
What To Do

As a new hunger leader, there are several things you can do right away. There are many more that will take time and planning. This section will get you started and point out some things to look for as time goes on.



What To Do First

1. Get Connected

- ◆ **Go to www.elca.org/hunger and familiarize yourself with the site.** You'll find all sorts of information about what ELCA World Hunger does, the current state of hunger in the world, resources for increasing awareness and raising money, and more.
- ◆ **Go to www.elca.org/hunger/synod and familiarize yourself with the site.** This is a site specifically for synod hunger leaders. It contains information and resources to help you with the responsibilities of being a hunger leader.
- ◆ **Contact Nancy Michaelis, the ELCA Hunger Leader Liaison, and introduce yourself as a new synod hunger leader.** Nancy can help you with your questions, connect you with other hunger leaders, and ensure you get support and resources from the churchwide office. You can reach Nancy at 800-638-3522, ext. 2713 or Nancy.Michaelis@elca.org.
- ◆ **Go to <http://tinyurl.com/clswm> and join the ELCA World Hunger online discussion.** The discussion group is on Ecunet, and is a place where hunger leaders from both congregations and synods can post questions and requests, and share information or ideas with other ELCA hunger leaders. A free Ecunet Lite membership allows you to participate in up to three discussion groups. Post a "hello" message in the ELCA World Hunger discussion to try it out and let everyone know you've joined us!
- ◆ **If you'd like, request a mentor.** As a new hunger leader, you'll probably have lots of questions, and you may not feel comfortable posting them all on Ecunet. If you'd like a more personal method of support, you might want a mentor. Experienced hunger leaders have volunteered to pair with newer people to help them get started. It's a rather informal program. Once paired, it's up to you and your mentor to decide how you'd like to work together, how often you'll communicate, and the best ways to do so. More information about mentorship can be found on page 6-2 of this welcome kit. If you'd like a mentor or have questions about it, contact Nancy Michaelis.

2. Find out what hunger activities your synod has engaged in during the past year.

What was your synod's level of giving to the World Hunger Appeal last year? Does your synod have stated hunger goals and plans to achieve them? If so, how are they going? To what degree do congregations call on the synod for help in their hunger work? Who else at the synod level is involved in hunger work and what do they do? Answering these and other questions you have will help you know where to start and what needs to be done.

3. Set goals and start planning.

If your synod already has hunger-related goals, what will you do to accomplish them? If your synod does not have stated goals, find out who else should be involved and begin creating them. Once you and your synod know what you want to achieve, plan how to get there. Planning is likely to take some time and will be an interactive process as you gain information, ideas, and people to help. In fact, even after you have plans, you are likely to revise them throughout the year to accommodate new ideas, people, or other changes. But it's never too early to begin thinking about what you want to do either this year or next, jotting down your ideas, and talking to others in your synod about their thoughts. You can find sample goals and plans to help you with this on pages 6-4 through 6-6 of this welcome kit.

4. Initiate a hunger activity in your own congregation.

There's no better way to lead than by example! See page 6-9 for some suggestions of what you might do. Or be creative and design your own activity! Afterwards, tell other hunger leaders about your success and any tips you have by posting a message on Ecunet or by contacting Nancy Michaelis.

What Comes Next?

◆ Take the Lead

Your first tasks as a synod hunger leader will get you connected to the people, processes, and resources of your synod and the churchwide World Hunger efforts. Once you become familiar with what's happening and spend some time thinking about the hunger initiatives in your synod, you will probably have all sorts of ideas about how to continue and develop those initiatives. We encourage you to do so! Be creative as you create, revise, and carry out your plans! And if you're pleased with the outcome of a particular activity, please tell other synod hunger leaders about what you're doing. Ecunet is a great way to reach other hunger leaders, or contact Nancy Michaelis and she can help get the word out. Through these and other means, you, too, will hear about what other synods are doing. If something catches your attention and you'd like to try it, take the lead. Start by calling the synod hunger leader who conducted the activity to get more information, and if it fits, incorporate it into your plans.

◆ Call Attention to Hunger

Of course, you'll be calling attention to hunger in nearly everything you do as a synod hunger leader. But one particular opportunity to make hunger a priority in your synod is the annual **synod assembly**. Participate by organizing an interactive hunger display, conducting an activity to raise money for World Hunger Appeal, or submitting a resolution about some hunger alleviation action you'd like your synod to take. If at all possible, attend the assembly so you can talk to people from your synod about the important work you're doing and the help you need.

◆ Keep Learning – and Teaching

You will receive information and materials throughout the year about hunger and some ways that synods and congregations can help. Please read and act upon these materials. And please give us your feedback on them. We need to know both what you find really useful and what we can improve.

In addition, there are two annual events that you should try to attend:

1. The Hunger Leaders' Gathering
2. The Global Mission Event (GME)

The **Hunger Leaders' Gathering** is just what it sounds like – a gathering of hunger leaders from across the country. It's an opportunity to learn about new resources, improve your hunger leader skills, gather ideas, and find out about recent ELCA involvement in the fight against hunger. It's also a time for hunger leaders to talk to each other about what they're doing, the challenges they face, and the successes

they've had during the year. The Hunger Leader's Gathering is typically held in June or July, and changes location each year. It's a wonderful time to both learn and teach, and to gain insight and excitement about your role as a hunger leader.

The second event you should try to attend is the **Global Mission Event (GME)**. GME is a broader event than the Hunger Gathering, involving people and topics beyond hunger itself. However, it is ultimately all about hunger in that it addresses many of world's problems that result in hunger. Much of it is presented by people from around the world who live enmeshed in these realities. GME will help you make sense of the various aspects of hunger, and how you are connected to them in your daily life. It is a profound and inspiring experience that will clarify the importance of your hunger leader work, provide you with stories and information to use when you speak about hunger, and leave you energized and eager to continue God's work.

◆ **Build a Network**

Fighting hunger can become as big a job as you want it to be. However, since none of us has unlimited time or energy, you'll probably want help, both to divide the work and make it more fun! Some synods already have robust and active hunger committees. In other cases, you may be starting on your own. Regardless, keep recruiting! Locate people at both the synod and the congregational level who are interested in hunger, and ask them to join you in some capacity. If you find people with a dedication like your own, there's no reason a synod or congregation can't have multiple hunger leaders. Others may prefer less commitment, such as volunteering for a couple of hours every few months. No matter how much time they want to invest, all volunteers are valuable! Whether you follow an established process for bringing new people into the synod's hunger work, or whether you invent your own methods, building a hunger network within your synod can increase your success while spreading the work load and making it more fun for everyone. Always be on the lookout for people who want to help.