



# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE

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Dear Friends in Christ:

The last question we ask those presented for Baptism is, as you know, "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" The answer is, of course, "I will, with God's help."

In seven years as your bishop, I have tried to keep that promise by writing opinion pieces on justice issues in Maine newspapers, by offering a diocesan presence in Augusta at hearings on legislation that threatens the well-being of our most vulnerable neighbors, and by joining with ecumenical and interfaith partners at press conferences and events on common concerns. I work with other Episcopal bishops in two groups: *Bishops for a Just World* and *Bishops United Against Gun Violence*. But, beyond these efforts, the time seems right to invite you, faithful Episcopalians across Maine, to become more engaged with public life at all levels of society, from the local to the international.

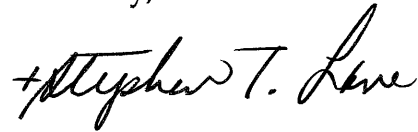
Earlier this year, our Diocesan Council recommended the formation of a Public Policy Advisory Group to assist me and my staff in prioritizing issues where advocacy is most needed. At its inaugural meeting that group agreed that a critical first step is to involve everyone more by launching a diocesan-wide network for justice. Similar networks are under discussion in many Episcopal dioceses, but the Diocese of Maine is well-poised to lead because our diocese encompasses the entire state. Indeed, if we can be swift to organize, The Episcopal Church has multi-year grant resources to assist us in enhancing and sustaining our network as an exemplar for the wider Church.

I invite you to become a member of the new Maine Episcopal Network for Justice (MENJ). There are no dues, and no vows of allegiance to a specific cause or point of view. You simply need to sign up for email alerts, join our Facebook group (if you're a social media-inclined), talk about advocacy issues with other members of your

congregation, and be willing to contact state and national decision-makers about issues that speak to your heart. It is important for people of faith be heard in the civic arena and to take our places in helping advocate for those our society who garner little public notice. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." May we share in Jesus' care for the least.

Thank you for considering this new way of serving God's church in the world.

Faithfully,



The Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane  
*Bishop of Maine*

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Link to Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/maineenj">https://www.facebook.com/groups/maineenj</a>
Link to MENJ	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/MEJNhome">http://tinyurl.com/MEJNhome</a>
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