

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." – (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Health Advocacy

Looking out for our families and ourselves is a full-time job these days. Yet in this quote from scripture it is clear that advocacy for others is also part of what is expected of us. Scripture is filled with calls for advocacy, from Psalms (82:3,4) to Proverbs (31:8,9) and Isaiah (1:17). Public advocacy for issues of basic health needs is certainly part of what the ELCA does nationally and internationally. A collective voice can be a powerful tool for justice.

How does one advocate effectively? For some the word advocacy brings an image of angry voices raised in protest, or perhaps one of taking extreme positions on social issues. If you are one who hears the call for active public advocacy, that is a wonderful gift. But for most of us, trying to find a place to start in a world with such great needs can be pretty intimidating.

In our congregation there are members who have organized aid for people in India who are denied the most basic elements of good health, such as clean drinking water, because of their social status. Recently members participated in a Mother's Day gathering that proposed "gifting" to provide ongoing self-sufficiency for Indian women with HIV. Margaret Mead, the great anthropologist, once commented, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Advocacy, speaking to the powerful for those unable to speak for themselves, can also be approached from an individual perspective. In many small ways one can heed Christ's call for advocacy, and make a difference. Small direct actions by individuals in the right situation can be very powerful, and if you are open to the will of the Holy Spirit, you will find ways to quietly advocate. And even prayer, after all, can be speaking to the all-powerful for those unable to speak for themselves. How might you advocate for the sake of others' health? - JL

If you have ideas to share with us or are interested in the work of the Health and Wellness Cabinet, please contact Anne Gatzke: littlezookie@yahoo.com.