

Feed My Sheep John 21:18

A Newsletter of the Hunger Task Force of the Southern Ohio Synod
September–October, 2013

HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL: WORKERS NEEDED

The Ohio harvest of produce this year is expected to be extremely plentiful. That is the good news. The number of people living in poverty and without food in Ohio is also extremely plentiful. That is the bad news.

There has to be a way to solve this dilemma. And there is. Below are helpful suggestions to get started.

Our Lutheran Churches are part of the solution. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world. Our congregational giving makes up the largest percentage of giving through ELCA World Hunger, but our churches here in the Southern Ohio Synod are uniquely positioned to reach Ohio communities in need. We start by listening to our neighbors. Then we work alongside them to address the root causes of hunger and poverty. Our Ohio congregations' gardens have provided fresh vegetables for many this past summer; our churches provide community meals and conduct food pantries throughout the year to help those in need.

There are still far too many people in Ohio who need help. **Ohio ranks third in the nation in food insecurity**; and now, the holidays, of which food is an important element, and the long, cold winter, loom on the horizon. Now is the time to begin preparation for those days ahead. Additional workers to provide the harvest are needed.

There are a number of individuals and congregations which feel a call to begin a hunger ministry, but have no idea where or how to begin such a service project. So what does a call to service look like? Service learning is a process to create service activities with deeper and lasting meaning. Service learning is an ongoing process that includes: preparation, action, reflection and celebration. Each opportunity to serve is not an isolated experience but rather part of a journey that leads to deeper and more meaningful relationships, and, therefore, deeper and more meaningful service. By participating in the service learning cycle, one begins to learn, practice and ultimately move from "service learning" to "service living" marked by intentional process and mutuality.

To help those who feel that call, the ELCA World Hunger staff has developed a new resource which gives a step by step guide to help leaders prepare their service project. **Digging In: A Leader's Guide to Service Learning** provides ideas to keep participants engaged throughout the service learning process. This guide is designed to start you on your way. You may already be an expert on service learning, or this might be your first time. Either way, every act of service makes a difference. When we begin to live this way together, the world will notice the difference made by a generation of people who have hearts and minds tuned into "service living" and the issues of hunger and poverty. You are invited to answer the call to serve, because God is calling us into the world.

The guide not only gives help in organizing a project, but also suggests the kinds of projects which can be implemented; from some very short, fairly simple projects, to sustainable projects which solve more difficult issues. This free resource and others can be downloaded from the ELCA website for world hunger or ordered by calling 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2580.

CONGREGATIONS IN ACTION

Trinity, Marysville

Pastor Barry Scott reports on Wednesday, August 28, 2013, his congregation set up tables and tents of fresh produce to feed those in need in their community--12,000 pounds of food to be exact!

Pastor Scott said the ministry came about through conversations with Mary Lasits and Brad Draper of Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio. Trinity's, Social Action group was seeking ways to partner with the agency and the fresh food giveaway was the result. There were donations from a local farm of sweet corn, and another of tomatoes. Some helpers came from the community, though Trinity members did most of the work. Among those from Trinity was the 6th grade class of 13 students as well as a senior helper, Ruth, who is 94 years old. Ruth took registrations for three hours in the heat of the day.

Trinity served 245 families, which was down a bit from their high count of 326 in June. Pastor Scott said, "We are setting up the schedule now for next year and plan to add a month, hoping to go from April to October. We are looking at how we might serve needs in the winter months, knowing the need is year round."

While Trinity spearheaded the food giveaway, other local social service agencies had tables set up to assist guests with other needs they might have. "We find many people need more help than food," said Scott. "This month the MidOhio Food Bank was here taking surveys on client satisfaction with food quality.

By reaching out to the community around them, the members of Trinity Lutheran Church have experienced an excitement about their ministry that reaches beyond just those directly involved in the food giveaway. "It (the food giveaway) is often cited in conversations about other ministries and what it is that God is doing in us and through us. It's giving a boost to our Vision 2017 process as we seek to find out what God is doing at Trinity and how we can help," added Scott

The Rev. Suzanne Dillahunt, Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, attended the food giveaway to show the synod's support for the work being done in partnership with Lutheran Social Services and the community

There is always some left over too!" So, what happens to the extra food? "We give it to the local food pantry or the Hope Center a block away. It all gets used," said Scott.

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati

Mary Ann Erdmann reports on the Outreach program week which included the **Bread for the World Petition**. This petition asks Congress to ensure that everyone has a place at the table and to not have the separation of the Farm Bill lead to the loss of SNAP benefits.

The week at LCR consisted of the Monday Meal hosted for our community at the end of each month when food might be running low. That meal was followed on Tuesday by a Mobile Food Pantry held in the church parking lot. Pastor Henry Zorn had stated in his email to the congregation that "witnessing all the LCR members jumping in alongside the poor" was such a heartwarming scene. And we definitely were joined together!

Our congregation members had already been offered **Bread for the World's petition** to sign during our weekend worship services, and we received many names. Following that, our Monday Meal friends were invited to sign. The signing culmination occurred, however, in our church parking lot

at the Mobile Food Pantry. With our guests seated on folding chairs, waiting their turn for food selection, Pastor Zorn presented the Bread petition to these individuals, explaining it thoroughly. It was very touching to see and hear the passionate responses, the strongest response being to the statement, “We want our government to balance the budget, but NOT on the backs of the poor;” vigorous head nods in agreement, hands raised up, as well as soft cries of “Yes!” and “Amen!”

We heard their pleas to sign the petition as they practically swarmed around us. Five or six people had us go back into church to make more copies...“and please staple some extra blank sheets on for more signatures.” They also said that they planned to go door-to-door or to their friends or churches to ask others to sign. We were overwhelmed by these heartfelt, deep reactions and by their strong support. The heart-warming revelation was that we were helping the voiceless to have a voice. Many don’t know about advocacy and the power they hold as voting citizens. Our efforts gave them the chance to help themselves and make their voices heard!

It was a gift to Lutheran Church of the Resurrection to take part in the joy of that passionate moment, and we look forward to the time when all of our brothers and sisters have a place at the table.

Editor’s note: If your congregation is planning a special activity to alleviate poverty in your community, or has conducted one, please share it with others. Send your story to Susan Truchses, struchses@sbcglobal.net, or call 937-324-4329 to let us know. We’d like to include your story in the Hunger Task Force Newsletter. Photos are always welcome as well.



2ND ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL LEADER’S DAY FEATURES ART SIMON

Mark your calendar now—February 22, 2014 – to attend the 2nd Annual Congregational Leader’s Day Education Workshop. The schedule calls for some exciting and challenging ways to get your members involved in hunger ministry. The featured speaker will be Art Simon.

Art Simon is founder and president emeritus of **Bread for the World**. He is an ordained Lutheran minister, and a world renowned advocate for people suffering from poverty and social injustice. Pastor Simon is a dynamic speaker and motivator. He has written several books on the fight against poverty and social justice and has received a number of awards and honorary degrees, including the **Presidential Hunger Award for Lifetime Achievement**.

Simon was the 35th recipient of the **Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom Award** in 2004. The honor was named after a 1963 encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), by Pope John XXIII that calls upon all people of good will to secure peace among all nations.

The conference will also introduce and show **A Place At The Table**, the documentary film about hunger in America, and include a discussion and suggestions on how to use the film in a congregational setting.

The tentative schedule for the day:

9:00 – 9:30 Registration

Workshops include the topics:

9:30 – 9:40

Devotions

Youth and the Hunger Appeal

9:40– 10:40

Featured Speaker, Art Simon

Advocacy

10:40– 12:15

Movie, **A Place at the Table**, discussion and How to use Hunger Education in congregation

12:15– 1:00

Lunch

1:15 – 2:00

Workshop (Choose 1 of 3 choices)

2:15 – 3:00

Best practices

3:00 – 3:30

Worship and commissioning

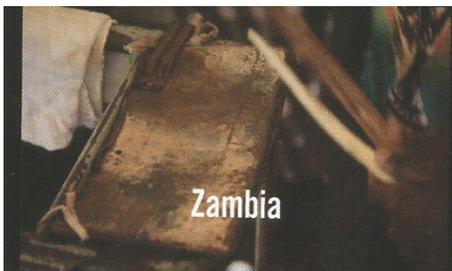
The event will be held at Abiding Christ Lutheran Church, 326 E Dayton Yellow Springs Rd Fairborn, OH 45324.

Telephone: (937) 878-2888.

More information will be available in the registration brochure which will be mailed in the near future.

ELCA MALARIA CAMPAIGN HAS NEW RESOURCES

The ELCA Malaria Campaign is impacting lives throughout Africa. This two minute video gives a glimpse of the work being done on the ground through our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Zambia. This short video is perfect for temple talks, adult forums, or youth group gatherings to show the



impact of your gifts. The video can be downloaded or watched online at www.ELCA.org/malaria.

Other resources for malaria are also available. There is a congregation Action Kit which presents an easy tool to help introduce the ELCA malaria campaign, as well as bulletin inserts, coloring pages, stickers, and profiles of countries where the Malaria campaign is present.

DOMESTIC HUNGER GRANTS – PLAN AHEAD

Domestic Hunger Grant winners for 2014 will be announced in early 2014. However, if your congregation runs a food pantry, operates a community garden, houses the homeless, hosts a community meal or provides some other ministry to those in need, an ELCA World Hunger Grant may be able to help IN 2015. Visit www.ELCA.org/domestichunger to learn more about the grant process. Grant applications for the 2015 granting cycle will be available in May, 2015.



Hunger Task Force Members: Rev. Henry Zorn, chair; Nicholas Bates; Rev. Glen Bengson; David Drumm; Rev. Joene Herr; Rev. Mary Molnar; Rev. Mike Poole; Rev. Jeff Wick, synod staff; Susan Truchses, newsletter editor.