



Hunger/Poverty

Ethical Reflection

- *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* (Luke 4:18-20)
- Every human being has dignity and worth by their very personhood.
- The common good needs to be considered in all deliberations and policy decisions.
- Providing for basic human needs benefits all of society.
- *The aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state and by such of its subdivisions, and in such manner and by such means, as the legislature may from time to time determine.* (NYS Constitution Article XVII, Section 1)

Background

- Congregations and community ministries provide the safety net beneath the safety net. They are having trouble meeting increasing needs.
- HPNAP, the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program and Public Assistance provide crucial help to those in need. In the present economy, each experiences growing demand while being at or near capacity.

- NY faces a budget deficit and must pass a balanced budget. What is done with services to vulnerable people can have good or bad consequences for the state.

Present Situation

- The additional proposed 10% increase in the basic welfare grant this year is to be commended but does not cover inflation over the years since it was last raised.
- HPNAP lost more than \$5.4 million in 2008 budget cuts. \$4.4 million was restored plus an additional emergency \$1 million. Without help from HPNAP, congregational and community ministries will be overwhelmed.
- Proposed cuts to the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program come just as caseloads, already at capacity, include a growing number of homeowners.

Using Available Resources Will Help

- See that proposed spending cuts on programs serving vulnerable people do not inadvertently cost the state more in other costs in the long run.
- The Council is hosting a Front Line Ministry Forum in May that will bring together providers of assistance to the needy from across the state to listen to their needs. The results of this “on the ground” information can help with your decisionmaking.

3/2009)

Member Denominations

American Baptist Churches, 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