**Tips For Organizing Your Offering of Letters**

Many congregations across the VA Synod conduct an annual Offering of Letters to Members of Congress coordinated through the nonpartisan advocacy group, [Bread for the World](about:blank). Below are tips to help you organize an offering in your church.

1. **Introduce your congregation to the** [**Biblical basis for advocacy to end hunger**](about:blank)**.** Throughout the Scriptures, God speaks of our purpose to rebuild, restore, and renew all that is broken. This short brochure reminds us that we are called to work to end the brokenness of hunger and poverty in our communities, in our country, and in other countries.
2. **Learn about the “Offering of Letters” theme.** Each year, Bread picks a specific public policy goal or piece of legislation to galvanize Christians in writing to their Members of Congress. Visit the Bread Offering of Letters website for details on the annual Offering of Letters topic and plan on taking a little time yourself and as a congregation to become informed on the subject. For example, if the topic is about supporting more funding for school breakfast and lunch programs, do some research on the extent of child malnutrition in your own county or in Virginia. (Bread has detailed information about hunger available by state.)
3. **Download the** [**Offering of Letters Resources**](about:blank) **from the Bread website**. You can find fact sheets, bulletin inserts, prayers, and sample letters to Congress and more to help your organize your church offering.
4. **Plan your Offering of Letters** during a regularly scheduled event such as your weekly Christian Education time, during fellowship after worship, or a regularly mid-week gathering. Bread will provide indication on whether letters are most impactful within a certain timeframe.
5. **Engage all members of the Congregation**. Offerings of Letters are appropriate for all ages and it’s great to get young people started early in speaking up for others in need. Roles that can be assigned in advance include:
   * Opening Prayer Leader
   * Topic Presenter (s) – provides an overview of the topic for the Offering of Letters and why it’s important to speak up to Members of Congress at this time.
   * Offering Leader – provides direction on writing a letter to a Member of Congress
   * Closing Prayer Leader
6. **Allow time for personal writing.** Allot at least 10 minutes for people to write their letter. Have writing paper or postcards, pens, envelopes and stamps ready and provide the address for your local member of Congress.It’s very important that every letter or card have a return address so the Member of Congress knows the correspondence is coming from his or her constituents.
7. **Be respectful of differing opinions.** You may find some members have reservations about writing on the specifics of a piece of legislation. Perhaps they don’t feel they know enough or don’t fully agree with the recommendations being suggested by Bread for the World. That’s fine! Encourage them to write what’s on their heart with regard to the importance of our government addressing hunger here and abroad.
8. **Still uncertain?** Contact the Bread organizer for Virginia, Florence French Fagen, at [ffrench@bread.org](about:blank).