

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | September 29, 2017**

In this Sunday's text, Jesus critiques those who oppress others, those who use people for their personal favor and benefit, those who forget the things that matter like justice and mercy, and those who look shiny on the outside but are shallow on the inside.

Jesus is concerned with doing justice, not with paying actionless lip service to it while blatantly committing acts of injustice (as seen in Matthew 21:28-32, 25:31-46).

This emphasis on praxis in Matthew, the combinations of words and actions, is a renewal of the teachings of the ancient Israelites' Mosaic covenant and prophetic traditions. Hear the word (God's generosity and grace), and respond (with acts of love and service).



This past week the [Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey](#) released a report, "[The Uncomfortable Truth: Racism, Injustice, and Poverty in New Jersey](#)." This report names structural racism as the leading cause of poverty in New Jersey. Looking through the data, this point is made very clear. But the strength of the report is that it moves beyond hand-wringing to real solutions by proposing recommendations and legislation for real change in the policy and culture of our state.

The Anti-Poverty Network will be hosting forums around the state over the next year to engage persons with lived experiences of poverty and injustice with the data in the report. Working alongside all residents and elected officials in New Jersey we can end poverty. Join us in conversation, study, engagement--and action. Also, a six part discussion guide will be available for Lent in 2018.

Responding to Matthew's Good News to the poor means helping to feed those who are hungry--advocating for SNAP benefits. Engaging in release for the captives--advocating for criminal justice reform. And freeing the oppressed--by advocating for racial equality.