

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | August 23, 2018

"Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth that renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you" from the Prayer of the Day.

The ministry of advocacy is all about relationships! It begins with our connection with Jesus and moves into interconnection with others. We do not advocate "for" others; the ministry of advocacy walks "alongside" of others, because of our relationship with God.

God's intention is that all people claim their voice and their agency and so advocacy is simply the ministry of amplification. As the voices of those who struggle for daily bread, safe housing, and fair employment are raised, the people of God amplify these cries so that no child of God is unheard or silenced. We share each other's pain and join in the struggle for justice together, engaging with the needs of our neighbors.

Advocacy is amplification, and it is also renunciation. Hungry children, homeless refugees, inequality in education, degradation of the environment, and violence in our streets and homes. These (and many others) are all areas where God's heart has been made known to us. God intends that families and neighborhoods be safe places, that those with limited choices be assisted, and that creation is cared for as gift from God.

In these last few weeks of summer, take some time to visit and listen. Go out of your way to personally spend some time with a family who comes to your local food pantry, have a conversation with the server at your local diner who works for tip wages, or attend a different house of worship this weekend. As we get to know our neighbors and form meaningful relationships, we move closer to living in God. Blessings of God come through relationships; their gifts are felt now and throughout eternity. As our personal relationships deepen, our voices strengthen, amplifying needs and renouncing the evils that God deploras.

Have you considered volunteering, getting involved, or becoming a mentor? Ask your pastor or priest how to get involved in your local community or parish or follow one of these links:

Food pantries around the state: https://www.foodpantries.org/st/new_jersey

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of NJ: http://www.bbbsnj.org/pg_programs-amain.php

Volunteers of America: <https://www.voa.org/>