

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey**  
**Weekly Witness | February 28, 2017**

Today we launch this resource for congregations and clergy from the desk of LEAMNJ, which will be emailed weekly. We are very excited for this next step in keeping you up to date on public issues facing our state and nation!

One of our goals moving forward is to tell stories, share sermon illustrations, and provide devotional resources that we encourage you to borrow for worship and church newsletters to connect your faith to local and federal issues. This week, check out "[Lenten Meditations 2017](#)," developed by Episcopal Relief and Development. For each of the forty days, writers reflect on a daily scripture passage and what it means to live in community. The ELCA has also put together a Lenten study focusing on Hunger entitled [40 Days of Giving](#).

Below you will find a brief overview of pieces of legislation that are being processed in Trenton this week. We encourage you to pray for those who may be affected by decisions, as well as use your voice as a person of faith to advocate in favor of a peaceful and just society.

Most importantly, we hope to engage in dialogue with you, so that we can provide vetted information and helpful connections to God's engagement with us through faith based advocacy. With any questions for how to better engage with your local governments as a person of faith, you can always email Rev. Sara Lilja, the director of LEAMNJ, at [slilja@learnj.org](mailto:slilja@learnj.org).

#### NEWS FROM TRENTON

- On February 28, Gov. Chris Christie will give his final state budget address.
  
- [Assembly Bill 2334](#)/[Senate Bill 295](#) will be heard in the Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee.
  - This important legislation will expand access to naloxone by allowing pharmacists to dispense the life-saving medication without a prescription.
  
- Assembly Bill 3677 will be heard in the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee
  - Requires racial and ethnic impact statement for certain bills and regulations affecting sentencing.
  
- Senate Bill 3027 will be heard in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee
  - Establishes state food waste reduction of 50% by 2030.
  
- On the Governor's Desk: [Senate Bill 895](#)- "Earn Your Way Out Act"
  - Requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to develop inmate reentry plan; establishes administrative parole release for certain inmates; requires study and report by DOC on fiscal impact.

#### ADVOCACY ASK

Please take a few minutes to call the governor this week. Ask him not to repeal the Medicaid expansion. Almost two-thirds of Medicaid costs come from low-income elderly and disabled people with serious—and thus expensive—health-care needs. The Medicaid expansion also provides coverage for much needed treatment for those recovering from addiction. The governor can be reached at 609-292-6000.