



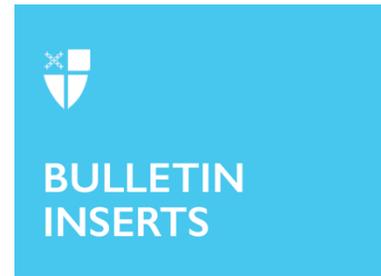
April 15, 2018 – Easter 3 (B)
For Such a Time As This: Economic Opportunity Initiatives

The Episcopal Church and the ELCA continue our united call to Pray, Fast, and Act in support of policies and programs that provide opportunities for and respect the dignity of all people.

This month, our focus is on economic opportunity initiatives. Although the U.S. government facilitates a variety of programs, all too often families find it nearly impossible to break out of poverty. Many families work low-wage and low-skill jobs, yet still struggle to keep up with their needs.

The 2018 federal poverty level for a family of two—like a single parent with one child—is \$16,460. Sadly, many families are in this group of working poor. Though some individuals can work hard 40-hour weeks and 52-weeks a year, they still can be below the poverty line.

For example, a person working 40-hours a week and 52-weeks a year at the federal minimum wage would earn \$15,080 a year. These positions almost never provide paid vacation or sick time and often not even federal holidays, and not all are lucky enough to have consistent full-time work throughout the 52-week year. In Congressional testimony last month, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce heard that this working poor represent 80% of people receiving government assistance.



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Education as a means of economic opportunity to increase wages and gain better employment is one means of helping this demographic gain upward mobility.

On April 21, join the EPPN and presiding bishops of The Episcopal Church and ELCA as we Pray, Fast, and Act for economic opportunity initiatives.



PRAY for the working poor of our nation, that while they fight to keep their families housed, fed, and clothed that we may fight to provide them with educational opportunities.

Almighty God, who hast so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

- *Book of Common Prayer* – Collect For Labor Day

FAST in solidarity with those who while they labor tirelessly still struggle to provide for themselves and their families. Help us remember that though they are working, they are unable to access education and training which would open greater opportunities to support themselves and their families.

ACT by studying the one-pager on the connection between economic opportunity, education, and poverty (available here: bit.ly/fsatApril). Then, on the 21st of April, write Congress and demand robust federal funding for educational programs from early childhood to adult and trade schools.

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