

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE - 2020 Bulletin of Reports

February 2019 – January 2020 fiscal year

\$3,700 IN GRANTS AWARDED:

- Community garden re-build after vandalized. Produce given to shareholders, leftovers given to food pantry, % of profits to ELCA World Hunger, Trinity, Durand (\$750)
- New freezer for food pantry. First, Galesburg (\$650)
- *Park Players* youth summer leadership camps, Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries, Rockford (\$800)
- *Season of Creation* working retreat with guest speaker Rev. Dr. Leah Schade, Creation Care Subcommittee (\$1000)
- Support to provide employment and safe living facility at apartment building for people formerly homeless, Zion Development Corp. (\$500)

GRANT APPLICATION: <http://nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry/grants/>

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS:

Congregational Resourcing Event and Synod Assembly:

- Hosted workshop to field ideas and build a team of passionate leaders to redevelop the Anti-racism/Multi-cultural Ministry synod subcommittee.
- Conducted an *In-Kind Offering of Letters*, inviting congregations and individuals to write or sign letters to our senators and representatives advocating for global nutrition programs. 3000 letters were hand-delivered to our elected officials.
- Hosted forums providing overview of focused work of subcommittees and general work of the committee.
- Set and met the goal to have young adult representation on our committee, as the synod constitution requires.
- Heard from Dr. Peter Kivisto who visited ICE detention facility at the county jail in Hardin, IA.
- Find updates and info on our Facebook page: *Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee* and on the synod website at: <https://nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry/>

SUBCOMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS:

CREATION CARE: Hosted a workshop at CRE: *Loving Creation at Church and Home*; hosted synod-wide event featuring Dr. Leah Schade who led a creative form of civil discourse guiding conversations on potentially divisive issues; hosted a week-long working retreat of pastors who wrote liturgies for the Season of Creation to be shared with every synod congregation.

ADVOCACY: Lutheran Day in Springfield was May 7, when Lutherans from IL congregations and organizations advocated for vital social services whose funding had been severely cut.

In response to a 2018 Synod Resolution encouraging an annual synod *Bread for the World Offering of Letters*, the Social Ministry Committee established an Offering of Letters Sub-Committee. Congregations and assembly members were invited to participate at last year's 2019 Assembly. 3,000 letters were offered and sent to 8 Representatives and our 2 Senators advocating for legislation that supported the SNAP Program (Food Stamps) from being cut and tax credits for low income families and in support of Global Nutrition House and Senate. Resolutions. Both programs remained in place and fully funded. *Sub-Committee Chair: Rev. Kenn Storck Members: Paul Carlson, Jean & Mike Hotopp, Andres Koresko, Isabel Hansen*

WORLD HUNGER: Raised \$3,897 during their 2nd Annual Cycle to Synod event for ELCA World Hunger. They also reviewed 5 applicants for the 2nd year of ELCA Domestic Hunger grants. Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries (RALM), was one of 44 ministries across the church that was awarded a grant.

RACIAL JUSTICE: A team of passionate leaders began meeting to practice respectful dialogue, to listen to our stories and perspectives; to plan 2020 Congregational Resourcing Event workshop and 2020 Synod Assembly Puzzle Piece Project, engaging people in their awareness of structural racism to move toward action. Vision and Mission Statements currently being developed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Grateful to Pastor Jacob Gawlik, who began as chairperson and Rev. Dr. Charles Olson, who began as secretary. Welcome this year to youth member, Brynn Conway. Thanks to our other committee members and their servant hearts: Pastor Denver Bitner (bishop liaison), Pastor David Elliott, Pastor Katie Gallagher, Amy Hoening, Dr. Peter Kivisto, Andy Koresko, Marian Myers, Ron Simmons, Joan Soltwisch.

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Robin Caldwell, Chair, NIS Social Ministry Committee