

Feed My Sheep John 21:18

A Newsletter of the Hunger Task Force of the Southern Ohio Synod

November-December, 2013

HUNGER HEADLINES COMING HOLIDAYS

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits dropped November 1 as stimulus spending expired, affecting nearly 48 million Americans who will see their benefits (food stamps) cut just before the holiday season.

A 15 percent reduction in benefits will affect nearly 48 million Americans, or 23 million households. This translates to a loss of about 21 meals per month for a family of four. About 1.8 million Ohio food stamp recipients will have to make do with lower monthly benefits. The average per meal subsidy for SNAP recipients will be cut from \$1.50 to \$1.40, resulting in an average loss of \$29 in monthly benefits, according to a report by the Policy Matters Ohio think tank.

The economy is still weak in many Ohio counties,” Policy Matters Ohio’s, Wendy Patton said in a press release. “Many people cannot get work or do not earn enough to feed their families. These cuts to food aid are going to hurt many children, families and communities.”

Representatives from the **Ohio Association of Foodbanks**, say the state’s charities and food pantries – which distributed \$227 million in food to needy residents last year – won’t be able to come up with another \$190 million in food to replace the cut in federal aid.

Agency personnel state they will have to do what low-income people do, which is reduce the amount of food they give out and ration, predicting the cuts will increase hunger, forcing more school children to attend school without eating, and worsening the health of senior citizens and people with disabilities.

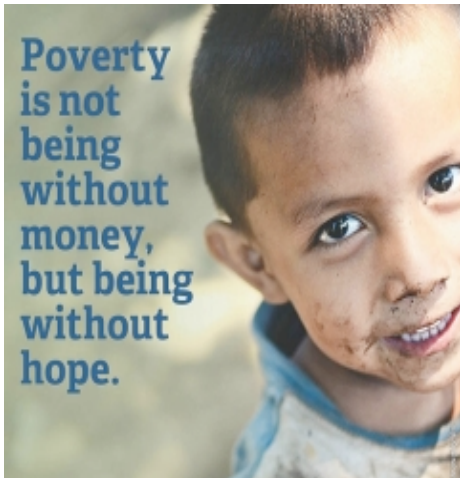
The holidays certainly look bleak for so many American families. And more cuts to SNAP loom on the horizon. How will we respond?

Now is the time to donate money and food items to local food pantries and programs. Also, **become an advocate** and write to your congressional representatives and senators. The ELCA website has an advocacy section where you can get more information. Agencies such as Bread For the World and other advocacy groups also have sample letters on their websites. Consider using them and forward them to your representatives.

Perhaps the greatest gift you can give this holiday season is HOPE. Even a hungry child can go a lot farther if he believes things will get better.



SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS BETTER



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS RESOURCES

Schedule an alternative-giving fair, and give everyone you know “Good Gifts” this Christmas.

Instead of giving more unneeded gifts to family and friends this Christmas, give a gift of hope through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Here's an easy way to encourage members of your congregation to give "alternative gifts" for Christmas -- to help them escape the season's gift-giving frenzy. Place one of the World Hunger "stories" (from website) in worship bulletins, bulletin inserts, or newsletters on each of the first three weeks of Advent to give members an opportunity to give a special gift to the World Hunger Appeal instead of a material gift to family or friends. Select and copy the text from each section and paste it into your word processing or other application.

In this season of Advent, give the equivalent of what you would spend on a new shirt, dress or pants or yourself or as a gift to someone this Christmas. Write in a card: "A special Christmas gift to the Hunger Ministry of the congregation has been given in your honor to help people in poor communities improve their lives through the use of their own talents." Put a check for your total gifts in the offering plate, or send it directly to: ELCA World Hunger Appeal, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764.

Learn more about [ELCA Good Gifts](http://www.elca.org/worldhungerappeal) and how they can help you and your congregation give gifts that really make a difference at www.elca.org/worldhungerappeal.

2ND ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL HUNGER LEADER'S DAY FEATURES ART SIMON

Mark your calendar now—February 22, 2014 - to attend the 2nd Annual Congregational Hunger 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 The Rev. 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:
9:30 - 9:40 Devotions
9:40– 10:40 **Featured Speaker, Art Simon**
10:40- 12:15 Movie, **A Place at the Table**, discussion and How to use
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

Workshops include the topics :
Advocacy
Youth and the Hunger Appeal
Hunger Education in congregation

The event will be held at Abiding Christ Lutheran Church, 326 E Dayton Yellow Springs Rd Fairborn, OH 45324. Telephone: (937) 878-2888.

LIGHT THE WAY HOME SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

{From time to time, Feed My Sheep profiles an agency in the SOS which has been awarded funding through the ELCA grant process. This issue focuses on a unique program in Franklinton, an impoverished area of Columbus. The agency submitted a grant application in 2013 to be awarded in 2014.}

Light the Way Home is a 12-48 month holistic, supportive housing program that empowers low income Franklinton families to improve their economic, housing, and physical well-being through an innovative family-strengthening model that combines mentoring, case management/life coaching, peer support, and affordable housing. This is an ongoing program that has capacity to serve 8-10 family units. The holistic method is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty that affects Franklinton families. Franklinton is an inner city neighborhood with a strong urban Appalachian cultural influence located west of downtown, which suffers from severe generational poverty, and is the most at-risk area of Columbus.



Light the Way Home **is a project of Lower Lights Ministries**, an agency which has served this area of Columbus' west side for over 20 years. Through their holistic approach, and with the partnership of several other agencies, Lower Lights Ministries has developed a Dynamic Assessment Tool that allows each family to be assessed by a professional case manager upon entry into the program. Families are assessed based on several objectives and listed as thriving, safe/stable, vulnerable or in crisis. This then allows families to set goals to improve areas where they are struggling and maintain those where they are thriving. The objectives include:

- Provide quality, supportive below market-rate housing for participants.
- Increase positive interpersonal/familial interaction, and foster a safe and thriving environment for participants
- Increase financial sustainability and employability of participants and reduce dependence on public support
- Increase positive interdependent relationships within the community and decrease isolation of family.

According to Project Director Delaine "Birdie" Dayton, in the past year the greatest success of the program was hiring three program graduates in management-level staff positions to ensure that the program grows more indigenous. These include a Co-director of Rachel's House, the prisoner re-entry program, Light the Way Home Director, and a Volunteer Coordinator. The agency plans to continue to empower local individuals and families through a new Leadership Education Initiative.

If interested in applying for an ELCA grant, please visit www.elca.org/hungerappeal and search ELCA hunger grants. Grant applications are online. Follow instructions and submit applications according to the guidelines listed on the website.

MALARIA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

The ELCA Malaria Campaign continues until 2015. Of the goal of \$15 million, \$9.2 million have been garnered, but there are many congregations which have not participated in the campaign. It is not too late. To become involved and support the program visit the ELCA website for resources and suggestions on what your congregation can do.

It is imperative to defeat the dreaded disease, as news of increased deaths due to malaria in the USA have been reported by the media (USA Today and CBSTV). Because of increased travel to nations where the disease is still prevalent, many visitors to those countries, unaware of the disease, have not received anti-malaria medications before they travel. Tourists are often bitten by a disease carrying mosquito, but do not realize they have become infected. They return to the US and then become ill. When they seek treatment, physicians often misdiagnose the disease, not expecting malaria, because the disease has been almost extinguished in the nation. The patient goes home thinking he has the flu, and continues taking improper medication, becomes increasingly sick until it is too late to recover from the disease.



Deaths from malaria in the US have increased 15% since 2010, especially in the South and Midwest regions of the USA. It is imperative to continue to fight malaria in underdeveloped countries and improve awareness in this nation as to the danger of the disease.

TYPHOON SLAMS INTO PHILIPPINES

One of the most powerful storms ever recorded, Super Typhoon Haiyan, crashed across the central islands of the Philippines. With winds of over 200 miles per hour and torrential rains, it has caused massive destruction, loss of lives and forced millions of people to flee their homes.

Your help is needed to make a difference in affected areas. Through partnerships and as a member of ACT Alliance, Lutheran Disaster Response is responding to the most urgent needs of food, water, clothing, shelter, sleeping material and medicine. Possible assistance may also include helping those whose livelihood of fishing or farming has been destroyed.

Gifts designated to "Pacific Typhoon Response" will be used in full – 100 percent – to help with immediate and long-term need. Your generous offerings of prayer and financial support will help those affected as they journey to recover. Check the Lutheran World Relief and ELCA websites for more information about where to send contributions.

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
