

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey**  
**Weekly Witness | December 29, 2017**

*“When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.” --Luke 2:39-40*

The late [Rev. Dr. Susan K. Hedahl](#), who taught homiletics at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg for more than two decades, [published](#) an exegesis a few years ago looking particularly at the questions this text raises for “adults who have anything to do with children, be they parents, members of religious communities or the general public.”

She [asks](#) the following questions:

- What expectations do we have for our children as they grow toward adulthood?
- What are our hopes for them?
- How do we utilize the resources of our faith communities to support children?
- What protection and guidance do we offer them so hopes and expectations can be realized for their flourishing?
- What responsibilities do all adults have for children, regardless of whether or not they are related to them by blood or marriage?

The rate of uninsured children in New Jersey is at an all-time low, according to the [2017 New Jersey Kids Count](#) report published by the [Advocates for Children of New Jersey](#). More students are starting the day with school breakfast through the federal school meals program, more households benefited from a financial boost through the earned income tax credit, and more families participated in the NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help put food on the table. All of this is because caring people have advocated on behalf of all children.

“It is clear that federal investments in children are paying off, but as Congress debates on the future of healthcare, as well as funding for critical programs that help kids grow, learn and stay healthy, our voices for children are needed more than ever to make sure we do not lose ground on these tremendous milestones,” said Cecilia Zalkind, President and CEO of Advocates for Children of New Jersey.

We have an opportunity in the next year to pass legislation to assure that 100% of New Jersey children have health insurance. This is an opportunity for all children to grow up healthy and strong, to develop into the people God intends. Join LEAMNJ as we advocate for healthcare for all kids in New Jersey!