

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | November 2, 2018

This Sunday we celebrate All Saints' Day. As The Rev. Brian Peterson writes for [Working Preacher](#), All Saints' Sunday is,

not just to remember those from long ago or those whose deaths are still painfully near, and not just to point ahead to that ultimate promise of resurrection, though both of these are certainly part of this day and to be affirmed. More centrally, however, this day is about what all God's saints have known and experienced, that here and now there is no death or grief or fear so deep and dark that the voice of Jesus cannot reach into it, call us out, and bring life.

It has been a difficult few weeks. Violent deaths caused by hate, brokenness, and evil in the world make it hard to hear the voice of Jesus. We cry out, Lord have mercy. [Reports](#) remind us that forty percent of our neighbors in New Jersey are struggling to make ends meet, with an alarming disproportion of these neighbors who are black and brown families. We cry out, Lord have mercy. Immigrants fear for their safety as public rhetoric grows increasingly inhospitable. We cry out, Lord have mercy. We grieve along with Mary and Martha, crying out, Lord have mercy as we mourn those we have lost in the past year.

And yet, there is no darkness that Jesus cannot breathe life into. His voice carries through the wilderness and it echoes through our voices as we care and advocate for and with our neighbors. In the Gospel from John, Jesus not only brings life to a family but calls to the community to continue the work. "When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

In the midst of so much pain, our advocacy, rooted in our faith and guided by our God, can help bring life. This past week the law went into effect providing [paid sick days](#) for all workers. The Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment period also began this week and is open until December 15. Learn more [here](#) about how you can help those without health care enroll.

And in response to so much gun violence in our lives, several anti-violence bills moved through the state legislature this week. One such legislation will ban "ghost guns" and 3D printable guns in New Jersey. The measure ([S2465/A3129](#)) would prohibit the purchase and assembly of untraceable firearm components used to make homemade guns without serial numbers. Governor Murphy has promised to sign this legislation into law.

As anti-immigrant fears seem to be rising, here in New Jersey we are making progress on driver's licenses for all New Jersey drivers. Learn more [here](#) about how the lives so many of our neighbors who are immigrants will be safer when driver's license for all become a reality.

Life can be filled with darkness, but the voice of Jesus penetrates these times; we celebrate this week, along with all the saints, that there is no place or distance that Jesus's voice cannot be heard. And we respond to God's call to continue unbinding hate, oppression, and injustice from our communities.