

LUTHERAN OFFICE OF PUBLIC POLICY

Recession and You.....

Each of us has an investment in our future. In these times of economic recession it is easy for us to see only our own situation and make the necessary moves to protect our standard of living. That is the natural response for us as humans but is it the Christian response called for by our calling to be disciples of Christ?

Federal, State and local governments are all facing decline in income caused by the downturn in the economy and decreased revenues. All entities are proposing drastic cuts in programs and services in order to remain solvent. Gov. Markell frames his budget cuts in terms of shared sacrifice. But the sacrifice is not always proportional to the realities of those affected.

The Joint Finance Committee of the Delaware General Assembly has completed budget hearings for all departments and divisions in the State government. Everyone is distinctly aware of the grave situation. In each of the hearing there was an effort to cut spending where it would have the least impact on those in need. This committee is faced with a daunting task of recommending a balanced budget within the realities of fiscal constraints.

One of the Governor's major cut proposals affects state employees; 8% salary cut and loss of some benefits. The realities of this cut for those on the lower end of the pay scale are catastrophic. These employees were already at "working poor" wages. Secretarial support staff, school cafeteria workers, lower scale Del Dot employees are all barely making ends meet under the current conditions.

These issues will be prominent in the upcoming months. We can be involved in ways that are positive for others. Local food pantries are experiencing more clients than ever and rely solely on funds contributed by others. The "shared sacrifice" concept of Gov. Markell is not an original idea. In fact, worshipping communities have been doing this for centuries. I encourage those who are able to make contributions of food and money to their local food pantry, the Delaware Food Bank and Lutheran Community Services. These contributions go a long way to helping people at least provide food for their families. Pray for those in public office that the decisions they make are just and compassionate, wise and far-reaching. Contact your General Assembly Representatives and Senators and ask them questions about the Budget and how it will affect the poor and vulnerable. Hold an adult forum in your congregation to talk about our social statement on poverty.

Be a part of the e-advocacy network of the Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Delaware by contacting jdraney@aol.com.

In His hands, The Rev. John D. Ranney, Director, LOPPD