



FAN/ELCA NW SYNOD 2022 Year-end Report

The theme for our Annual Celebration in November was **Pathways of Solidarity** and we moved forward together on those pathways during our year of transition. As we began to return to in-person and hybrid events, your generosity helped reunite FAN's community to do the work of justice and live solidarity throughout the year.

Transition at FAN meant Elise DeGooyer stepping into the role of Executive Director after serving with Paul Benz as Co-Director for 8 years, and new staff joining our team and helping shape priorities for moving forward into our second decade. Online advocacy and technology enabled more people across the state to be engaged at decision-making tables. New coalitions formed as challenges emerged with Supreme Court decisions, gun violence, and white Christian nationalism. We know our multi-faith perspectives and voices of conscience are needed more than ever.

The 2022 Washington State legislative session yielded some incredible policy successes for FAN and our coalition partners. [We celebrated some substantial policy wins](#) for justice across our state. It was one of the most productive short sessions in recent memory, with transformational investments across the safety net—food, nutrition, housing, and cash assistance—as well as transportation and education. Of note was the success of FAN's anti-poverty priorities; every anti-hunger and safety-net priority on our agenda was funded to meet the unprecedented ongoing need:

- School Meals HB 1878 expanded free school meals to more than 92,000 kids. HB 1833 created a multilingual online tool for school meal applications/programs for low-income students.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was funded to extend to June 2023 the 60-month-time-limit hardship exemption, and to increase the monthly payment standard for TANF households with nine or more members. TANF families with a child under three years old will also get an additional \$100/mo. diaper subsidy (SB 5838)
- Aged Blind and Disabled (ABD) cash grants will increase the maximum amount from \$197/mo to \$417/mo for one person and \$528/mo. for two people. ABD eligibility was also expanded to include human trafficking victims (HB 1748).
- Dept. of Social & Health Services HB 2075 will reduce call center wait times and provide in-person services at DSHS.
- We Feed Washington boxes were funded at \$58 million to continue to connect farmers, food programs, and hungry households.
- Fixes to the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) HB 1888 will ensure that all eligible families will be able to access the tax credit as intended. An additional \$10 million was also budgeted for

WFTC outreach and language access, meaning more eligible Washingtonians will be aware of the credit and able to benefit from it. Starting on February 1, 2023, the WFTC program will provide payments ranging from \$300 to \$1200 to low-to-moderate income households. This will help roughly 420,000 households when fully implemented.

- Paid Family and Medical Leave was modified by SB 5649 to be more equitable.

In addition, we moved forward our strategic goals:

- 1) Sustain FAN's Organizing Capacity:** Our Organizing Team continued to work statewide, convening FAN faith communities, and strengthening and equipping our network to do the work of justice. We added two part-time organizers in Central WA—Jess Ingman is based in Wenatchee and covering the north central region, and Rev. Eric Don Anderson is based in Yakima and covering south central communities. Our Spokane organizer moved on mid-year to a full time job in her field, so we are rebuilding that capacity for Eastern WA. With the help of regional organizers, we were able to convene well-attended hybrid Spring summits and Fall cluster gatherings.
- 2) Collaborate year-round in multiple coalitions:** Our new Policy Engagement Director, Kristin Ang, in her first year at FAN continued our relationships with more than 25 issue-specific and policy coalitions. She helped form a Policy Committee of volunteers to guide our work, served as a link for faith communities in Tacoma as they built advocacy on gun violence, and convened more than 20 interim meetings with faith advocates and their electeds.
- 3) Maintain effective Legislative Advocacy:** We hosted online FAN Interfaith Advocacy Days in 2022 in Spokane (in partnership with local sponsors) and in Olympia. We promoted and attended other coalition partners' advocacy days focused on hunger, housing, and poverty issues. We maintained a FAN lobbying presence in the online legislative session with staff and volunteers.
- 4) Communicate regularly and effectively with our statewide network:** We continued to communicate with our network throughout the year, using all the tools available to us. We recognized that there was pandemic exhaustion with online forums/communication, so we were delighted to begin to gather people in person again, yet offer an online option for people who needed that.
- 5) Convene educational and advocacy forums that align with ELCA priorities:** We co-sponsored Food Week of Action in 2022 to uplift food security priorities and sponsored forums on related issues: We offered a webinar on the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition food policy priorities for the year, now [archived on our YouTube page](#). And in collaboration with our partners at Interfaith Works, Seattle Mennonite Church and others, we sponsored two talks during Food Week by indigenous authors about the history of colonization and ways it continues to impact our Native American neighbors today through the challenges to the Indian Child Welfare Act (pending in the Supreme Court) and the Doctrine of Discovery (embedded in U.S. case law).

Financial Stability: For 2022, FAN's governing board passed a deficit budget to use some one-time gifts received in 2020-21. As we closed the books for 2022, we did not spend as much as budgeted, due to some staff changes, an unexpected grant, and a successful hybrid fundraising dinner in November. We passed our 2023 budget with new investments to sustain our work and expand our capacity in a couple areas.

On our Journey toward Racial Equity: The FAN governing board and staff continue to be on a journey to becoming a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist organization. Our new Board Governance committee convened this year and began to identify candidates that would help in leading our organization toward these goals. We are pleased to add Dr. Jasmit Singh to our board, as a regionally and nationally recognized leader who helped found the national human rights group, the Sikh Coalition, and also locally founded the Khalsa Gurmat Center for Sikh education and cultural understanding. We also added to our board the Rev. Dr. Edward Donalson of Seattle University, pastor of Kingdom Family Worship Center, who is a scholar and activist in the theology of Black Lives Matter. Our leadership and staff continue to work together to deepen their own personal and professional understandings of racial equity and white supremacy. These commitments have also led this year to some collaborations highlighting the public threat of white Christian nationalism as it surfaces in our communities. In our policy work and in our multi-faith collaborative work, we continue to increase our awareness of the interconnections of racial inequities, and seek to work toward healing and repair. We recognize that we do this only in solidarity with others.

Some stories of the year through pictures: Returning to some in-person gatherings in 2022 was exciting, and allowed for long-needed solidarity in our community as well as some photos of our year! Included below is the crowd gathered at our November Annual Dinner. Kristin Ang attended the White House Conference on Hunger and testified in a Congressional hearing on the Farm Bill that was held in our area. Our board and staff held an annual retreat in July to reacquaint ourselves with each other, meet new members, and strategize for the year. And we attended or co-sponsored solidarity events in response to gun violence, to celebrate Pride month, and to support our Muslim neighbors when their youth center was attacked.

Thank you for being present with us in solidarity!



It was good to celebrate in-person in Renton, Spokane and online for our Annual Dinner!

Images of FAN's Year in Solidarity for Justice!



Kristin Ang at the White House Conference on Hunger in Sept 2022 (left) and testifying at Congressional hearing on the Farm Bill held in Carnation, WA, in July 2022 (right, with Anti-Hunger advocates and Congresswoman Schrier).



FAN Board and Staff held a hybrid strategy retreat in July



After the tragic shootings in Buffalo NY and Uvalde TX, FAN attended and co-sponsored faith community vigils and marches. We also marched in Pride events across the state (Our Redeemer's Lutheran, Seattle, top right).



When a Muslim youth center and mosque was targeted in Burien, WA, FAN staff and board showed up to stand with our Muslim neighbors.