NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The New York State Council of Churches, founded in the late 19th century, represents 7,000 congregations across the State of New York. We are comprised of eight partner denominations including American Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed Church of America, Society of Friends, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

The New York State Council of Churches:

Certifies and supports chaplains in Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Office of Mental Health and Office for Children and Family Services, as they seek to offer love and hope to so many who feel hopeless and have had little experience of being loved unconditionally. We urge fully ordained pastors, including those who may be serving as parish ministers, to consider applying for certification. We continue to have a chaplain shortage and need qualified applicants.

Advocates for laws and policies, consistent with our denominational partner’s social principles, which aid people who are poor and the disenfranchised.

+ With Fiscal Policy Institute and a broad coalition of many organizations, we continue to address the problem of severe wealth inequality in New York by urging that new revenue be derived from the very wealthiest New Yorkers to prevent cuts to human services, including Medicaid, while also offering property tax relief for homeowners.

+ Sponsorship of our Second Annual Statewide Ecumenical Advocacy Day in conjunction with the Fiscal Policy Institute. 70 participants were in attendance as we focused on alleviation of homelessness, expansion of affordable housing, retention of new bail and discovery laws, limiting solitary confinement, stopping wage theft, protecting our courts from inappropriate ICE activity, requiring disclosure in state agencies of immigrant children separated from their parents, divestment of fossil fuel stocks from the state pension fund, and proper funding and investment in a clean energy economy. The full description of our 2020 legislative asks can be found by going to WWW.Nyscoc.org.

This year we sponsored Who is My Neighbor Seminars in conjunction with the Pace University Land Use Law Center and Goldstein Hall Attorneys at Law and many others. The seminars have helped congregations reassess their mission, reach out to their communities and imagine how they can use their property to helping their neighborhoods be more racially and economically inclusive.

We completed a high school trip to Washington DC from February 18 to 21 of 2020. 39 high school students and chaperones participated in a seminar arranged by Church and Society of the United Methodist Church focused on countering racism and visited Museum of African American History and Culture.

After a trip to India, the Council is sponsoring with Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations a conference on Religious Freedom and Human Rights in India on March 28, 2020 at Trinity Episcopal Church. We continue to strengthen bonds with our partner, the Church of South India as they struggle with other religious minorities against increased persecution.

We thank our denominational partners for their support. For more information go to WWW.Nyscoc.org, 1580 Central Avenue, Albany, New York, 12205 518-436-9319. The Reverend Peter Cook is Executive Director.