

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey**  
**Weekly Witness | December 21, 2017**

*“Mary interrupts the routines of our world when she proclaims: ‘The Lord has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; the Lord has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty’ (Luke 1:52-53).”*

This is how Fritz Wendt, a Lutheran pastor in New York City, describes Mary’s Magnificat in a recent blog reflection entitled, “[The Politics of Divine Disruption](#).” He is following a tradition that reclaims Mary’s song as one of protest, not of meekness.

“This is Mary’s message: Through God’s action, the social hierarchy of wealth and poverty, power and subjugation is to be turned upside down; a new social order of justice is at hand.”

Mary, the mother of Jesus, trusts that the God who chose her, is the one who will turn the world as she knows it upside down. She, a person of no political power or economic might, was chosen to usher in a change, to bring Jesus into the world. Because of this, she sings boldly that others like her will continue to know that they are beloved by a holy God. Mary’s son, the Son of God, will bring salvation to all people -- and through her words she honors the God who brings that revolutionary salvation.

As Martin Luther wrote, Mary sang her song not for herself, “but for all of us to sing it after her.” And to sing it while working in faith and love to share God’s grace with all people -- the hungry, the imprisoned, the immigrant, the homeless.

“Are you ready to shake up the world?” asks Fritz Wendt. This final Sunday in Advent and as you celebrate Christmas, remember that we celebrate good news of great joy for all people in the birth of Jesus Christ. And ask yourself, what is my role in this new, shaken world?

### **ADVOCACY ASK**

This week New Jersey State Senators Rice and Cunningham announced that they will be introducing a bill in the new year to restore voting rights to nearly 100,000 people on probation, parole, and in prison in New Jersey. We, as people of faith, are needed to help move this bill into law.

The necessity of this legislation is articulated in a report from the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice called “[1844 No More](#).” Scott Novakowski, the primary author, explains that New Jersey first denied the right to vote to people with criminal convictions in 1844, the same year it adopted a constitution that restricted voting to white men. Today, about half of those denied access to this fundamental right are Black, even though Black people make up just 15 percent of New Jersey’s overall population -- a result of systemic racial discrimination throughout the criminal justice system.

Join LEAMNJ in supporting this legislation; call your state legislators to let them know that you support voting rights for all New Jerseyans and wish to see this bill passed in 2018.