



Synod Assembly Resolutions 2021

In Support of ELCA Hunger Ministry

Discussion Guide

At the very beginning of the resolution, it reminds us about how Jesus told his followers this during one of his many teaching moments: “For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.” [Matthew: 25:35]. And this is only one example of Jesus describing the importance of feeding hungry people. Throughout his life and ministry, he modeled the ministry of feeding people food for physical bodies along with spiritual food for their minds and hearts.

1. Along with prayers on Sundays and other days, how is your congregation helping with the work of feeding people food or providing them with groceries?
2. How much do you know about the reasons for food insecurity or hunger in your community? Are they the same or different from what makes people hungry in other parts of the country or the world?
3. How often do you or members of your congregations sit down to listen to people who get food from community pantries or eaten meals with them that are offered by churches?

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Through the work of ELCA World Hunger, Lutherans across the United States help get food to hungry people through community meals and food pantries. But Lutherans are also responding to hunger and poverty in the United States and throughout the world by addressing root causes through education, advocacy, sustainable development, and community organization so that people are connected to the resources they need to lift themselves out of poverty.

1. What kinds of things have been done in your congregation or community to teach people about the “root causes” that cause people to experience food insecurity or hunger?
2. What do you see as the best way to help families experiencing food insecurity? Meeting immediate needs through charity? Making sure those families earn enough to buy their own food? Help make sure that local and state leaders hear from people who are hungry when setting funding priorities for taxpayer money?

Data on how poor people get access to food show that the majority of assistance comes from the government, primarily from the federal government, but also from state and local governments. This analogy may help: for every ten bags or boxes of food that reaches people who need it, nine of those bags come from government sources like SNAP or Free Lunch programs. One bag comes from food pantries maintained by churches, synagogues, mosques, and other community organizations.

1. Given the need, especially currently as a result of the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, what would churches and other private charities need to do if the government sources went away?
2. How do you feel about making poor and hungry people fill out paperwork and be “approved” before they gain access to food? How does making it harder for poor and hungry parents to gain access to food provided by government or private organizations help children get the food they need to grow up healthy and strong?

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Among other things, the resolution asks the congregations of the NW Synod of Wisconsin and the individual members of congregations to increase their giving by about 5% to reach the goal of \$1,000,000 by the date of the Assembly in 2023.

1. What are some ways you can think of that your congregation could help individuals respond to this challenge by increasing their giving? What are ways congregations could increase their own giving as they set their annual budgets for 2022 and 2023.