

Section G

Reports of

Agencies



Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa)
www.lamp.org

“God’s Work. Our Hands...and Voices!”

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa) is a **partnership ministry** of the Church in Society Program Unit of the ELCA, ELCA World Hunger, the seven ELCA Synods, Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations, Seminaries, Colleges and other agencies and institutions located in the Commonwealth. Our advocacy ministry is guided by Scripture, the ELCA Constitution and continuing resolutions as well as the Social Statements passed by the church in Assembly.

Advocacy is part of **the vocation of the baptized to “strive for justice and peace in all the earth”**. LAMPa partners with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod through providing education, equipping events and opportunities for congregations and individuals to engage in advocacy with their representatives for just public policy in our state government. Through congregational forums, synodical workshops, youth gatherings and the annual **Lutheran Day at the Capitol**, LAMPa provides education on these complex issues and how we as Lutheran Christians discern our baptismal calling to respond to the needs of our neighbors. LAMPa offers advocacy opportunities through **ACTIONET**, a network of Lutherans who write, call, and visit legislators around issues of the common good, the **Ambassadors Ministry** of individuals in an intentional relationship with their legislators and a **Facebook** group. Contact the LAMPa office (www.lamp.org) to sign up, and pass the word around to friends and fellow congregants!

LAMPa is engaged in **the effort to end hunger** in Pennsylvania and we are working to ensure that state budgetary priorities are faithful to the needs of the poor and vulnerable. In 2009 we worked towards increasing affordable housing through creation of a state housing trust fund and sufficient funding for programs that serve the poor, such as emergency food, home heating assistance, basic and early childhood education. LAMPa also worked to **promote access to healthcare** through advocacy for expansion of health care options for low income persons in Pennsylvania and partnered with the ELCA Washington Office in national health reform. In 2010 LAMPa will be leading efforts to establish a statewide Poverty Reduction Commission to provide the first comprehensive overview of poverty, and poverty solutions, in Pennsylvania.

LAMPa is deeply appreciative for **the financial commitment** of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to advocacy and public policy ministry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with and for the poor, vulnerable, disenfranchised, and for all of God’s creation. We were blessed in 2009 by the public leadership of **Bishop Claire Burkat** and the time, talents and commitment of **the Rev. Serena Sellers**, synod representative to the LAMPa Policy Council. We look forward to the appointment of a second Policy Council member in 2010.

The success of our advocacy efforts depend on the involvement of Lutheran Christians to advocate for just public policy. The churches of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod have a strong sense of mission to serve those in need. We ask you to consider working with LAMPa

and together **address the root causes of hunger** in Pennsylvania. As a ministry of advocacy for this Synod, we are available to speak to your congregation. To schedule a visit, or learn more about the work of LAMPa please call or email us.

In Christ,

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THE PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

2009 ANNUAL REPORT – WWW.PACHURCHES.ORG

OUR MISSION

Article 12 of the Council's *Constitution and Bylaws* sets its mission: "The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is a voluntary association of separate and autonomous Christian churches, within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through which its members seek to manifest their fellowship (koinonia) with one another, to engage in common ministries of witness and service, and to advance towards the goal of visible unity." This brief annual report illustrates how the Council tried to fulfill its mission in 2009. For additional information, visit www.pachurches.org.

FELLOWSHIP

The former presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Pr. H. George Anderson, argued in an article in *Ecumenical Trends* that "it is clear that personal relationships between our bishops and leaders of other traditions enabled them to take the lead in ecumenical arrangements of all sorts." Personal relationships, together with the fellowship that is both created by and nurtured by them, are central to any ecumenical enterprise. The Council has focused on building and sustaining fellowship among the leaders of its member church bodies by

- engaging in common prayer and worship at its board meetings,
- encouraging leaders to share stories of their coming to faith and their call to ministry,
- encouraging the sharing of both the opportunities offered by and the concerns of member church bodies around Pennsylvania, and
- hosting an overnight gathering for religious leaders at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College.

COMMON MINISTRIES OF WITNESS AND SERVICE

WITNESS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Through its public advocacy ministry, the Council witnessed on behalf of social justice and for the common good. Priorities for the 2009–2010 legislative session were poverty (including all related issues like housing, hunger, health care) and public education. Additional work was done on civic engagement (thanks to an unsolicited grant from the Wallace Global Fund), torture (through the National Religious Campaign Against Torture) and gun violence (which resulted in the endorsement by the Council’s Board of Directors of a resolution on gun violence).

Working in coalition with like-minded groups—both religious and secular—is essential to the Council’s public witness. Some of the coalitions are informal; others, like the Interfaith Justice Coalition, are ongoing opportunities for sustained engagement with allies representing a variety of constituencies. The Council’s role, whatever the coalition, includes representing the interests of the Council and its members as outlined in its *Principles for Public Advocacy*. Information on issues and opportunities for involvement can be found at www.pachurchesadvocacy.org.

MINISTRIES OF SERVICE

The Council supported local churches engaging in trucker and traveler ministry at three sites, where three chaplains served along with volunteers and local church leaders. The Council also supported local churches (in the Fruitbelt and in Chester County) engaged in ministry with migrant and seasonal farm workers. Field chaplains and volunteers offer farm workers and their families worship services, spiritual counseling, clothing and other material aid, assistance with immigration issues, emergency transportation for medical care, translation services, emergency housing and food, and recreation.

For these ministries of service, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches provided management services, coordination, and advocacy. The Council business office handled insurance, chaplains’ salaries, and expenses. Designated funds and the funds raised by local committees meet the basic expenses of the program.

WITNESS AMONG PERSONS AT LEISURE

The Council also worked with local park ministry committees to assist in chaplain recruitment and program administration. The annual training held just after the Memorial Day holiday ensured that chaplains were equipped for their ministry and a mid-season retreat gave them opportunity to share experiences and further hone skills. Twenty-three chaplains served campers in 37 state, federal, and private campgrounds.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR CHURCH WORKERS

The Council sponsored a three-day continuing education event for clergy and other church workers, the Pennsylvania State Pastors’ Conference. Planned by a committee of representatives from member bodies, the conference featured the Rev. Dr. Gilbert R. Rendle, senior consultant, Texas Methodist Foundation Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence.

TOWARD VISIBLE UNITY

In one sense, all the ministries and activities of the Council witness to a visible—though still incomplete—unity. Cooperating together in significant ways, the forty-three member bodies of the Council give evidence of their unity in Christ. Even as we are mindful of all the barriers to full visible unity that still remain, we can rejoice in the measure of common commitment and common life that we can demonstrate.

We continue to look for new ways to strengthen our witness to visible unity and to encourage member church bodies to “live into” their ecumenical relationships—especially relationships of full communion, interim Eucharistic sharing, Churches Uniting in Christ, and Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

THE MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION

Officers for 2009 were the Rev. Dr. Marja Coons-Torn (Conference Minister, Penn Central Conference, United Church of Christ), president; Bishop Gregory A. Pile (Allegheny Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), vice-president; Elder Barbara Adams-Smelter (Synod of the Trinity, Presbyterian Church (USA)), secretary; and Mr. David Hoffman, CPA (Central Pennsylvania Conference, United Methodist Church), treasurer.

The Council ended 2009 with an operating deficit of just over \$17,000 (a deficit of nearly \$60,000 had been projected). Careful stewardship, a better return on invested funds, and a very small increase in support from member church bodies made the difference. Deficits are projected for 2010 and 2011.

Finally, the Council serves as the “landlord” for the Pennsylvania United Church Center, an office complex in suburban Harrisburg in which its offices are located. At present, all available space is occupied, with 19,500 square feet under lease to 21 tenants.