

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | July 13, 2017

God knows it is foolish to spread seed on unworthy soil, but God does it anyway. God spreads love with reckless abandon in hearts that are hard, immoral, conflicted, and perhaps even corrupt. God throws seed at leaders who have proved that they have hard hearts, stiff necks, and divided loyalties. Jesus continues to throw seed at us, continues to work with us, and continues to help us see what God is up to in the world. Jesus scatters the seed of the Gospel with wild prodigality, even when it is clear that we are tired, unfocused, or frustrated. Jesus continues to pour out his love on us by welcoming us again and again to the Eucharist each week, binding us into community, and offering us grace.

God pours out his love upon us relentlessly. And when he finds even the smallest patch of good soil in our hearts, he nurtures the Kingdom within us, renewing compassion for our difficult neighbors, energy for engagement with public officials, and hearts for seeking justice. This parable is about God and God's wildly extravagant love for us, and that, I've been reminded this week, is more than enough.

And because God's love is sown within us, we are called to live in genuine community with one another--taking care of each other in times of sickness and despair, going out of our way to show kindness, and bearing the burdens of another.

This week our Advocacy Ask is that you call the governor, or email him, or both, to remind him that New Jersey was a national leader in paid family leave policy. And hundreds of thousands of workers have benefitted from being able to take time off to care for their families when needed. But many eligible workers have been unable to take leave due to barriers baked into the law itself.

A bill is now on the governor's desk that would tear these barriers down, ensuring that many more workers can take the leave they need. This new bill would:

- Significantly raise the wage replacement rate and ceiling, so more families can afford to take the leave they need
- Expand job protections for workers taking leave
- Expand the definition of family to allow workers to take time to care for a sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or parent-in-law
- Expand the amount of time available from 6 to 12 weeks
- Allow workers to take leave to help family affected by domestic and/or sexual violence

Please call (609-292-6000) Governor Christie today and ask him to sign A-4927. Tell him that since everyone pays into the paid family leave program, everyone should be able to afford to access the program.