



Episcopal Community Services (ECS-NJ) is an in an initiative in the Diocese of New Jersey that focuses on proactively addressing human needs, such as food and shelter, and relentlessly working against both social and racial injustice. Begun just a little over a year ago the following goals have already come to fruition in many areas.

1. providing grants to our ministries and projects
2. offering educational and training opportunities
3. opening up crucial connections and networks
4. advocating for meaningful systemic change

ECS is already making a meaningful and positive impact across the diocese through its education and advocacy work and through the grants it is making to address vital human needs in this part of God's dominion.

In Asbury Park, Episcopalians of Trinity Church assist homeless persons in finding permanent housing; provide these persons with the support and tools they need to stabilize their lives so they don't become homeless again.

In South Jersey, one of our churches assists women who have been victims of domestic abuse and addiction rebuild their lives through GED preparation, obtaining a driver's license; provide them with training and coaching for employment readiness.

Two churches, Trinity Church, Princeton and St. Michael's, Trenton have partnered to provide a safe haven in inner city Trenton to counter street violence and gang participation, joining with other community partners to offer after-school resources and support.

In New Brunswick, Christ Church is also working with community partners to purchase and provide food and other living essentials to meet the needs who suffer from poverty and food insecurity.

In Elizabeth, San Jose and St. John's Episcopal Churches have combined to advocate for immigrants and offer immigration assistance, including legal assistance in Elizabeth to a community that serves a large immigrant population.

In Palmyra, the small community of Christ Church is offering worship and fellowship to people of all ages who live with the challenges of autism in the adjacent areas of Burlington County.

Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey recently granted \$117,000 to support these and other ministries. These grants were able to be made because churches and individuals inside the diocese, and even some persons outside the diocese.

Significant challenges and inequities have grown more obvious against the backdrop of COVID-19:

1.2 + million people are food insecure in NJ, almost 400,000 of whom are children.

300,000 + NJ residents are facing evictions.

In December of 2021, the Vestry of St. Francis voted to become a Founding Congregation of ECS-NJ, as Bishop Stokes notes in his letter to the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry on the next page. That is a commitment to donate \$10,000 over the next three (3) years to ECS-NJ. The \$2,000 St. Francis gave to ECS-NJ in Lent and Easter of 2021 is the first step in fulfilling that pledge. We hope that all parishioners will join us in this commitment through their generous contributions by using the Special Contribution envelope in their contributions boxes or the Special Offering option in our online giving platform."

Through your generous support will guarantee our Diocese the ability to expand ministries across New Jersey in order to better address the needs of society. With your support, we will stand up for social justice and overcome the bonds of racism.



The Diocese of New Jersey

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM H. STOKES, BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY

December 23, 2021

The Rev. John V. Zamboni, Wardens and Vestry Members
St. Francis' Church
400 New Market Road
Dunellen, NJ 08812

Dear Fr. Jack, Ms. Myzie, Mr. Sinckler and Members of the Vestry of St. Francis' Church:

As we bring this Advent to a close and prepare to greet the Christ child anew into our world and into our lives, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the leadership you have shown in becoming a Founding Church of Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey. Your pledge of \$10,000 over three years represents a generous commitment and sign of support to this new ministry.

I feel confident ECS-NJ will strengthen our common life as a diocesan community by allowing us to alleviate poverty and desperate human need throughout the cities, towns and villages served by our 137 congregations including Dunellen and its environs served so faithfully by St. Francis'. ECS-NJ also allows us to combine our voices and our power to address the pervasive injustices in our society that lead to the suffering of to many of our friends and neighbors and to serve as advocates for those who are so often without voice.

Marked, as they have been, by the ravages of a global pandemic, the last two years have confronted our congregations and communities with enormous challenges. St. Francis' has not only been faithful and persevered, you have gone "above and beyond," in many ways and especially through your generous support of the bold initiative that is Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey. Please accept my most profound and personal thanks for your leadership and care.

I pray you and the people of St. Francis' have a most blessed and joyous Christmas filled with the light of the newborn King.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

The Right Reverend William H. Stokes, D.D.
12th Bishop of New Jersey

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