

## **Economic Justice/Poverty Issues**

### **Ethical Reflection**

- Society is measured by how it treats the poor. Jesus tells us nations will be judged by how they treat their most vulnerable
- Government is responsible for the general welfare of its people which includes protecting the most vulnerable
- Government responsibility for the common good includes a just sharing of resources
- It is wrong to burden the afflicted while asking little of the well-to-do
- Budget are moral documents. They show what we care most about and how it compares to other things we care about. They should reflect values of equality, opportunity and justice.

### **Situations Needing Attention**

#### **Public Assistance Grant**

##### **Background**

- The last time NY raised the public assistance grant was in 1990.
- The cost of living has gone up 49%.

##### **What Would Help**

- Raise public assistance grant by 49% and index for inflation.

#### **Disparity between Rich and Poor**

##### **Background**

- Disparity between rich and poor continues to grow. NY has the greatest gap between rich and poor among all 50 states.

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- When taxes are reduced for the wealthiest Americans, it reduces government's capacity to provide services for our most vulnerable citizens.

What Will Help

- No more tax cuts for the wealthy
- Restore progressivity of tax system so poor are not more burdened than wealthy. Income (not just earned) rather than sales tax is fairer to all segments of society.

**Low wage workers**

Background

- Jobs pay too little to lift people out of poverty.
- Growing percentages of those using church food programs are the working poor. This is inequitable use of resources because not everyone lives near food program and programs are not mandated to serve all
- There has been an increase in the working poor even while the poverty rate decreases.

What Will Help

- Continue to raise minimum wage to a liveable (or fair) wage, then index for inflation.
- Expand services for working poor such as rent assistance, food stamps, heating assistance and child care.

(2/4/08)

**Member Denominations in New York**

American Baptist Churches, Empire Baptist Missionary Convention, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Religious Society of Friends, United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church.

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