

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | November 16, 2018

“This has been an emotionally and spiritually exhausting week,” writes [Debie Thomas](#) in the weekly webzine Journey with Jesus. “We need look no further than the news to see apocalyptic images scarier than any Hollywood might produce.”

Fires in California have scorched entire communities. Senseless gun violence continues to kill God’s children. Hate and nationalism are on the rise. We live in an apocalyptic time.

Debie Thomas [reminds us](#) that an apocalypse is an unveiling. Or, an uncovering—a disclosure of something secret and hidden. To experience an apocalypse is to experience accurate revelation. As American author and social activist Adrienne Maree Brown wrote, and Thomas quotes, in reference to racial injustice and the Black Lives Matter movement: “Things are not getting worse, they are getting uncovered. We must hold each other tight and continue to pull back the veil.”

The veil in New Jersey was pulled away again recently in [a report](#) that states that to afford a two-bedroom apartment families need to earn over \$28.00 an hour. (Learn more about the housing crisis in New Jersey [here](#).) Not only is housing unaffordable, but we live in the most segregated state in the nation in regard to housing, a reality that is [no accident](#). And according to a recent lawsuit, New Jersey’s schools are [also segregated](#) due in large part to housing policies in the state.

In the end of this week’s gospel, we hear Jesus promise not death, but birth. Something is struggling to be born in this apocalyptic time and we cannot become cynical or grow numb or feel paralyzed by feeling overwhelmed. As Thomas [writes](#), “Yes, the birth pangs hurt. They hurt so appallingly much. But God is our midwife, and what God births will never lead to desolation. Yes, we are called to bear witness in the ruins, but rest assured: these birth pangs will end in joy.”

Pulling away the veil of segregation and racism is painful. It requires us to look a little deeper to understand how these systems have been put into place, and then to engage in honest policy discussion that will move legislation away from this ugly history. LEAMNJ’s mission is to help congregations and individuals of faith to do this and we are in this with you.

In the coming weeks, organize a conversation group in your congregation. Host activities that offer opportunities to deepen relationships with your neighbors of many races. Advocate to the governor’s office to urge him to lead policy changes on segregation in housing and education in New Jersey. Inspire him to have the moral courage to pull the veil away. And hold one another close and have grace; this is painful work.