

An Open Letter from Clergy and Leaders of Faith Communities to Governor Dannel Malloy and members of the Connecticut General Assembly

We, the undersigned clergy and leaders of faith communities, urge you to take a different approach to the current budget you are about to impose on Connecticut residents.

We urge you to reject the dominant narrative of fear and scarcity, especially as it is proclaimed by the representatives* for the wealthiest of our state's residents- and instead consider the individuals, the children and the families whose lives you will profoundly impact with your decisions and actions. (We use the word "representatives" because we believe there are many wealthy and privileged in Connecticut who would be proud to pay their fair share.)

The crafting of our state's fiscal policies to meet the interests of the economically privileged, specifically the top 1%, is myopic and immoral. An austerity budget as it is being crafted will benefit the few, who by no means live on an austerity budget, and will deprive the many, who do.

It is not too late to reverse course.

Budgets are moral documents. A great religious leader proclaimed that "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Budgets can lift millions out of poverty; budgets can consign millions to poverty. Budgets can provide access to a vibrant network of "public goods" such as quality affordable health care, public education, health insurance and other essential human services. Budgets can also bury us deeper into a system of income inequality that commonly reveals the fault lines of racism, classism, ageism, and an insidious fear of "the other" however defined. Budgets can strengthen the mechanisms that make a democracy more inclusive. Budgets can also dismantle those mechanisms, weakening the fabric of a democracy that promises "liberty and justice for all".

Governor Malloy and members of the Connecticut General Assembly, the choices you make today are moral ones, with a profound impact on us all.

- Cutting access to needed services, reducing access to child care programs, eliminating Earned Income Tax Credits, laying off or eliminating the opportunity for the very workers who provide these services to continue to work, while proposing that 100 Connecticut residents receive a tax break of \$100,000 through a repeal of the estate tax?

This is a moral choice.

- Cutting 9,500 HUSKY parents from the Medicaid program, eliminating basic dental services for the poor and elderly, and taking actions that will erode Connecticut's

Medicaid program as a health guarantee for our low-income, elderly and disabled, while refusing to seriously consider a .01 % revenue increase on the incomes of extraordinarily wealthy individuals?

This is a moral choice.

- Balancing our state budget on the backs of low and moderate income families, while allowing large profitable corporations to pay their workers poverty wages without consequence.

This is a moral choice.

We understand that the projected budget deficits are daunting. We understand that the choices you face are not easy. We also understand that those who benefit most from a system of inequality generally exercise their power and privilege to protect their interests, their wealth, and a system that indulges them every day, whatever the long-term negative consequences for a larger quality of life for the majority of Connecticut's residents.

We call on you to resist the temptation of serving those who are wealthy and powerful, and instead- root your actions and choices to serve the greater good.

We urge you to reconsider the current course of our state budgeting and to embrace policy alternatives that will create greater equity and justice in our state. You can do so by:

- Modernizing our current sales tax system;
- Broadening the services taxed while lowering the rate of sales tax, thereby raising \$730 million;
- Reforming the wealth and income tax systems, thereby generating \$238 million from our wealthiest individuals;
- Assessing a low wage employer fee on large profitable corporations, thereby generating \$305 million;
- Passing a sugary beverage tax that will promote health choices, while raising up to \$105 million.

The above reforms alone could generate \$1.38 billion in additional revenue!

The voice of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King sounds for our own time: "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

As leaders of faith communities, as residents of this state, and as your constituents, we urge you to heed the wisdom of Dr. King the simple morality of "The Golden Rule"; and the visionary social, economic, and political viability of a new course.

In faith and finance,

Rev. Cheryl P Anderson
First Congregational Church, UCC
Washington, CT

Anna Andrews
Clerk, Storrs Friends Meeting

Pastor Brian C. Baeder
Church of the Good Shepherd, Congregational
West Woodstock, CT

The Rev. Diann H. Bailey
First Church United Church of Christ (UCC)
Suffield, CT

Rev. Janine Baryza-Ly
First Church in Hartland
East Hartland, CT

Rev. Martha Bays
Congregational Church in Killingworth, UCC
Killingworth, CT

Rabbi Marci N. Bellows
Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek
Chester, CT

Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett
Temple Sinai of Newington
Newington, CT

Rev. Bradley J. Bergfalk
First Congregational Church of Litchfield
Litchfield, CT

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor
First Church of Christ UCC
Mansfield, CT

Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham
First Congregational Church, UCC
Guilford, CT

Rabbi Herbert Brockman
Congregation Mishkan Israel
Hamden, CT

Rev. F. Lydell Brown
Pastor/Founder of Burning Bush Family Life Center
Waterbury, CT

The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, Senior Pastor
First Congregational Church
Southington, CT

Rev. Julia Burkey
First Church UCC
Middletown

Rev. Dr. Steven E. Burt, retired UCC clergy
Lyme, CT

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson Bull
Unitarian Universalist Minister
Meriden, CT

Rev. Ruth Chartier
Farmington Valley Association, Connecticut
Conference
First Church of Christ, Congregational
Farmington, CT

Rev. Michael Ciba, Senior Regional Minister
CT Conference of the United Church of Christ
Hartford, CT

Rev. Denise Clapsaddle
Co-Pastor, Broadview Community Church (UCC)
Hartford, CT

Rev. Dr. Shannon Clarkson
First Congregational Church
Guilford, UCC

Rev. Leonard G. Clough
Member of First Church of Christ, Congregational
Simsbury, CT

Rev. Ed Cornell, Senior Pastor
First Church of Christ Saybrook
Saybrook, CT

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Retired
First Church in Windsor, UCC
Windsor, CT

Rev. Carol Cyr
First Congregational Church
Cheshire, CT

Rev. Marjorie H. Davis, Retired Pastor
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of
Christ
Hartford, CT

Rev. Mia J. Douglas, Authorized Minister of the
Connecticut Conference, UCC
Glastonbury, CT

Rabbi Tony Eaton
Congregation Simchat Yisrael
West Haven, CT

Rev. Matthew Emery
Storrs Congregational Church UCC
Mansfield, CT

Reverend Ronald T. Evans, Retired
Senior Minister Emeritus
First Congregational Church of Darien, UCC
Darien, CT

Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager
First Church of Christ, Congregational
East Haddam, CT

Pastor Paul Fleck
Hamden Plains United Methodist Church
Hamden, CT

Rev. Lucille L. Fritz, Pastor
Huntington Congregational Church United Church of
Christ
Shelton, CT

Rev. Abby Gackenheimer
Congregational Church of Plainville
Plainville, CT

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey M. Gallagher, Senior Pastor
United Congregational Church of Tolland, UCC
Tolland, CT

Rev. Carleen R. Gerber, Associate Minister
First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Old Lyme, CT

Rev. Timothy Gilbert
The Congregational Church of Union, UCC
Union, CT

The Rev. David W. Good
Minister Emeritus for The First Congregational
Church of Old Lyme
Old Lyme, CT

*Kaiyra A. Greer, Associate Pastor
First United Methodist Church
Stamford, CT

Rev. Bonita Grubbs, Executive Director
Christin Community Action
New Haven, CT

Imam Dr. Abdul-Majid Karim Hasan
& Brother Yusuf Shah
Abdul-Majid Karim Hasan
Islamic Center
Hamden, CT

Rev. Jacquelyn R. Hall, Winchester Center
Congregational Church
Winchester, CT

Rev. Peter M. Hammond
Bridgewater Congregational Church, UCC
Bridgewater, CT

Rev. Ernest Harris, Retired, Dept. of Pastoral Care,
ECHN

Rev. Dr. Paul C. Hayes, Pastor
Noank Baptis Church
Noank CT

Elder Ron Hurt
Deliverance temple
New Haven, CT

Rev. Linda Hoddy, Minister
Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society
Woodbury, Ct

Linda M. Huff
Co-pastor Broadview Community Church, U.C.C.
Hartford, CT

Rev. Michelle Hughes
Connecticut Conference UCC
Hartford, CT

Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner
Unitarian Society of New Haven, Hamden, CT

The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Kennard
Lynwood Road Church
Storrs, CT

Rev. Janice Kimball
Hadlyme Congregational Church, UCC
Hadlyme, CT

Rev. Gini King
First Congregational Church, United Church of
Christ CT
Guilford, CT

Rev. Dr. Frank G. Kirkpatrick
Professor of Religion Emeritus
Trinity College
Hartford CT

Rev. Sara Lamar-Sterling
United Methodist clergyperson
Yale New Haven Hospital
New Haven, CT

Rev. Marshall Linden, Retired UCC
Waterbury. CT.

Rev. Mark Lingle
St. Francis Episcopal Church
Stamford, CT

Rev Donna K. Manocchio, retired,
Wethersfield, CT

Reverend Scott Marks
New Growth Outreach Ministries
New Haven, CT

Rev Matt McCaffrey
Waterford Congregational United Church of Christ
Waterford, CT

The Rev. Ruth E. McCarty
First Congregational United Church of Christ,
Bristol, CT

Rev. Ineke K. Mitchell, Retired
Canton, CT

Scott G. Morrow, Pastor
North Haven Congregational Church, United Church
of Christ
North Haven, CT

Rev. Dr. Ted Mosebach, Pastor Emeritus
First Congregational UCC
East Hartford, Connecticut

Rev. James H. Latimer
North Madison Congregational Church, UCC
Madison, CT

Rev. Barbara J. Libby
Authorized Minister of the CT Conference,
Serving as Conference Minister for the RI
Conference, UCC
Resident of New Haven, CT

Reverend Pamela Lupfer
PCUSA Joining Hands Campaign Organizer for
Trade Justice

Rev. Dr. Diane Monti-Catania
Salisbury Congregational Church, UCC
Salisbury, CT

Rev. Frank Newsome
Senior Pastor of First Congregational Church
Norwalk, CT

Rev. Dr. Patricia Nicholas (retired)
New Milford, CT

Rev. Kari Nicewander
Senior Minister, Immanuel Congregational Church
Hartford, CT

Rev. Craig M. Nowak
Minister, Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church
Consulting Minister, Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Storrs

Rabbi Stacy Offner
Temple Beth Tikvah
Madison, CT

Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals
Co-Pastor, First Congregational Church
New London, CT

The Rev. Dr. Sandra L. Olsen,
Middletown, CT

The Rev. Erick Olsen, Pastor
Church of Christ, Congregational (United Church of
Christ), Norfolk

The Rev. John W Olson.
Bridgeport City Council
Democratic Town Committee
Bridgeport, CT

Reverend Carolyn Patierno
All Souls UU Congregation
New London, CT

Rev. Josh Pawelek,
Unitarian Universalist: East
Manchester, CT

The Rev. Dr. Allie Perry
Worship Coordinator
Shalom United Church of Christ
New Haven, CT

Rev. Suzanne Personette
Interim Pastor
Middlefield Federated Church
Middlefield, CT

Rev. Ellen Petersen
Riverton Congregational Church
Riverton, CT

Rev. Mark Pilletere
Center Congregational Church
Torrington, CT

Rev. Kristen Provost Switzer
Newtown Congregational Church, UCC
Newtown, CT

Rev MaryAnn Purtill
Marlborough Congregational Church
Marlborough, CT

The Rev. Dr. Virginia McDaniel, Senior Minister
First Congregational Church of Granby
Granby, CT

Rev. Carol Rawls
Fairfield East association
Member of First Church of Christ Congregational
Redding, CT

Rev. Allison Read
College Chaplain, Trinity College
Hartford CT

Rev. Erica Richmond, Community Minister
Unitarian Society of Hartford
Hartford, CT

Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia
Congregational Church of Brookfield
Brookfield CT

Rev. Cathy Rion Starr
Unitarian Society of Hartford
Hartford, CT

Rev. Heather Rion Starr
Unitarian Society of Hartford
Hartford, CT

Dr. Bonnie Scott
Transitional Senior Minister
The United Church on the Green
New Haven

Rev. Robert Sehi, LCSW
Manchester, CT

Bishop John Selders
CT Moral Mondays
Hartford, CT

Rev Kent Siladi ,
Conference Minister Connecticut Conference of the
UCC
Hartford, CT

Rev. James Silver. Retired Pastor of the Connecticut
Conference of the United Church of Christ
Hartford, CT

Rev. Dr. Frances Sink
Minister, Unitarian Universalist Congregation
20 Forest St, Stamford, CT 0

Rev. Barbara Shaffer-Bengston
Hospice Chaplain
VITAS Healthcare
Middlebury, CT

Rabbi Jeremy Schwartz, Temple Bnai Israel,
Willimantic, CT

Reverend Toni Smith,
Membership United Church of Chester
Chester, Ct

Rev Dr Rochelle A Stackhouse
Hamden, CT

Rev. Dr. Eileen Sypher (Retired)
Membership in United Church of Chester
Chester, CT

Rev. David Taylor
First Church of Glastonbury
Glastonbury, CT

Mary Marple Thies, Retired
Presbytery of Southern New England
Presbyterian Church

The Reverend Edward Townley
The Spirit Expressing Unity Ministry
Vernon, CT

Rev. Kevin Weikel
First Church of Christ of the United Church of Christ
Simsbury, CT

Rev. Stan Youngberg
Interim Minister
Prospect Congregational Church UCC
Prospect, CT.

Rev. Cynthia Yee, Retired
First Church of Christ Congregational,
Farmington, CT

Rev. Kate VanDerzee-Glidden
First Church UCC
Glastonbury CT

Rev. Sarah Verasco
First Congregational Church, UCC
Guilford, CT

Rev. Rodney Wade
Long Hill Bible Church
Waterbury CT

The Rev. Dr. James R. Wheeler, Rector,
St. John's Episcopal Church
Stamford, CT

Rev. Dr. Alida Ward
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church
Fairfield, CT

Rev. Cynthia Willauer,
Ministry for the Care of Creation,
First Congregational Church
Old Lyme, CT