July 15, 2018 – Pentecost 8 (B)
For Such a Time As This: Safety Net Sustainability

The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue our united call to Pray, Fast, and Act in support of programs that provide for necessary care for all people. Both Churches have in place such programs, but often these programs are designed to meet shortfalls in federal and state assistance.

This month we focus on safety net medical and retirement programs. The United States has a strong tradition of communities working together to care for the less fortunate. Since the time of the Revolution, Europeans such as Tocqueville noted that our ability to form associations and groups to address common problems differentiated Americans from other people. The federal government represents the largest such association formed for the improvement and betterment of our society. Towards that end, we have instituted Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security so that the poor, elderly, disabled, and people caught in economic conditions they can’t control will have a back stop for their health and wellbeing. In recent decades, as investments in programs that spur the economic potential of individuals has declined, the number of people needing these backstops has grown.

On July 21, please join the EPPN, ELCA Advocacy, and the Presiding Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church as we #PrayFastAct.

PRAY for all those who rely on our nation’s common Christian charity to receive medical care or retirement.

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Poor and the Neglected, The Book of Common Prayer

FAST to remember those who are unable to access these programs and the many who would be hungry and hurting if they were to lose the bit of help these programs provide.

Share on social media using #PrayFastAct. On the 21st, post a picture of a dinner place setting with the reason you are fasting this month.

ACT by urging our elected leaders to support policy solutions that address the long-term sustainability of these programs not by block granting funding or manipulating eligibility, but by investing in our fellow citizens so that in the long-term, fewer people need a helping hand.

Learn more from the Episcopal Public Policy Network at advocacy.episcopalchurch.org.