunger, poverty, care of creation and advocacy.

Communications/administration – We are deep into the process of rebranding, building our “new” website, and making lots of administrative processes work better. The new office is almost completely furnished now with cubicles and a welcoming area for partners to gather.

New Mexico

Ruth Hoffman, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – New Mexico

www.lam-nm.org

Poverty and Hunger Coalition – Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-New Mexico has been an active partner in the newly created Interfaith Hunger Coalition as a part of the advocacy committee by helping to organize several gatherings in the Albuquerque area with coalition members and candidates for election to the New Mexico House of Representatives. The gatherings were opportunities for coalition members to express their concern about the unacceptably high rates of hunger and poverty in New Mexico and to engage in conversation with the candidates about how to address the situation. Eight candidates attended the gatherings, which took place at Albuquerque congregations. Ruth Hoffman, LAM-NM director, also spoke about state public policies that would help address poverty and hunger at a recent education workshop sponsored by the Coalition at Holy Rosary Catholic Community.

Food stamps – In mid-September, Ruth traveled to southern New Mexico and testified before the interim Legislative Health and Human Services Committee in opposition to increased work requirements for SNAP recipients proposed by the state Human Services Department. She also spoke in opposition to the proposed rule changes at a public hearing that was attended by at least 100 people. At the hearing, Ruth also spoke on behalf of the New Mexico Conference of Churches. Ruth's testimony was highlighted in a recent KUNM radio segment: <http://kunm.org/post/faith-leaders-speak-against-new-snap-requirements>



Pennsylvania

Amy Reumann, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania www.lutheranadvocacypa.org

On Sept. 7, LAMPa helped Lutherans add “Our voices” to the theme of “God’s work. Our hands.” with letter-writing and [speaking to media](#) in locations around the state on behalf of our neighbors on housing, hunger and immigration.



At the capitol – LAMPa delivered a letter from Bishop Kusserow, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, urging lawmakers to act to end discrimination based on sexual orientation. LAMPa staff brought others engaged in ministry with the homeless to meet with legislative leaders to push for passage of bills to expand the state Housing Trust Fund. The visits were made powerful by the presence of one mother, accompanied by the Rev. Matthew Lenahan, who shared how a Lutheran congregation in Lancaster County is walking with her as she struggles with homelessness. Collaborating with the Lower Susquehanna Synod on a food drive/hunger advocacy project, LAMPa accompanied youth motivated by a synod retreat themed “Hungry” to participate in the “Can Hunger” event at the capitol, where they spoke with the leader of the legislative hunger caucus.

On the road – LAMPa staff participated in Bishops convocations in the Allegheny and Lower Susquehanna synods, the launch of a hunger team in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, a Lutherans Restoring Creation and training in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the People’s Climate March in New York City. We conducted our biennial survey to establish LAMPa’s agenda for the next legislative term. The results showed education and health care to be top priorities after hunger and were analyzed at our policy council retreat.



Virginia

Marco Grimaldo, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Civic engagement – The fall continues to be a busy time for educational forums and advocacy training in Virginia. We are also encouraging in-district meetings with legislators in advance of the January legislative session. Most recently we have been offered programs in Charlottesville and Roanoke that allow the immigrant community to better understand their rights and engage decision-makers including local law enforcement in productive discussions about their community. We have also been part of a growing minimum-wage campaign for raising the wage both in Virginia and at the federal level.

Health – Our health care work continues even though there has been no agreement on Medicaid. Small numbers of local leaders join us each Monday for our Moral Monday call for Medicaid, and it continues to be a great way to muster solidarity. As we prepare for the next assembly, we will prepare to also work on legislation related to health equity and network adequacy that can help make sure that low-income and underserved communities, which may already be covered, get the health care that they need with reasonable access.

Our [policy priorities](#) have been revised for the year ahead, and we also have a new website so Virginians can better follow our efforts and download the resources they need. We have background papers and talking points on each of our top priorities as a way to jump start those campaigns. Visit us at www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org.



Washington

Paul Benz, Faith Action Network

www.fanwa.org



Promoting advocacy – Faith Action Network's 15 geographic clusters convened to discuss effective types of advocacy efforts in faith communities in Washington, share FAN updates, and talk about future collaborations. Meanwhile, ongoing meetings with state legislators and members of congress continued. This month FAN met with multiple legislators, including the state House Republican leader, state Senate Democratic leader and her district House member, and a federal House member meeting with members of an African American Baptist church. FAN is also currently getting ready for our Annual Dinner on Nov. 16 where local philanthropist and travel guide speaker Rick Steves will speak on the importance of faith-based advocacy. U.S. Sen. Patty Murray has also been invited.

Upcoming election and the ballot – FAN has coordinated and sponsored three candidate forums with three more to go. The forums are focusing on state legislative races with each one having three questions coming from FAN – of which one is always on hunger and poverty. Average attendance has been 50. FAN continues to be the statewide faith organization coordinating support for Initiative 594 (mandating universal background checks for gun sales). A Faith March to the Ballot Box will occur on Sunday, Oct. 19 in Seattle – local marches/vigils will be encouraged. Two forums on preventing gun violence were sponsored jointly by ELCA Southwestern Washington Synod Bishop Rick Jaech and FAN.

Wisconsin

Cindy Crane, Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

www.loppw.org

Poverty – With secular and faith partners, LOPPW will endorse a referendum on whether Wisconsin should take federal dollars for Badger Care on the November ballot in 20 Wisconsin counties. Although the vote cannot determine a change, it provides an opportunity for citizens to voice concern about 87,000 residents unnecessarily going without health care. LOPPW will work on an op-ed and additional ways to promote a Vote Yes on BadgerCare Nov. 4th campaign initiated by Citizen Action Wisconsin. On Nov. 8 LOPPW will lead a summit on poverty for the Northern Great Lakes Synod in Marinette. Here is a link to the flyer: <http://www.loppw.org/files/2014/10/Poverty-Summit.pdf>.



Sex trafficking – LOPPW is starting a campaign to pass a Safe Harbor Bill. Recently Women of the ELCA leaders led a workshop with a PPT created by Cherish All Children's (CAC's) director and LOPPW's director in the Northwest Synod. Our new CAC/LOPPW advocacy group will meet for a second time in October with additional members and discussion about how to further include Women of ELCA and involve congregations.

Upcoming events –

- Advocacy and Hunger workshop at synod-wide event in Marquette, Mich. – Oct. 11
- The director will be the Lutheran representative on a panel at an event hosted by Catholic and Lutheran campus ministries: "Faithful Citizenship: A Christian Perspective on Voting and Political Involvement" on Oct. 21 at UW-Eau Claire

Federal – This month, LOPPW will set a plan to build awareness and advocacy on the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, the EPA rule on carbon dioxide emissions, and other federal issues related to environment. Additionally, LOPPW's director was at a third 2015 Advocacy Day planning committee meeting organized by the Wisconsin Council of Churches.