

October 3 - Hurricane Help on October 5, Stopping Wage Theft, Environmental Justice, Beyond a Two State Solution in Israel-Palestine, Responses to Criminal Justice Reform

In the state of New York, 1 billion dollars is stolen from workers every year in the form of wage theft. Some of our frontline workers who deliver our food, wash our clothes, and clean our homes, businesses, and offices, have had their employers close only to quickly reopen under another name so they could avoid paying back wages. The SWEAT bill will make it easier for workers to file liens against businesses for stolen wages as is already possible for workers in Wisconsin. Please read Peter Cook's [commentary in the Times Union](#) on the necessity of passing the SWEAT bill to stop this egregious behavior.

We also urge you to be in touch with the bill sponsors, Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, along with your state senator and Assembly member to urge them to do everything they can to bring the SWEAT bill to the floor for a vote.

Inaugural Meeting of NY Renews Faith Engagement Committee

Monday, October. 4 at 5:00

The first meeting of the New York Renews Faith Engagement Committee will be held on October 4 at 5:00. The Faith Engagement Committee will embrace the full breadth of the multi-faith community in the work of facing our climate crisis.

Your presence, your energy, your ideas, and your fellowship will all conspire to strengthen the work of protecting all life on this troubled planet. Thanks to Xaver Kandler at NY Renews, Jeff Levy-Lyons Jewish Climate Action Network NYC Steering Committee and The Reverend John Flack, Pastor, Our Savior's Atonement Lutheran Church in Manhattan for leading this emerging network of faith leaders.

Please mark your calendars for Monday, October 4th at 5:00PM. Here is the Zoom link in case you missed it:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8997106623?pwd=SIVzWEILMDdIVWNjd1kva0pvSHRXUT09>

Meeting ID: 899 710 6623

Passcode: nyrenews

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,8997106623#,,,,*81053733# US (New York)

**NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND MESSIAH LUTHERAN
CHURCH, ROTTERDAM, TO HOST PALESTINIAN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN
RIGHTS ATTORNEY**

Beyond the Two State Solution" with Jonathan Kuttab

Sunday, October 17th at 6:00pm

Trinity Community Center

705 Curry Road in Rotterdam, NY

Streaming on Facebook Watch

The New York State Council of Churches and Messiah Lutheran Church in Rotterdam are sponsoring a Community Conversation entitled "Beyond the Two State Solution" with [Jonathan Kuttab](#). A well-known international human rights attorney, Jonathan was the head of the Legal Committee negotiating the Cairo Agreement of 1994 between Israel and the PLO. Jonathan continues his law practice in the US, Palestine and Israel and is a co-founder of the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq and co-founder of Nonviolence International. He serves on the Board of Bethlehem Bible College, is President of the Board of Holy Land Trust and was recently named the Executive Director of Friends of Sabeel, North America.

Many argue that the hope for Israel and Palestine to peacefully co-exist as two separate and independent nations is no longer realistic. But if the two-state solution is no longer viable, what other options are there? What is, or should be, the agenda for the foreseeable future for those who are seeking justice and peace in Israel and Palestine?

All, regardless of their faith background, are invited to attend a conversation that will explore the facts on the ground in Israel and Palestine and what options are possible beyond a two state solution. Masks are required inside the Trinity Community Center in line with CDC recommendations. The event will also be live streamed on Messiah's Facebook Page for those who cannot attend in person.

The executive committee of the New York State Council of Churches also recently endorsed H.R. 2590, "[Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.](#)" The National Council of Churches USA, Church World Service and several U.S. church denominations have also endorsed the act. The proposed legislation, introduced by Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), aims to promote and protect the human rights of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation and to ensure that United States taxpayer funds are not being used by the Government of Israel to support the military detention of Palestinian children, the unlawful seizure, appropriation, and destruction of Palestinian property and forcible transfer of civilians in the occupied West Bank, or further annexation of Palestinian land in violation of international law. To date the legislation has 30 co-sponsors. If your Member of Congress has not yet signed on as a co-sponsor please encourage him or her to do so. A list of current co-sponsors and other information about H.R. 2590 can be found on the web pages of [No Way to Treat a Child](#).

LESS IS MORE

Within a day of Governor Kathy Hochul signed Less is More into action, the Governor and advocates were *already receiving backlash and the spread of misinformation from opponents*. It is essential that faith leaders be ready to combat misinformation being spread by influential political leaders.

The misleading information they proffer (along with some in the press), is disruptive to all the positive progress Less is More aims to accomplish with public support. We urge you to be cautious consumers of the news we are reading. **Be critical of your sources, do research on authors, ask questions- be a wise news consumer.** Here is a sampling of some particularly statements made by politicians to undermine the Less is More Law.

Here is a sampling of a few of the twisted statements made by politicians and some responses.

Lee Zeldin: the presumptive Republican nominee for New York Governor, offered this [statement](#) which shows Congressman Zeldin's willingness to twist what Less is More will seek to accomplish. This law, which does not go into effect until next March, is for people who have paid their dues to society and are seeking to follow the rules of parole but who may have a technical violation. If a person on parole has committed a crime, breaking the terms of parole, they can be re-incarcerated. We do not further punish people on parole for a crime for which they have already paid their debt to society unless they commit a new crime deserving or re-incarceration.

This confusion about the law is reflected in another despicable story which appeared in the New York Post about someone who was re-incarcerated in Monroe County for a technical violation but then was released. They were released not because of the Less is More Law but because of the county's choice to release the prisoner. The county knew that the person they released was charged with murder which should have prevented them from releasing him the first place. They released him, however, to discredit the Less is More law only to re-arrest him 10 hours later. Emily Singletary, Co-Executive Director of Unchained, offered this [complete response to what transpired in Monroe County](#).

Governor Hochul has also made some notable steps forward by releasing 200 individuals re-incarcerated due to technical violations before Less is More was due to into effect in March of 2022. In addition to this release, she also sent 200 individuals to upstate prisons to reduce the population at Rikers Island. Less is More and the release and/or movement to other prisons is one of many steps that need to be takes towards the recommended closing of Rikers Island. We do not want to see this progress halted due to the spread of misinformation.

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO: Shift the narrative! We encourage everyone, especially faith leaders, to question and educate distorted arguments you are hearing! We have all seen how deadly the spread of faulty narratives can be- please, do not stand idle as others spread lies and negative sentiments regarding Less is More and the dismantling of Rikers Island.

HURRICANE IDA: RESOURCES AVAILABLE NOW!

Join us on Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 3:00pm

Zoom ID: 817 2170 4891 PASSCODE: 410658 or CALL (646) 558-8656

FEMA program experts will discuss what's available to you and your constituents:

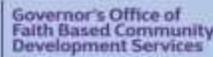
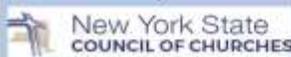
The Public Assistance Program
Small Business Administration Low Interest Disaster Loans
The Mitigation and Individual Assistance Program

HOSTED BY:

Peter Cook, Executive Director, New York State Council of Churches
Que English, Deputy Director, Governor's Office of Faith and Community Development Services
Peter B. Gudaitis, Executive Director & CEO, New York Disaster Interfaith Services & Chair, New York VOAD
Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President, The New York Board of Rabbis

FEMA REPRESENTATIVES:

Daniela Heppard, Public Assistance
Carl R. Dombek, Small Business Administration Low Interest Disaster Loans
Sharon Edwards, Hazard Mitigation
Tamara Sendral, Individual Assistance



More people than we know, have suffered because of Hurricane Ida. Many victims are also not aware that they are eligible for assistance. Some congregations, along with other not-for profits and businesses, sustained damage. Faith leaders, as they serve their congregations and communities should be made aware of what is available. Join us!

[RSVP here to Sandrine Holloway. Feel free to submit questions and share with your network.](#)

STAY UP-TO-DATE »

HOW NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CAN HELP YOU

The great theologian Karl Barth once advised young theologians “to take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.”

Studying the Bible is central. It's also important for clergy to stay on top of what is happening in their city, state, nation and world. But what you read and how much you can read can be a little mind boggling. You have to find your own rhythm. At the New York State Council of Churches, we have made it our aim to give tools to pastors and their congregations to help them live out their faith in the public square. We try to pick through a lot of material and advocacy requests and highlight a few things which we think are important.

In addition, however, we try to post on a daily basis on our website actions and events which are happening in every part of the state. We invite you to go to WWW.Nyscoc.org to

see these events and learn how to participate since we often cannot get everything in the newsletter because these events can come and go so quickly especially during the legislative season. Please remember that a key part of evangelism is taking care of your neighbors. That means faith leaders need to regularly show up with parishioners at community events and actions where they are seen as seeking your neighbor's welfare.

In terms of news stories, we read widely and try to do some analysis particularly as it relates to our social justice priorities. However, we also urge you to go to sites which list articles and news summaries from all major written, radio and television from across the state. Two of the best free summaries are the Empire Report at <https://empirereportnewyork.com/> and City & State <https://www.cityandstateny.com/>. If you subscribe (again it is free) they will send you summaries (once a day with the Empire Report and three times a day with City & State.) Some, but not all, of the articles they list might require you to subscribe after a few free articles. For the most part, however, you can get a ton of good information for free. City and State has an added feature of listing a whole bunch of public events across the state including some in your region. In summary, here is our advice to build into your prayer, Bible and theological study routine:

1. If you have not already signed up for the New York State Council of Churches newsletter, please do so by going to WWW.NYSCOC.Org. You can see the archive of all previous e-mails at <https://nyscoc.org/about/newsletters-and-resources-shared/>
2. Daily check WWW.NYSCOC.org for coming events and include them in your calendar. If you have events in your area you wish to have us post, send us an e-mail at Nyscocalbany@gmail.com or submit an event notice which can be found at <https://nyscoc.org/submit-event/>. We love hearing about new events you bring to us!
3. Daily check our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/nyscoc>. We regularly post articles which we think will be of particular interest. You can also see what we post on Twitter at @NYSCofChurches. Many times we will repost articles you to send us.
4. Do subscribe to City and State and the Empire Report to get their daily e-mails.
5. Be sure you have subscribed to your denominational newsletters. Go here for a listing of all our partner denomination websites: <https://nyscoc.org/member-churches>.
6. If you want to reference the 2021 Legislative Act for the New York State Council of Churches go to: <https://nyscoc.org/2021-new-york-state-ecumenical-advocacy-day-legislative-asks-and-more/>
7. We often post seminars we have sponsored by going to our YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUEzeGhDirE&t=109s>
8. We commend to you Heather Cox Richardson's daily historical analysis of the day's events at <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/>

Other

1. Please build a relationship with your Assemblyperson and State Senator. Ask to be on their newsletter and periodically make an appointment to speak with them along with your parishioners. Invite them to come speak at your church. If you need to find your state lawmaker go to <https://openstates.org/>
2. Pre-Development Assistance for Churches. If you are interested in re-purposing your church property to build affordable housing or other uses and need expertise and funds to do this well, look at the Who is My Neighbor seminars at WWW.Nyscoc.org and call Peter Cook at 508-380-8289 PCook@nyscoc.org and we will help.
3. Chaplaincy. We continue to have a chaplain shortage in our state correctional system. The New York State Council of Churches is charged with certifying and supporting chaplains for state institutions. Call Peter Cook at 508-380-8289 if you are considering a change or want to consider the possibilities. Many parish pastors will make outstanding

chaplains. Go to for an application and list of criteria by going to <https://nyscoc.org/chaplain-resources/>

Donations

The New York State Council of Churches relies on your donations to do our work and be a resource to you. Please go to WWW.Nyscoc.org to donate or for your congregation to become an advocating church. You can also see an overview of work by going to WWW. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUEzeGhDirE&t=109s>