

# Advocacy in Action



lutheran metropolitan ministry | August 2021

## Mayoral Forum Recap



*Candidates ready to go for the digital forum. (Not pictured but joined by phone is candidate Dennis Kucinich.)*

*On August 11, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM), in partnership with nine other housing and homeless services providers, Homeless Congress, and the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland hosted a Mayoral Forum on Housing and Homelessness. The forum was developed to ensure issues of homelessness and housing instability are center to the candidates' platforms and that their vision for ending homelessness communicated to a broad audience.*

The forum was moderated by J. Rosie Tighe, associate professor in the Department of Urban Studies in the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. The questions were developed with feedback from members of LMM's staff advocacy committee, participants from the Men's Shelter at 2100's Current Events discussion group, and partner organizations.

Over the course of the forum, all seven candidates had the opportunity to share their plans related to racial inequality and homelessness, serving LGBTQIA+ youth, and reducing barriers to housing. Participants, including Councilman Basheer Jones, and former Congressman Dennis Kucinich, spoke to their personal experiences with housing instability and homelessness. Justin Bibb articulated the challenges his family members with criminal records faced in their housing search, and State Senator Sandra Williams spoke to her efforts helping families facing housing instability find housing. Zack Reed emphasized the need to fully reform the criminal justice system so fewer residents of color face reentry barriers to housing in the first place. Cleveland City Council President Kevin Kelley shared his openness to advancing Source of Income legislation, and lawyer Ross DiBello shared his support for including more constituent voice in the policy making process.

On August 12, LMM hosted a forum watch party and voter registration event at the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside. More than thirty residents attended to watch the forum while enjoying donuts, coffee, and juice and seven completed their voter registration! Following the event, James Walker, alternative shelter coordinator, facilitated a conversation about the candidates' answers and what the residents learned. Margie Glick, advocacy director, concluded the event by raffling off swag that was donated by the Cleveland Browns and included a Kareem Hunt autographed football, and passed out bus passes to all who attended.



*Men's Shelter residents watch and discuss the Forum*

## From the Desk of the Advocacy Director



Dear LMM Community,

It is hard to believe that September is right around the corner. In just a few weeks the weather will begin to cool and the leaves will begin to change. For many, Fall is a season of change, and this year is no exception. LMM's advocacy office is changing internally with plans of onboarding a new staff member in the near future, and externally, as we witness the first Cleveland leadership change in 16 years. As we brace for these changes we prepare for new responsibilities and expectations.

LMM's Advocacy Department is actively moving forward with the hiring of a Community Engagement Coordinator. This position will help expand capacity in LMM's Advocacy Department with the goal of ensuring LMM is at the table for critical conversations related to racial equity and community building. This position will also help advance a culture of advocacy across LMM and make sure the organizations advocacy priorities continue to align with the needs of the community we serve and where we are located.

The Department is also laser-focused on the 2021 mayoral election and city council elections which will bring new leadership to the City of Cleveland. In August, LMM helped plan a Mayoral Forum on Housing and Homelessness which brought attention to the policy priorities related to housing and shelter of all seven mayoral candidates. Over the next two months, LMM will continue to promote civic engagement through programming for staff and program participants. These efforts are bolstered with the financial support of a ClevelandVotes grant which will fund a series of events to promote awareness to the key issues being debated, the candidates' positions and importantly, when and how to vote.

LMM remains ready to adapt and evolve to meet these internal and external changes. And by the time of our next newsletter communication in November, will have many exciting updates to share!

Best,

Margie Glick  
Director of Advocacy

## Portraits of Chopping for Change



*Brandy Swoveland, LMM staff partner and C4C graduate. Portrait by Mark Grabowski*

LMM was fortunate to welcome Mark Grabowski, a graduate student in the Nonprofit Administration program at John Carroll University (JCU), for a 10-week internship with the Advocacy Department. During Mark's time at LMM, he quickly learned the power that storytelling can play in advancing advocacy. Mark, an amateur photographer, utilized his skills to photograph the BNG Schaefer House and the annual Team Up to Clean Up event at the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside.

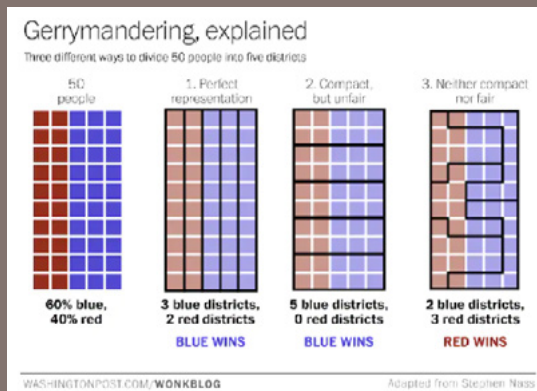
Not surprisingly, when it came time to determine his final project for JCU's Center for Service-Learning and Social Action Summer in the City Program, using photography felt like an obvious choice. Following in the footsteps of LMM's Portraits of Homelessness, a travelling art exhibit photographed by staff member Lydia Bailey, Mark used his passion for photography and skills as a Resident Minister at JCU to hear the stories and experiences of the women who participated in the Chopping for Change program. Mark then compiled these stories, and used his graphic design skills to [create a webpage](#) which launched this week. Through this effort, Mark has left his imprint on LMM. This webpage will be permanently available on our website, and hopefully expanded over the years! Visit the Portraits of Chopping for Change page [here](#).

## POLICY CORNER

# Cracking and Packing

If 2020 was the year of the Census, 2021 is the year of redistricting, when the data collected through the decennial Census is used to reconfigure federal, state, and local districts. Redistricting is important as fairly drawn districts have the ability to encourage representation, democracy, and political engagement – while unfair districts silence voters and limit engagement.

Two common tactics used in creating unfair districts, is ‘cracking’ and ‘packing’. Cracking (see #2) occurs when voters of a particular type are spread among multiple districts which denies voters a sufficiently large voting bloc in any one district. Packing (see #3) occurs when voters of a certain demographic or political affiliation are packed into one group to reduce their influence in other districts. Both approaches limit the voice of a particular demographic. In Ohio, voters have expressed their desire for more equitable districts through two constitutional amendments.



The [2015 constitutional amendment](#) created a bi-partisan state legislative districting commission to oversee just that. The seven-member commission is comprised of the governor, state auditor, secretary of state, and four members appointed by Ohio’s House and Senate leadership. Commission-drawn maps are valid for 10 years if bipartisan, and only four years if partisan. This amendment also requires a six member, bi-partisan advisory commission to be created to help with federal and state maps, and that districts are compact and made of a “contiguous territory.”

The [2018 amendment](#) impacting Congressional redistricting requires state legislators to have the support of three-fifths of the legislatures, and at least half of the minority party, for the districts to be in effect for 10 years. If the legislature is unable to adopt a new map, a commission will be formed. Then, the majority of commission members, including two members of the minority party, must agree on the map. If the commission fails, legislators would have a second chance to adopt a map and if that fails, the majority party, can adopt a partisan map, but for four years.

The impact of these amendments can be felt today as Ohio’s leaders move this process forward and advocacy groups continue to push for transparency and community inclusion. Stay informed and involved on this important topic by reading LMM’s advocacy emails related to redistricting and sign up for more detailed information at [www.FairDistrictsOhio.org](http://www.FairDistrictsOhio.org).

## LMM Community Partner:



The Center for Service-Learning and Social Action (CSSA) at John Carroll University (JCU) connects the academic mission of the university with its civic mission by providing high impact experiential learning opportunities for students, in close collaboration with our community partners. Students gain increased awareness and first-hand exposure to real-world issues as they deepen and apply what they learn in the classroom.

JCU faculty are committed to experiential learning and offer more than 60 service-learning courses annually, across a wide range of disciplines. Our community partners, like LMM, provide students with experiences of working with their clients, undertaking specific research projects, exploring the complexities of issues in the community, and grasping the importance of advocacy and civic engagement.

Helping students understand the importance of advocacy is key in developing the next generation of civic leaders and problem-solvers. Through the JCU Summer in the City Internship program, a cohort of students have the opportunity to “dig deeper” and examine the systems and structures that lead to social inequities. The interns worked full time for 10 weeks with various Cleveland nonprofits, including LMM, learning the inner workings of nonprofit organizations, the challenges they face, and role advocacy provides in creating change.

This fall CSSA looks forward to the return of in-person engagement once more with our community partners. We are poised to launch a Food Buggy venture in partnership with LMM and the JCU Donnelly School of Leadership and Social Innovation. Students will implement a business model to sell lunch for a profit during the day, and use profits to provide a meal to Cleveland’s homeless residents during nights and weekends.

To learn more about CSSA at John Carroll University, [click here](#).



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### Our Mission:

To promote shalom (peace, well-being) and justice (right relationships) through a Christian ministry of service and advocacy with those who are oppressed, forgotten and hurting.

### Link with LMM

@LMMCleveland

@LMMCleveland

Facebook.com/LMMCleveland

YouTube.com

E-newsletter sign-up at [www.lutheranmetro.org](http://www.lutheranmetro.org)

Latest news at [www.lutheranmetro.org](http://www.lutheranmetro.org)

## 5 Numbers to Know: Cleveland Mayoral Race

*The mayoral contest in Cleveland marks the first election without a favored incumbent in four terms. Here are important facts related to the ongoing election.*

**16**  
# of candidates who considered running for mayor

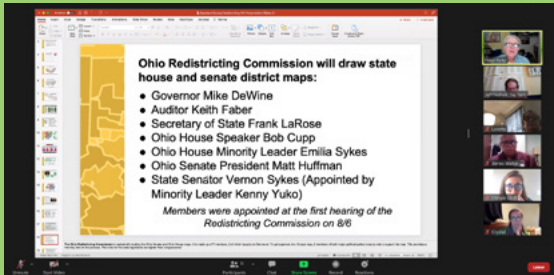
**7**  
# of candidates who are on the September 14th ballot

**2**  
# of candidates who will move on to the November 2nd General Election

**16**  
# of years since the last new mayor in Cleveland

**0**  
# of Republicans running for mayor in Cleveland

## In The News: Cleveland VOTES Supports LMM



Fair Districts Ohio meet with LMM staff to talk redistricting and mapmaking

LMM is thrilled to have been awarded a grant in August through ClevelandVotes’s Equitable Civic Engagement Fund. Resources from this fund are allocated to help nonprofit organizations educate, connect and empower voting aged residents in the Greater Cleveland area. LMM will use this support to create bi-monthly opportunities that engage LMM staff partners and program participants in civic engagement opportunities related to the upcoming elections and re- districting. Already, LMM has used this grant to host the mayoral watch party at the Men’s Shelter at 2100 and a two-part mapmaking activity which engaged staff partners in the redistricting process. Moving forward, LMM plans to host get-out-the-vote events, educational forums prior to and after the November 2nd election, and to purchase cool civic engagement centric swag like “Your Vote Your Voice” t-shirts. Have an event idea in mind related this initiative? Contact Advocacy Director Margie Glick at [Mglick@lutheranmetro.org](mailto:Mglick@lutheranmetro.org).

## Voter Info

### Key Fall Deadlines:

- Primary – September 14, 2021
- Deadline to Register to Vote in the General Election – October 4, 2021
- Early Vote Begins – October 5, 2021
- Election Day - November 2, 2021

### Voter Registration:

- Visit <https://olvr.ohiosos.gov/> to:
- Check your voter registration status
- Pledge and make a plan to vote or register to vote
- Explore your voting options

### Turning in Your Ballot:

- Visit [this link](#) to learn about early vote times and request your Vote-by-Mail/Absentee Ballot!