

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday



ADVOCACY IN SERVICE TO OUR NEIGHBOR

“Our charity is essential to help that child receive their daily bread after going without it... The reality is justice-work is only one or two steps beyond what we are already doing. By listening, learning, and opening ourselves for change we can modify existing service to both meet the immediate need in front of us while looking to address the root causes of hunger, division, and fear in our world,” reads an ELCA-affiliated state public policy office resource from [Hunger Network Ohio resource](#).

Thank you for considering advocacy in service to our neighbors with your “God’s Work. Our hands.” Day of Service activity, expressing your congregation’s love and community presence.

LETTER-WRITING

People of faith can advocate in many ways. Perhaps your congregation’s involvements and coalitions, or [ELCA-affiliated state public policy office](#), suggest something you can do in your locality. Or perhaps you’d like to **invite your congregation to write a letter to a policy maker on a timely matter advancing in our society on your Day of Service.**

When an elected official hears from constituents, your local experiences and convictions can have impact.

- See the [ELCA Action Center](#) for a digital Action Alert reaching lawmakers on current priorities in the federal legislative dialogue.
- Because the 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization has far-reaching impact on nutritious food reaching hungry people in the United States and globally as well as a sustainable environment and many aspects of agricultural life today and in the future, **advocating for your faithfully discerned priorities in the farm bill reauthorization process is a great letter-writing opportunity.**

FARM BILL BACKGROUND

The farm bill is omnibus (meaning several different parts all joined together) legislation that is critical to addressing hunger in the United States and globally. It covers federal nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), environment, trade, foreign aid and rural development. The bill impacts the lives of Lutherans and our communities – among us are farmers and ranchers and Indigenous communities and global partners and low-income Americans.

To get a better picture of what the Farm Bill entails and how it becomes policy, consider this 5-minute video from the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service made in 2019. [“What is the Farm Bill?”](#)

Also helpful from the National Sustainable Agriculture Association is a video in 4-minutes that describes how the farm bill “connects the food on our plates, the farmers and ranchers who produce that food, and the natural resources – our soil, air and water – that make growing food possible.” [“The Farm Bill: From Seed to Plate”](#)

With our faith-informed goal of a just world where all are fed, check out these printable overviews prepared by Bread for the World, with which the ELCA is in partnership.

- [“Nutrition: Building a Healthy, Equitable, and Sustainable Food System via the Farm Bill”](#)
- [“Fact sheet: Farm Bill International”](#)

WRITING YOUR LETTER

Start by identifying elected officials in your area. Use govtrack.us to find federal officials or openstates.org among other lookup tools. It may be of interest to go to the website of that lawmaker. Spend some time to explore which committees the person serves on or legislative areas the person particularly cares about, and maybe even reference what you find in your letter.

We’ve provided a very basic template to get you started, but it does not have much information on it – on purpose. What you know about your location and in your experience carries the most weight when reaching out to your elected officials.

- Themes to reflect in your letter could focus on: Hunger & Nutrition (local and global); Environment and Creation Care; Agricultural Connections; among others.
- Your personal story and values, experience of your congregation and ministries such as a food pantry or meal program, and reflections on local community impacts set your letter apart.

Please send collected letters to the ELCA Witness in Society office in Washington, D.C. for delivery to lawmakers. ELCA Washington Office, 10 G Street, NE, Suite 490, Washington D.C. 20002

“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,” says the Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director, ELCA Witness in Society. Thank you for your advocacy and have a wonderful “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday!



ADVOCACY IN SERVICE TO OUR NEIGHBOR

LETTER TEMPLATE ON FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

Here’s a sample — and some of the elements — to guide what YOU want to write! Use the following blank page to write your letter, then send it to ELCA Washington Office, 10 G Street NE, Suite 430, Washington, DC 20002 for delivery to lawmakers.

September 10, 2023

The Honorable [name]
United States Senate
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization

Dear Senator [name]:

As a Christian, your constituent and a resident of [town], I am writing to you about the Farm Bill. While Congress works to renew our food and farm programs by reauthorizing the bill, I urge you to support legislation that builds healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems.

My congregation in your district, [name], operates a food pantry that serves over 200 of our neighbors and members every week. But hunger is still a chronic and growing issue in [town], and pantries are barely able to keep up with the demand. Last week I spoke with someone patronizing our pantry who, like many, works but still can’t keep up with the growing cost of living. Core issues such as expanding SNAP eligibility in the Farm Bill will do more than our food pantry can do alone, reducing hunger in [town] and many other towns.

Faith communities and their social ministries are working to meet needs, but we cannot address food insecurity and intertwining realities for our agricultural communities on a broad scale. Reauthorization is an opportunity

TIPS FOR YOUR LETTER

- Month, Day, Year
- Use proper title; if you’re not sure, look it up online: emilypost.com/advice/official-forms-of-address.
- List subject you want to discuss
- Use proper form of address
- 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.
- Cite an example of how you and/or your congregation is involved in an issue you care about, or what faith conviction informs your position on a



to advance significant good for all of us, including those who need basic nutritional support to stay healthy. Our agricultural community is vital to our daily lives, and this Farm Bill reauthorization can support farmers’ vocations, the ability of tribal nations to advance their food sovereignty and security, and related factors that will impact the health of our communities immediately and in years to come.

Sincerely,

[signature]

[Name]
123 Main Street
Our Town, WI 12345
Abc.xyz@email.xyz

policy matter.
Connect that with how
the Farm Bill could address
that matter.

Ask for a response if you
desire one, being sure
to include your contact
information with your
signature.

Sign, then print your name,
and be sure to include your
address.



ELCA

