



## CARE OF CREATION MINISTRY

**Our Savior's Care of Creation Ministry asks you to contact your elected official to safeguard and protect our environment - God's creation and gift to us.**

**Ask for:**

1. A just transition to clean energy that protects workers and taxpayers
2. Specific targets to reach zero emissions
3. Incentives to homeowners, businesses and non-profits to maximize energy efficiency and transition to clean energy
4. Support for farmers in their effort to practice regenerative agriculture

**To find your city, county, state and federal elected officials, scan the QR code below:**



**Call to Civic Engagement:**

***The Church Council of the ELCA issued a guide to congregations that points out that the gospels encourage Christians to follow their values in civic action. The church body should help governments choose actions and directions to ensure that everyone benefits from good government and a just world.***

Below are a few key excerpts from the ELCA social message adopted in 2020. The complete document can be found at:

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Government\\_and\\_Civic\\_Engagement\\_Social\\_Message.pdf?\\_ga=2.212170260.1696504977.1643147333-1713463185.1643147333](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Government_and_Civic_Engagement_Social_Message.pdf?_ga=2.212170260.1696504977.1643147333-1713463185.1643147333)

A social message on ...

### **Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy**

*As adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on June 24, 2020*

Government remains God's gift because it is intended to do what churches, families, individuals, and businesses cannot do on their own: protect and coordinate the well-being of individuals, communities, and creation. Some people object to the church involving itself in matters related to government, in "politics." Taking partisan stances is not the church's role, but "politics" has to do with negotiating how the benefits and burdens of living in a society are shared. Politics is key to self-governance.

ELCA social teaching, consistent with classical Lutheran thought, recognizes the ambiguity that civil government at all levels can be a force for good or for evil— or, most accurately, both in some combination. This realistic view of government holds in tension the failures of our shared political life with the recognition that God intends for government to protect all people and to enable human societies to flourish (Romans 13:1-7). This realistic view establishes a fruitful middle ground between idolatrous endorsement of government or its policies and cynical rejection of the good it provides. ELCA social teaching holds that all residents of the United States have a responsibility to make government function well—not to abandon our democracy but to engage it in a spirit of robust civic duty. For Lutherans, this responsibility is lived out as a calling from God, expressed in the discipleship described in our baptismal promises. It is based on our understanding of how God governs human society.

**CALLED TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** Over time Lutherans have learned that energetic civic engagement is part of their baptismal vocation, both as individuals and through the church's corporate witness. Such civic participation is not simply voluntary, idealistic, or altruistic. The ELCA holds to the biblical idea that God calls God's people to be active citizens and to ensure that everyone benefits from the good of government (Jeremiah 29:7, Romans 13:1-7).<sup>28</sup>

The ELCA is called as a church body to discern nonpartisan means of civic engagement. As a church we affirm the importance of government, specifically democratic self-governance. In this affirmative role, this church should support public servants and elected officials in their vocation to wield authority for the good of all. In this role our institutional witness is to foster justice, racial and social equity, reconciliation, and healing with compassion and imagination.

When confronted with a question about the legitimacy of paying taxes to the Roman authorities, Jesus declared, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:9-13). Jesus' response does not support a compartmentalized view of religious identity and political responsibility but rather endorses both religious and political responsibilities as legitimate. Lutherans conclude that life in society involves honoring God's two ways of rule: the right hand, which channels God's forgiveness and unmerited love, and the left hand, which channels God's love into just governance on earth.

***OSLC's Care of Creation Team encourages civic engagement consistent with our ELCA teachings.***