



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW) Annual Report

www.loppw.org (Search LOPPW on Facebook)

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Crane, Director cindyc@loppw.org

Thank you for supporting the ELCA's advocacy ministry in Wisconsin with support to the UP! We especially express gratitude for Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, the synod staff, and your dedicated South-Central Synod of Wisconsin representatives, Ms. Kristi Jones and Rev. Andy Twiton, on the LOPPW council.

During the last year, in response to God's grace and our life in community, we engaged our members and worked with legislators on the following priorities:

- Calling for an End to Hunger
- Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking
- Caring for God's Creation
- Supporting Immigration Reform
- Calling for Juvenile Justice Reform

Outreach: We engage our members via online action alerts, resources, weekly reflections, monthly updates with special interviews, and online and in-person trainings. In the last year, we led several virtual presentations and a few in-person workshops, including within the SCSW. In addition, we trained two volunteers, one active in the Women of the ELCA, to lead trainings, and strategized outreach to youth.

Young Adults and Youth: Because several young people express interest in how to live out their faith as part of a public church, LOPPW has worked at creating space for youth voices. We received a full-time hunger advocacy fellow for 2020-2021 thanks to a grant from ELCA World Hunger. Kyle Minden was LOPPW's second fellow; our first was in 2018/19.

New: In 2021 and 2022, LOPPW facilitated several meetings with youth workers from all six synods. We are very grateful to Ms. Marie Leafblad, SCSW Associate to the Bishop for Leadership Support, for her leadership on our team! As a result, we have our first high school online events planned for 2022.

Examples of Advocacy on our Priorities in 2021

Calling for an End to Hunger: We supported an extension of the federal Child Tax Credit.

Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking: We supported legislation that funded the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to do the following: 1. Prevent sex trafficking of children and youth. 2. Provide treatment and services for documented and suspected victims of child and youth sex trafficking. 3. Increase youth access to housing. 4. Prevent and reduce the incidence of youth alcohol and other drug use and abuse.

Caring for God's Creation: Our advocacy day, "Faith Advocacy for Climate Justice," on March 18, 2021, drew 88 participants. Our keynote speaker was Lt. Governor Barnes. Other speakers included Lutherans Restoring Creation Executive Director Phoebe Morad and Chief

Meteorologist and ELCA Member Bob Lindmeier, and a speaker from Renew Wisconsin. Most of the people remained for our post event with the Wisconsin 7, seven people, led by an ELCA pastor, who fasted for climate justice for 22 days. Our planning group included ELCA members from each of our six synods, including Rev. Nick Uthall and Chief Meteorologist Bob Lindmeier, and leaders from three statewide interfaith groups. We advocated on renewable energy, grants for farmers to manage pollutants, and increased funding to support jobs in renewable energy.

Supporting Juvenile Justice Reform: We started a coalition that focuses on returning youth 17 years old to the juvenile justice system.

Immigration: We supported the Welcoming Evacuees Coming from Overseas to Mitigate Effects of Displacement Act of 2021, also known as the WELCOMED Act. We also have been supporting the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would assist Afghan refugees to secure permanent residency in the United States.

Other Advocacy: Even if an issue is not one of our priorities, we can give guidance on how to organize and advocate. In 2021, a clergy from Trempealeau County who was already knowledgeable about 2nd Amendment Sanctuary cities/counties asked LOPPW for guidance in how to advocate against his county becoming a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary. Several local clergy and lay leaders organized, and in the end, the county dropped their proposal.

Wednesday Noon Live: In 2021, our monthly FB live updates have included interviews with Attorney Ruth Ivory-Moore, ELCA Director of Environmental and Corporate Responsibility and Kenosha pastor, Rev. Jonathan Barker on climate change; Mr. Vance Blackfox, ELCA Desk Director for American Indian Alaska Native Tribal Nations; Mr. Ramiah Whiteside, a Milwaukee resident who was directly impacted by being tried in an adult court at age 17; Attorney Jan Miyasaki on COVID's impact on sex trafficking; Mr. John Johnson, ELCA Program Director for Domestic Policy on supporting people experiencing poverty and the White House visit of Bishop Eaton and Bishop Curry (Episcopal Church).

A special shout out to Rev. Andy Twiton, Trinity Lutheran Church and LOPPW council, for his dedication to co-hosting Wednesday Noon Live!

Partners

LOPPW's director is on the steering team of the Wisconsin Climate Table and Raise the Age Coalition. LOPPW is also involved with coalitions related to hunger and anti-sex trafficking.

Join the Advocacy Network



Please consider going to loppw.org and click on to *Join the Advocacy Network* at the bottom right of our Home page. We'd love to share our Monday reflections, monthly updates, and action alerts with you.

Thank you again for your support as we continue working on our five priorities, broadening our outreach to adults, and creating more opportunities for youth. God's blessings!

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