WHO WE ARE
Lutheran Advocacy-MN (LA-MN) is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the six Minnesota ELCA Synods. It is one of several ELCA State Public Policy Offices. Our purpose is to advocate for justice in the areas of hunger, poverty, and care of God’s creation by speaking with and for those who have little or no political power. We seek to live into the ELCA vision to “Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God’s love for all that God has created.”

HOW WE DO IT
We work with and through ELCA synods, congregations, campus ministries, church members, and others to create and use networks for advocacy. Lutheran citizen advocates are encouraged to write personal letters or emails, and meet with their state legislators (or members of Congress) to influence action on specific issues or concerns as determined by LA-MN’s Policy Council. The Policy Council includes representation from each synod. Lutheran Advocacy-MN is non-partisan and participates in coalitions to enhance advocacy effectiveness and build political will to address important issues in God’s world.

WHY WE DO IT
To advocate is to plead the cause of those suffering injustice. Advocacy ministry is rooted in Scripture, Lutheran theology and our baptismal calling to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. It is expressed by advocating with and for our neighbors in need, for the sake of the common good, in places where important political and economic decisions are being made. (See back side for a discussion on a biblical understanding of advocacy and justice).

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED
TAKE ACTION: Write, call and visit your legislators. Organize a letter campaign at your church, and get a group together to meet with your legislators in St. Paul or at home. Write letters to the editor, and tag legislators in Tweets or Facebook posts on the issues. Join the LA-MN Action Alert and Newsletter Network to learn what action is needed and when. Ask LA-MN for the most recent sample letters and talking points.

BECOME A MULTIPLIER: Spread the word! Help recruit and engage more people and churches in action.

JOIN A SPEAKERS BUREAU: Volunteer to do presentations, Adult Forums, Moments for Mission, or sermons. Have conversations with Hunger, Justice, Mission or Creation Care committees.

SUPPORT THE WORK FINANCIALLY: Lutheran Advocacy-MN must raise support beyond the basic ELCA grant and synod support. Your monetary gifts help us to do more!

OFFER PRAYER SUPPORT: Pray for Lutheran Advocacy-MN, for churches to be engaged in public witness on the issues, and for Lutheran “citizen advocates” as they engage and build relationships with legislators. Pray for our legislators and legislative leaders. Pray for wise and just decisions, and for the working and guiding of the Holy Spirit in and through those decisions.
What do we mean when we talk about justice? In the Bible, justice and righteousness are interrelated, and refer to “right relationship.” **Righteousness is right relationship with God, while justice is right relationship among people, and even within all of creation.**

Throughout Old and New Testament, we read about the people God lifted up as advocates for justice. Often, God sent these folks to political leaders, to call upon them to “do justice” and to care for the widow, orphan, and alien immigrant (those most likely to be looked down upon and treated as outsiders or lesser beings – the most vulnerable).

God saw the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt, and sent Moses to Pharaoh (most powerful political leader of that day) to tell him to stop mistreating the people, and to let the people go. Prophets were frequently sent to kings and princes (the leaders of ancient Israel & Judah) with the message that they were not heeding God's commands, and were not ruling justly (see Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah, and other prophets). Nehemiah was called to speak to his boss, Artaxerxes (king of Persia) regarding the plight of the remnant left in Judah during the exile, and later to the Jewish nobles and officials who used their wealth and power to exploit and extract more from people who were already poor. **All these people were advocates, calling upon leaders and people to “do what is right” and restore right relationship.**

**Jesus called the Scribes and Pharisees “blind guides” who “neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.”** These religious leaders were “teachers of the Law of Moses,” and political leaders within the Sanhedrin under the Roman Empire. Jesus makes clear that in their legalistic ways of trying to show they were in right relationship with God, they completely missed the mark. The Pharisees should have used their positions to be good advocates for those who were vulnerable, to bring fairness and right relationships between people. Instead, they were looking out for their own interests.

Lutheran Advocacy – Minnesota (LA-MN) seeks to learn from these and other Biblical advocacy examples to faithfully lift up those that are vulnerable – those who are poor, who are hungry, who are homeless or have unstable housing, and even Creation which God created as good, but which through our human sinfulness has become fragile and distorted, with contaminated water, polluted air, and exploited resources. **LA-MN seeks to call upon our leaders to restore right relationship between people of all types, and within all of creation.**

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