

Moving from Concern to Action in Houses of Worship

ABOUT THIS VIDEO STUDY GUIDE

Host a viewing of all or a portion of the 21-minute video in your congregation or other group. Discussion questions can help start conversations to enrich our faithful civic engagement and plant seeds in your community.



“What I’m seeing right now is a lot of energized Lutherans discovering the power of public witness – how that clarifies our values, how that expands our understanding of who God is and who and what the church is called to be.”

The Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director,
ELCA Witness in Society

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Rev. Amy Reumann observes that people are encountering situations that lead them to ask deeper questions about their communities and the world around them. What are you hearing from people in your faith community, ministries and neighborhood that is not necessarily part of your members’ everyday lives?
2. How do these concerns invite you to conversation and action?
3. Pastor Reumann refers to the Lutheran understanding of justification by faith through grace. How does being freed by God’s grace influence the way we engage questions of justice, compassion and the common good? How do you see the relationship between justification and justice?
4. ELCA social teaching names four roles for the church in fostering peace: a disturbing presence, a serving presence, a reconciling presence and a deliberating presence. Which does your community lean into? Which role challenges you and may require more focus?
5. The video highlights hospitality as a powerful way faith communities can bring people together. How have you seen this in action? How might your ministry practice hospitality in new ways to welcome and engage others?
6. The video asks us to be realistic about what we don’t know. Who in your community is already showing up for neighbors and addressing local concerns? What might you discover by learning from their work and how might it shape yours?
7. What do you think Lutheran communities and people of faith can offer that bridges polarized conversations? Where have you seen faith create opportunities for listening, relationship-building and common action despite differing perspectives?
8. What does your Christian faith tell you about where God is calling us? What do you see as God’s vision for the future and how are you invited to bring that vision to life?
9. In faith-based organizing, what can we learn from accompanying neighbors rather than assuming we know what they need? How might that lead to different conversations, commitments and actions?
10. If you’ve dipped into some of the public proclamation resources Pastor Reumann names in the video, how have you found them useful?

View video at
<https://bit.ly/InterfaithAllianceARvideo>



ABOUT THE VIDEO

The video “Organizing in Houses of Worship - A Christian Perspective with Rev. Amy Reumann” is part of the Interfaith Alliance “Train Up for Faithful Practices” series.

It takes a deep dive into local congregational organizing from a Christian perspective: building teams, developing leaders, and creating faith-rooted organizing culture inside houses of worship - with a Lutheran lens.

Find a video overview on the next page of this Video Study Guide.

Video Overview:

MOVING FROM CONCERN TO ACTION (00:29)

Move is Driven by Local Relationships
Community Members Ask Questions About Local Inefficiencies
The Shuttering of the US Refugee Program As an Example
“What Do I Do To Address Policy That Effects My Congregation?”
Action Starts with Local Relationships – Not Headlines
Action is Built Around Coalition
The Movement from Concern to Action is Messy

THE CHURCH’S ROLE IN ACTION (03:30)

Advocacy Helps the Church “Be the Church”
The Link Between Lutheran Theology & Justice
The Four Roles of the Church

- Be a Disturbing Presence
- Be a Serving Presence
- Be a Reconciling Presence
- Be a Deliberating Presence

Barriers to Action

- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Theological Clarity
- Limited Experience
- Charity Over Justice
- Limited Resources
- Isolation

Motivations to Action

- Knowing Your Theological Tradition
- The Power of Public Witness
- What Churches Can and Cannot Do

Theological Reflections

- What Does God Require of Us?
- Naming Evil
- The History of Holy Disruption
- Speak Publicly, Boldly and Honestly

NEXT STEPS (13:36)

Starting As Hosts
Starting As Neighbors
Seeking Training

THE FAITH PILLAR (15:34)

The Duty to Be Involved
Faith Values Rooted in Long Tradition
Faith Leaders are Trusted In Their Communities
Houses of Worship Can Bridge Polarized Divides
First Amendment Protections
Power Starts with God
Pointing to the Future

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES (19:10)

Accompaniment
Housing
Faith and Civic Life Statement
Corporate Social Responsibility

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