

## United Lutheran Appeal

**On a Sunday in February, you will have the opportunity to TAKE ONE SMALL STEP to help others through the United Lutheran Appeal of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod.**

The United Lutheran Appeal is a group of 13 Lutheran-Affiliated agencies that have joined together to make ONE annual appeal to congregations for funding for their programs. The Appeal is in its eighth season and is targeted for February (although you can choose any alternate date to support the appeal).

In the District of Columbia, 16.7 percent of residents – 49,600 people – live below the federal poverty line. It is also estimated that one-third of the youth in D.C. are living in poverty. Every day, agencies such as **Community Family Life Services, Southeast Ministry, and N Street Village** see the faces of poverty: the mother of five who cannot keep up with her rent because she needs to buy food...the just-released former convict who has no family, no job, and no place to live... the woman desperately trying to find work, but who no one will hire because she has a history of homelessness and no solid work experience... the child attending a D.C. school that ranks among the worst in the nation who cannot get the help he needs to reach appropriate grade-level achievement...the young mother who dropped out of high school and now realizes the importance of earning her G.E.D.

**Fellowship Square Foundation and National Lutheran Home** serve the housing needs of the elderly. They hear stories like that of Mr. W., who spent years caring for his terminally ill wife. After she died, he spent most of the remainder of his savings to bury her. Down on his luck and out of money, Mr. W. was unable to keep his house and was forced into a shelter for the homeless. Social service agencies coordinate with these organizations. Mr. W. says, “Without them, I would be living in a shelter. I am able to live in my own apartment, fix my own meals, and visit with some nice people. I am happy and grateful to be here.”

**Good Shepherd Housing and Transitional Housing Corporation** hear stories like Heather’s every day: “My name is Heather and the following is the short version of my life’s story. I hope you will think about what I am saying. My life was nothing but instability from the beginning. I did the best I could taking care of my mom, but I made some bad choices. Before I realized it, I had two children. I ended up leaving one child with a family I knew. Finally, I went through a very good transitional housing program, got my child back and got a job. However, after two years I had to leave that program and I knew that we would be homeless again if I didn’t get some help. I still was not earning enough to afford rent and I still had some growing up to do. I was still in survival mode. Today, after three years of living in an agency home, my family and I have peace because our housing is affordable, permanent, and supportive. Everything we need to finally experience stability. We now concentrate on being a healthy family and we are making good decisions. The kids are happy in their schools and they can learn instead of worry, something I never experienced as a kid.

**Lutheran Social Services** knows kids like Darren. When Darren was two years old, his mother left him with a neighbor while she went shopping for milk and diapers. Days later, when she hadn't returned, the frantic neighbor contacted authorities and Darren was placed in foster care. Three months later, Darren's mother reappeared. Darren's social worker and foster parents tried to support her through a substance abuse program, but her recovery was not successful. She left again. Throughout the turmoil, Darren remained in a safe, loving family who is now going through the process to adopt him. LSS also provides refugee resettlement services, a camp for HIV/AIDS children, and disaster response programs.

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Retreat and Conference Center** and **Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center** are outdoor ministries. As many as 50% of seminary students say that outdoor ministries played a significant role in their decision to attend seminary. Outdoor ministries offer a beautiful place to learn and grow with others in the faith. Camps build skills to prepare youths to assume roles as successful adults. **Lutheran Volunteer Corps** is a national volunteer service program that partners talented, passionate full-time volunteers with over 100 social justice organizations and ministries in 12 urban centers throughout the U.S. LVC Volunteers live together in intentional household communities, deepen their spirituality, and encourage simple, sustainable living.

**The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg** and **Roanoke College** are institutions of higher learning that prepare young people to be tomorrow's church leaders. **Roanoke College** is a four-year undergraduate college that believes that a sound religious program must be an integral part of the total college life, while at the same time providing a solid liberal arts education. Funds received through the United Lutheran Appeal are concentrated on providing scholarships for young adults in the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area. Meredith M. is a senior student awaiting her first call. She is a recipient of the Fund for Leaders in Mission Scholarship program and has been an intern in a Washington, D.C. church. Meredith is part of the growing trend of "first-career" students coming to seminary, where 30% of the student body is under 30-years old. Many of these younger students bring significant undergraduate loan debt with them as they discern their call and seek the seminary that will prepare them for professional ministry. Scholarship support for students is as key a priority for the seminary as is keeping the costs of a quality education manageable. Tuition covers less than one-third of the cost of educating each student.

The average cost of a restaurant dinner for two in the metropolitan area is \$66. Will you take one small step and give up one meal out to donate to the Appeal? Support the Appeal in your congregation, or visit [ULADC.org](http://ULADC.org) for more information or to donate online.