

**Social Ministry Coordinator (Church in Society)**  
**Report to Conference Conventions 2009**

As Social Ministry Coordinator, my role is to raise awareness of the root causes of social needs and injustices and encourage actions of compassion, advocacy, and social change, guided by a vision rooted in the gospel.

At some congregations I have given the sermon time to talk about both local and global hunger and poverty, our call to do justice, how we can respond via GHDA (or now, CLWR, local Canadian projects, and Kairos actions), and where our donations go. Many congregations are interested in local issues such as homelessness and inner city programs. I also work to explain the difference between justice and charity. Where that is understood, social justice committees approach their work in a more holistic manner, and those that are involved with service projects are more likely to do some reflection, education and advocacy about root causes and why there is a need for us to do this work.

In the past, one of my major activities has been to raise the profile and understanding of the Global Hunger and Development Appeal, which financially supported CLWR, local Canadian poverty/hunger projects, Kairos, and a variety of other projects and organizations. At the national convention this past summer it was decided to dissolve GHDA. However as I understand it, this administrative change will not alter the focus or priority for the work that we do; it mainly affects how donations towards this work are channelled. There is still funding available at this time for projects that address local needs, so please apply for a grant if your congregation has an idea. The application form is on the Synod website: Social Ministry: Projects for Congregations (see below).

The Stewardship of Creation has been a major topic of interest. Using a PowerPoint, I have talked to several congregations about this, raising different points of concern and ideas for action in the congregation or the home. Many have committed to be “greener”, and some have applied for accreditation by the national office.

The Kairos Re-Energize campaign supplements our Stewardship of Creation initiative. Kairos offers those who are already deeply committed to social justice some faith-based action ideas. The Kairos Re-Energize resources include the 100 Mile Supper, the PowerDown Day retreat resource, the church building energy audit, and Carbon Sabbath materials.

I have a wide variety of ecumenical contacts, and I work to promote their workshops and events located around the synod. This ecumenical participation offers Lutherans the opportunity to attend a number of events that would be impossible to organize on our own.

The global food crisis, which has evolved as a major issue over the past year, relates to climate change, the energy crisis, local and global hunger and the work of CLWR. On this topic, a major activity for me was to be on the Social Justice Institute Organizing Committee. This committee of religious academic staff (Newman College, Kings College, St. Joseph’s College, Catholic School Board, etc.) Kairos, and staff from denominational offices plans a yearly ecumenical event. The 3 day event held in May 2009, “Hungry for Justice” included several workshops for

adults and also sessions for high school aged students on topics related to food issues, such as the food crisis and climate change, local hunger and foodbanks, 100 mile diet, local foods, land use issues, fairtrade products, inner-city food programs, a speaker from Kenya, etc. There will be a 1 day event in the spring of 2010 - watch for the announcements on the topic and date.

In May 2009 the national church leaders of the major denominations in Canada (including Bishop Johnson) came to Alberta to visit the Oilsands on a Kairos sponsored fact-finding tour. I helped to organize the Edmonton evening of dialogue. For more information, see the article that I wrote, which was published in the Alberta insert of the Canada Lutheran.

I am able to come to your congregation, wherever you are located, to speak about any of these topics - using a PowerPoint presentation, sermon time, or by meeting with a committee.

I continue to maintain a Lutheran Social Justice Email network, and am working towards having at least one contact in each congregation. Please contact me if you would like to receive these occasional emails with upcoming events and resource ideas. I also maintain the Kairos Alberta ecumenical email network and the Social Justice Institute email network.

### **YOUR congregation can make a difference!**

We can provide funds to assist congregations with projects that address hunger and poverty in Canada (e.g. community gardens, community kitchens, Out-of-the-Cold shelters, Old Strathcona Outreach Worker to address homelessness in Edmonton, urban ministries to low income people, exposure trips, etc.) See the Synod's webpage, Social Ministry: Projects for Congregations at

[http://www.albertasynod.ca/social\\_ministry/projects\\_for\\_congregations](http://www.albertasynod.ca/social_ministry/projects_for_congregations)

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I look forward to hearing from you!  
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