



# St. Matthew Lutheran Church Green Team

*Environmental Justice and Compassionate Voting*



Adult Forum  
October 4, 2020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



# First an announcement...



*Join us for the*



## *New Jersey Farmers Against Hunger Annual Thanksgiving Packing Event*



*Every year, Farmers Against Hunger volunteers come together to pack upwards of 3,000 bags of mixed fall produce for a special Thanksgiving distribution.*



*The bags are delivered to families in need across NJ just in time for the holiday.*

***Sunday, November 15th  
1:45 to 3:45 pm***

*Tri-County Cooperative Auction Market,  
619 Route 33 West, Hightstown, NJ  
(near Home Depot and Wal-Mart)*

*Please RSVP to: [beckymasserini1@gmail.com](mailto:beckymasserini1@gmail.com) or  
[brianlestini@yahoo.com](mailto:brianlestini@yahoo.com)*

*There will be appropriate social distancing; PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN MASK. Also,  
We recommend wearing warm layers and gloves because we will be packing outside.  
Individually wrapped snacks will be provided; please bring your own beverage.*

***Please join us!!***



# ....then a pop quiz!

Which State has...

- One of the largest number of EPA superfund sites
- Some of the worst air quality in the country
- Has experienced some of the most dramatic temperature increases due to global warming
- Recently enacted one of the strongest environmental justice bills in the country



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- New Jersey
- Texas
- Florida
- Michigan

Sources (accessed Sept 30, 2020): <https://www.nj.com/news/2020/09/toxic-nj-site-could-be-states-newest-addition-to-nation-leading-superfund-list.html>  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/04/air-quality-report-shows-an-overall-drop-in-ozone-pollution-in-new-jersey/>  
<https://www.nj.com/opinion/2019/08/ground-zero-for-climate-change-new-jersey-editorial.html>  
<https://www.inquirer.com/science/climate/new-jersey-governor-phil-murphy-environmental-justice-law-20200918.html>



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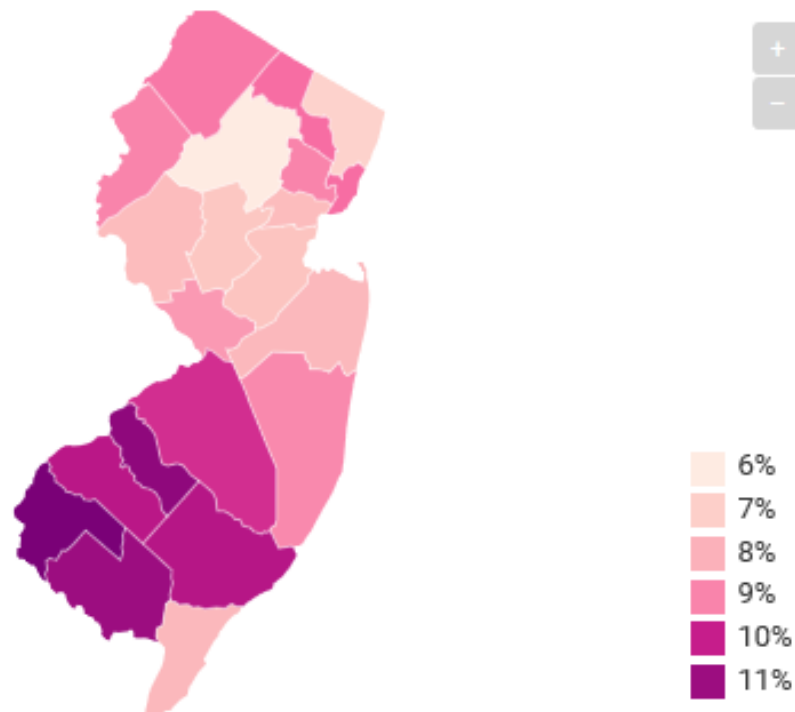




# New Jersey bears a disproportionate burden of environmental health impacts



## Percent of population with asthma



- 700k with asthma
- 300k with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- 3 degree F increase in annual average temperature since 1970
- 22.5 days/year with high ozone; estimated to double by 2050

Survey period: 2011-2016

Map: Disha Raychaudhuri, NJ.com • Source: NJSHAD • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Michael Sol Warren | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com , Disha Raychaudhuri | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and Ayurella Horn-Muller | Climate Central.

[www.nj.com](http://www.nj.com), accessed 23-April 2019.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/health/sc-hlth-asthma-black-children-1016-20191008-bdvswdpnlfhylgvlegxogw463a-story.html>. accessed 02-Oct-20



# What is “Environmental Justice” (EJ)?

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, defined as:

- **“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”**

“This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- 1. the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and**
- 2. equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”**

source: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>





# A brief history of EJ

- **Began in the Civil rights era (1960's)**

- 1968: Memphis Sanitation workers strike

- **Gained momentum in 1980's**

- 1982: Non-violent protest against polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in Warren Co, NC
- GAO study: 75% of hazardous landfills located in communities where  $\geq 26\%$  were African American & below poverty level
- 1987: United Church of Christ (UCC) study showed clear relationship between hazardous waste sites & race

- **1992: EPA establishes Office of Environmental Equity**

- 2015: EPA releases 2020 Action Agenda

- **2000's - today: A watershed moment**

- EJ becomes an increasing priority of mainstream environmental advocacy groups
- EPA postpones EJ and Structural Racism training
- 2019 staffing/budget below 1990's levels; proposed  $\sim 73-90\%$  cuts ( $\sim \$175$  million) in FY2021 ( $< 0.1\%$  of agency's budget)



Bettman/Getty Images





# 2020 - Two landmark EJ bills pass in New Jersey

- S232: Requires NJ DEP to account for cumulative impacts of pollution in a community when issuing permits for new polluting facilities



Signed into law Sept 18, 2020

- A1978: bans single-use plastic & paper bags, straws, polystyrene food containers



Passed in both Senate & Assembly, awaiting Gov Murphy's signature

Governor Phil Murphy (609-292-6000,  
<http://www.state.nj.us/governor/contact/>

)





**Join an online meet and greet  
with New Jersey DEP Deputy  
Commissioner Olivia Glenn**

FRI, OCT 9 AT 3 PM

Meet and Greet with NJDEP Deputy  
Commissioner Olivia Glenn

★ Interested ▾

<https://secure.everyaction.com/f2ItJ4eaWk6O7aXD6okxZw2?ms=FBevent>



# How might we think about EJ from a Christian theological perspective?

- Most basically grounded in the notion of “loving one’s neighbor as oneself,” the second of the fundamental commandments (Mark 12:31)
- According to GreenFaith:

*“Loving our neighbor as we love ourselves is an act of faith, to be lived out through an intentional approach that seeks to understand our neighbor’s suffering and joy. In the building of these relationships, we discover and comprehend how our individual good and fates are tied to each other, by our own Creator’s will.”*



# The ELCA Statement on Environment (1993)



**We model God's justice** by striving to embody 4 four principles in the face of the intricate complexity of creation and of the human community:



- ***Participation***—All human beings are entitled to a voice and to have their interests considered when decisions are made affecting the creation and its resources. Human beings should be advocates for the non-human parts of creation;
- ***Solidarity***—We acknowledge our interdependence with other creatures, and act both locally and globally on behalf of all creation, especially those parts that are most vulnerable and at greatest risk;
- ***Sufficiency***—We are to place priority on meeting the basic needs of all humanity and all creatures and since the earth's resources are finite, this has implications for human acquisition and consumption patterns;
- ***Sustainability***—We should act so as to provide “an acceptable quality of life for present generations without compromising that of future generations.”



# What is Compassionate Voting?



***"Compassion" = "to suffer together," "sympathy for others' distress together & desire to alleviate it"***

- Caring for one another and for the planet is central to our collective faith traditions and our beliefs
- Voting compassionately--with those values in mind--is critical to living out our faith and protecting our future
- When held as a fulfillment of the "golden rule," we realize that we are voting for our neighbors, and in so doing, we walk the pathway to a better world for all, ourselves included



# GreenFaith Compassionate Voter Campaign



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## **4 things you can do**

***Sign the Compassionate Voter Pledge:*** <http://bit.ly/GFVoterPledge>

***Read the Organizing Guide:*** <http://bit.ly/GFVoterCampaignGuide>

### ***Volunteer & Recruit Others:***

- Compassionate Voter Captains
- Moral Observers - upcoming trainings Sept 23 and 30, 2 PM

***Check your own registration ([vote.org](http://vote.org)), return your ballot early, and talk to your family, friends and houses of worship!!***



# Important dates in NJ



- ***OCT 13: VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE!***
- Nov. 3: General Election. Polling locations are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Nov. 3: County officials begin counting votes
- ***Nov. 3: Deadline for post office receipt of mail-in ballots***
- Nov. 3: Deadline for in-person submission of mail-in ballots
- Nov. 5: Deadline for mailed ballots to be received without a postmark “due to postal error”
- Nov. 10: Deadline for mailed ballots to be received with a postmark



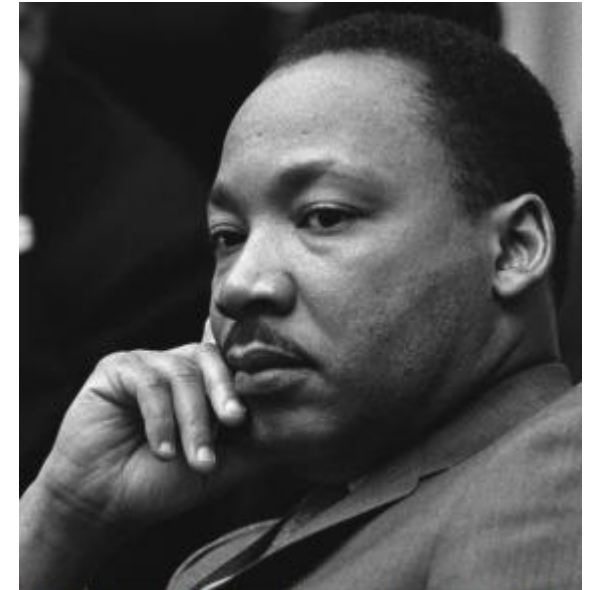


# Questions?



*“I do not pretend to understand the moral universe. The arc is a long one. My eye reaches but little ways. I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by experience of sight. I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice.”*

- *Reverend Theodore Parker, 1853*



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**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**