

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | December 8, 2017

Katie Munnik [wrote](#) about this week's gospel reading for the Presbyterian Record, describing John the Baptist's cry of "Prepare the way of the Lord"

"In this text we have the image of the wonderfully strange John the Baptist, calling people out from the city to stand with him in the wilderness river. He is calling for confession, for repentance, and for roads to be made straight. He is calling for change. Change of heart, change of life. But there is humility in this calling, too. It isn't that change is the answer. Change only prepares the way.

John recognizes that the water with which he baptises is only the beginning. When the Christ comes, the baptism will be stronger, and the people will know the Holy Spirit in their very hearts. That will be, quite literally, the crux of the matter. But for now, John calls for repentance and when we repent, we rethink. We reorient ourselves. We regret. We turn away from what has been. And in turning away, we turn towards the light."

Each week in worship, we confess our sins in the presence of God and one another. We heed the call of John to repent and make the path ahead one of glory to God, knowing fully that our abilities to do so are limited and we need the help of God.

But how do we confess our communal sins? It is tempting to continue along the path of refusing repentance in favor of blame and ignorance, but during this Advent season we must reflect, repent, and reorient. In what ways have we, as a society, as neighbors, as community, and as a country, failed one another through our collective actions or inactions? How can we turn together toward the light, instead of remaining on the confusing path of darkness?

This Advent season, spend time in your communities praying for those hurt by our communal sins. Examine our national and global crises and listen to the cries of the oppressed. Imagine a community of compassion, justice, and unending love and use your gifts to follow John into the wilderness to create new, Christlike ways of being in the world. And repent of things done and left undone.

ADVOCACY ASK

For the past few months Congress has left a critical issue undone. They have not renewed funding for the Children's Health Insurance (CHIP), which insures children of working-class families, including more than one million of our kids here in New Jersey. CHIP expired last September, leaving families wondering each day if this critical source of health coverage and care will still be there for their children. The House leadership has proposed a [short-term plan](#) to help states piece together CHIP funding but this delay is not what Congress promised when they set their renewal deadline two years ago. And it is not what our kids need.

Families need Congress to make good on its promise and to enact a bipartisan five-year funding extension of CHIP as quickly as possible. If Congress does not act, coverage will be disrupted for millions of families in New Jersey and around the country.

Please share these resources with your networks and on social media to spread the word about the need to extend this vital program.

- Infographic: [3 Reasons to Renew Funding for CHIP](#)
- Factsheet: [CHIP Funding Delay Threatens Children's Health Care](#)
- Blog: [Tell the Senate to Pass a 5-Year CHIP Bill Now](#)
- Families USA's CHIP resource center, [including shareable graphics](#)