



## Fulfilling our Responsibility to Care For Our Neighbors

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Social Statement, "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" (ELCA, 1999) is a benchmark for our role as Christians in economic life. Because of sin, we have fallen short of our responsibilities to one another in this world, but we live in light of God's promised future that ultimately there will be no hunger and injustice. This promise makes us restless with a world that is less than what God intends. In economic matters, this draws attention to:

- The scope of God's concern: "for all";
- The means by which life is sustained: "livelihood";
- What is needed: "sufficiency", and
- Long-term perspective: "sustainability".

### 2009 Legislative Agenda

- 1) Promote the bi-partisan Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 recommendations, especially to "Restore work as a way out of poverty."

**Specifically** we will advocate for acquiring and keeping living wage jobs that provide stable and long-term employment. Particular attention will be given to creating new employment opportunities through a state green jobs bill that provides training as a pathway out of poverty while protecting our environment and reducing our global warming pollution. Low income people and communities of color are disproportionately affected by this recession and climate change and underrepresented in many fields where these jobs will be created. We will work to hold the Minnesota Department of Transportation accountable to federal guidelines for training and hiring minorities and people of color.

- 2) Protect the most vulnerable - the disabled, the elderly and children - from a disproportionate share of the budget cuts.

**Specifically** we will advocate for preserving the safety net so it does not become a safety sieve. Protect programs that will help people get through the recession: hunger prevention, childcare, housing and healthcare. Create an on-going mechanism in state government to monitor the impact of proposed legislative changes to eliminate poverty while not making it worse. Particular attention will be paid to reducing racial and gender disparities.

- 3) Support legislation to curb payday lending abuse.

**Specifically** we will support legislation that will require that after three consecutive payday loans in any six-month period, the fourth loan automatically converts into an installment payment loan to allow borrowers to escape the debt trap and to make clear that Internet payday lenders must follow Minnesota law.

- 4) Invest in people and prepare for recovery:

**Specifically** we will advocate for raising sufficient revenues in a manner fair to those living in poverty while streamlining programs for greater effectiveness and efficiency.