

Lutheran
Advocacy
Ministry
New Mexico

Rocky Mountain Synod
ELCA

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - NM is called to advocate for justice in public policy with a particular emphasis on alleviating poverty and hunger and supporting ELCA members and congregations, as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners in the ministry of advocacy.

January 21, 2025

Dear Partners in Advocacy,

Maybe like you, I am still working to make sense of Monday, January 20th. The day when we annually honor the life and legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and yet, a day also marked by the inauguration of the new President this year. There are possibly no two polar opposite visions for our country and our world community than that represented and celebrated that day.

One of my favorite statements made by Dr. King comes from his 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which he said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico was established 41 years ago to respond to housing cuts made by the Reagan administration and quickly moved to focus as well on the staggering issue of poverty and hunger in our state and the myriad of other challenges faced by New Mexicans as a result. At its core, *our mission centers on advocating for justice in our state's public policy*. I invite and challenge all of you to recommit yourself to this effort, both here in New Mexico, as well as in exercising your voice in Washington. We must remain vigilant.

The **First Session of the 57th Legislature** is now underway. The 60-day session will conclude at noon on March 22nd. This "long session" will be fast-paced and intense. At the end of opening day more than 200 bills, joint resolutions, and memorials had been filed. Legislators can continue to introduce legislation through the midpoint of the session, February 20th.

I hope you will take the time to review a summary of our 2025 Advocacy Agenda below. Legislative priorities for Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico continue to focus on the core areas of addressing hunger and poverty, affordable housing and homelessness, and family-sustaining income, among others. Several legislative priorities include supporting *key*

provisions of the Governor's Food Initiative, the Paid Medical and Family Leave Act, Medicaid for All, fair and just tax policy, the Green Amendment, the creation of an independent redistricting commission, and amendments to the state's constitution to modernize our legislature. I invite you to attend a more extensive review of our agenda and the upcoming session that will take place this **Sunday afternoon, January 26th, beginning at 4 p.m.** A link to sign up is included below.

There are a variety of options for you to participate both online and in person during the legislative session. The highlight of the session remains the annual **Legislative Issue Briefing and Bishop's Luncheon** on **February 20th**. Please find the registration link below. *It takes a lot of volunteer support to pull off these two events and we can use more.* If you would like to volunteer please contact Judy Messal at (575) 496-4754 or you can email her at judithmessal@comcast.net.

In addition, consider joining us on one of our three **Lutheran Advocacy Days**. This will be an opportunity for you to join us in person at the Roundhouse, to attend committee meetings, visit legislator's offices, and speak out on priority legislation for LAM-NM. You can find the dates below.

As we move through the coming weeks I look forward to your support through awareness, direct participation, and in your prayers. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you need more information or have any questions about our work during the 2025 session.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Kurt

Kurt Rager
Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico

"...And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8



2025 Issue Briefing & Bishop's Luncheon

Registration is open for the **2025 Issue Briefing and Bishop's Luncheon** that will be held on Thursday, **February 20th!** We are pleased that **First**

Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe, a long-time member of our advocating congregation program, will return as host for the morning **Issue Briefing**. And, after a one-year hiatus, we will return to the *La Fonda Hotel* for the **Bishop's Luncheon**.

Schedule

8:30 a.m. - 9:15 Check-in, refreshments & fellowship at First Presbyterian
(208 Grant Ave, Santa Fe, NM 87501)

9:15 a.m. Welcome and Opening Devotion

9:30 a.m. Guest Speakers

10:45 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Bishop Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni

11:15 a.m. Advocacy Agenda and Issue Briefing

Noon-12:15 p.m. Transition to La Fonda Hotel

(100 E San Francisco St, Santa Fe, NM 87501)

12:30 p.m. Bishop's Luncheon Begins

2:00 p.m. Lunch concludes

The registration cost per person remains the same as last year at *\$40 per person*. However, on *February 17th*, it will increase to *\$45 per person*.

Please register and buy your tickets [HERE!](#)

(Please note, this is not a fund-raiser as the registration charge covers only the anticipated cost for the luncheon.)

This will be the first year for our new Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod, the Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni. Bishop Johnson Aelabouni was elected last spring and began her service on July 1, 2024. We hope you will join us in offering a warm welcome to the Bishop as she hosts her first Bishop's Luncheon.





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2025 Advocacy Agenda

The LAM-NM 2025 Advocacy Agenda was recently adopted by our Policy Committee. To download a copy of the agenda, please go [HERE!](#) Please join us for a complete review of the Advocacy Agenda that will take place this **Sunday, January 26th, beginning at 4 p.m.**

Key Areas of Focus:

Hunger

Affordable Housing & Homelessness

Family-Sustaining Income

Health Care

Tax Policy

Criminal Justice

Care of Creation

Good Governance

[Sign up for Advocacy Agenda Briefing Here!](#)



2025 Legislative Advocacy Days

Returning this Year!

LAM-NM is planning a day each week for you to join Kurt and other volunteer LAM-NM advocates to work the Round House by lobbying legislators and potentially offering public comment during committee meetings on priority bills for our advocacy agenda. You are also invited to come and watch the process and activity of our state's legislature. There is much to keep you busy!

Please join us one (or more times) on the four consecutive *Tuesdays of*

February 25th, March 4th, 11th, and 18th.

Please email or call Kurt before the day you plan to be there to add your name to the list and to receive instructions for parking and meeting.

Let your voice be heard!



Additional Special Days!

You are invited to participate with some of our key partner organizations and coalitions on their special days of emphasis:

- * **January 28th:** *Paid Medical & Family Leave Lobby Day* -(Register [HERE!](#))
- * **January 30th:** *New Mexico Food & Farms Day* -(Register [HERE!](#))
- * **February 3rd:** *Immigrant and Worker's Day of Action*
- * **February 11th:** *Legislative Modernization Day*
- * **February 13th:** *Disability Rights Day*
- * **February 13th:** *NM Coalition to End Homelessness Advocacy Day* - (Register [HERE!](#))
- * **February 21st:** *Hunger Action Day*



How to Access the Legislature

Both House and Senate committee meetings will always be accessible via a webcast, as will all Floor Sessions. A broadcast link is included below. For those who want to provide public comment virtually, and not drive to Santa

Fe, you will be able to participate via Zoom. You can provide public testimony by using a Zoom link that each committee will publish with their agendas. Rules will vary from committee to committee, as will the posting of agendas, so it's important to plan ahead. Some committees do require that you sign up the day before or before the start of the meeting if you want to speak.

As the session progresses, please continue to watch for and respond to ***ACTION ALERT*** emails that LAM-NM will send. Action Alerts will be targeted toward specific LAM-NM priority legislation, will provide information about the bill and why we support or oppose it, and will "ask" for action from you to contact your legislators. In addition, an updated summary email with additional news and events will also be sent each week of the session.

To find out what's happening each day, follow this link [HERE](#).

To watch committee hearings and floor sessions live, follow this link [HERE](#). Recordings of all committee meetings and floor sessions are also available.

To find and track legislation that has been introduced, follow this link [HERE](#).

To find contact information about your representative or senator, follow this link [HERE](#).

To access the Home Page of the NM Legislature, follow this link [HERE](#).



Human Sexuality Gift and Trusty Study Process

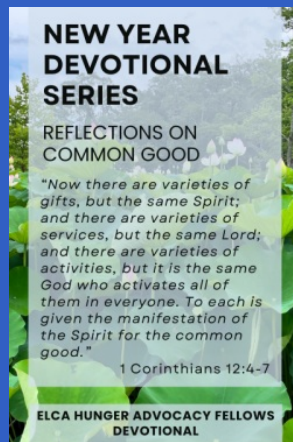
The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly called for two reconsideration of the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. Members of ELCA congregations are invited to read the draft edits and reply with their feedback through a survey by January 31, 2025. Drafts are available in English and Spanish.

Other ELCA social writing projects underway include:

*A Social Message on Child Protection
Civic Faith and Life*

Social Message on Gun Related Violence & Trauma

[Respond & Learn More Here!](#)



Devotional: New Changes and Unwavering Promises

Read the most recent ELCA Advocacy Blog by Joey Chin, an ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellow, one a series this year that offers reflections on the common good.

[Read the Blog Here!](#)

Farm Bill Engagement Updates

The Farm Bill is one of the most influential pieces of legislation affecting hunger and conservation in the U.S. and around the world. Our ELCA Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., is heavily engaged in supporting successful passage and offers a variety of resources for your awareness and individual advocacy.

[Read Farm Bill Updates Here!](#)

Advocating Congregations

St. Paul Lutheran (Alb.) * First Presbyterian (Santa Fe) * Bethlehem Lutheran (Los Alamos) * St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal (Alb.) * All Saints Lutheran (Alb.) * St. Luke Lutheran (Alb.) * Peace Lutheran (Las Cruces) * Christ Lutheran (Santa Fe) * St. Timothy Lutheran (Alb.) * St. Andrew Presbyterian (Alb.) * Albuquerque Mennonite Church (Alb.) * First Presbyterian (Las Vegas) * Church of the Holy Cross Episcopal (Edgewood) * Monte Vista Christian (Abq.) * United Methodist Women of New Mexico

Learn more about joining the Advocating Congregation Program [HERE!](#)

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-NM works in advocacy partnerships with the NM Conference of Churches and the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Connecting faith and public life: We believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. God uses our hands, through our direct service work and our voices, through our advocacy efforts, to restore and reconcile our world. Through faithful advocacy, the ELCA lives out our Lutheran belief that governments can help advance the common good.



Office Location

Our office is located in Albuquerque at St. Paul Lutheran Church.

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