

When Hunger Hits Home

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We've seen the statistics so many times the numbers no longer have meaning. Nearly one billion people face hunger each and every day. The same number lack safe drinking water. One billion people live on less than \$1 a day. Sadly, one billion of our brothers and sisters live in a world of poverty beyond our imagination. But hunger is not just a problem for developing countries, it's a daily struggle for millions of Americans and thousands in our communities.

For those living in this synod, the numbers quickly subtract them into poverty. Let's take a close look at our neighbor Vicky in Green Bay. Vicky and her husband Dan had three children and together they had enough to pay for the necessities, and sometimes a fun day for the kids. But her husband lost his job and their marriage fell apart.

It's now up to Vicky to support her family of four with a minimum wage job that pays \$15,000 a year. Although she makes very little money, she still must pay taxes. Vicky has about \$2000 taken out of her paycheck annually, so in reality she is supporting a family of four with \$13,000.

After Dan left, she was lucky to have found an apartment for only \$450 each month. But their home is in a tough part of town and she worries about her children's safety. Vicky wants to work more hours to earn more money, but without family nearby to help with the kids, she has to rely on child care. She found a cheap day care provider for two of her kids, but still it costs her \$480 each month. Without help to watch the kids at night and on the weekends, Vicky can't pursue her dream of continuing her education and landing a job that pays more money and provides health insurance.

Each month, Vicky brings home \$1,083. And each month Vicky spends \$930 for just housing and child care. With her remaining \$153 she needs to feed her 3 children, pay utilities, and cover the costs of her car. To break it down further, each member of Vicky's family lives on \$1.27 a day. Vicky is not alone in this daily battle against hunger, and she doesn't live in a developing country. How are we as Lutheran Christians called to be a neighbor to Vicky? Go and do likewise.