



ALL SAINTS CHURCH

ECONOMIC JUSTICE RESOLUTION

Adopted by the Vestry of All Saints Church, Pasadena, on January 6, 2015

Revised by the Vestry of All Saints Church, Pasadena, on June 26, 2018

Be it resolved that the Rector, the Wardens and the Vestry lead All Saints Church Pasadena on a path of activism for economic justice. We resolve to oppose economic structures that destroy lives and deplete natural resources for financial gain. We resolve to support basic human rights, to reclaim stewardship of the earth on behalf of all creation, and to identify and act on a vision of democratic and spiritual renewal.

We will:

1. Educate parishioners to be articulate public advocates for economic justice;
2. Be proximate to those who suffer, being mindful of the impact of systematic exploitation of people and the depletion and degradation of earth's resources;
3. Seek out partnerships with organizations supporting labor and economic justice, fight for livable wages and share resources with community groups requesting our support;
4. Tell the uncomfortable story of unreconciled racial injustice in America and make efforts to heal our unacknowledged national wounds;
5. Advocate for a progressive tax policy that corrects structural disadvantages for all working people;
6. Combat the causes and consequences of human-caused climate change;
7. Promote democratic values that ensure the equal rights of all people and work to rectify unjust laws and policies;
8. Campaign for permanent supportive housing and basic, affordable, safe housing as a foundation for life;
9. Examine our household practices in relation to global trade policies;
10. Craft liturgical opportunities to amplify the call for economic justice so that we more fully become a faith-based locus of advocacy for structural social change.

FAITH and MORAL IMPERATIVE

Jesus and the prophets teach us that the whole universe and all that is in it is created in love by God (Psalm 24:1); and that unjust economic practices and policies are a violation of the command to love our neighbor; that human beings cannot serve both God and wealth (Luke 16:13), that those who oppress the poor show contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Proverbs 14:31); thus calling all people to participate with mutual solidarity and respect for all God's creative work.

All Saints Church declares itself to be for justice for God's people. We live out our baptismal covenant calling us to work for peace and justice for all, embracing the examples of the early Christian communities and their nonviolent rejection of the violence and injustice of domination and empire.

Our Vision Statement calls on us to 1) embody the inclusive love of God in Christ through Spirituality, Community and Peace and Justice" 2) be informed by and made accountable to the World's deep needs" 3) engage in the "courageous and risk-filled work of peace and justice."

The Episcopal House of Bishops has issued resolutions and pastoral teaching on economic justice, among them a 2011 call for "Creation of More Compassionate and Sustainable Economics that Support the Well-Being of All of God's Creation."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, house, and medical care and necessary social services."

KEY EVIDENCE OF AN UNJUST ECONOMY

In our advocacy for economic justice and nonviolence, we challenge the current world economic order in which the industrial, financial, legislative powers exercise both structural and direct violence against members of the human family resulting in the following distortions:

- The U.S. economic system that has increased inequality well beyond any rational argument of economic utility. From 2009 to 2012, the top 1% incomes grew by 31.4% while bottom 99% incomes grew only by 0.4%. Hence, the top 1% captured 95% of the income gains in the first three years of the recovery. (Saez September 2013)
- Wages and salaries have been flat for three decades in the U.S. resulting in increases in household debt as families struggle to maintain their homes and families and other involvements that make for a full human life.
- U.S. tax policy disproportionately benefits the top 1%, the financial industry and corporations and thus occupies a key role in creating the income gap (Saez January 2013).
- Government bail outs for powerful banks but not homeowners in mortgage crisis though it is the bank CEOs that had behaved irresponsibly.
- Poverty levels are disproportionately present and persistent in minority neighborhoods (Sharkey 2013).

- Systematic liberalization of corporate charter regulations allows privatization of the extracted wealth with no accountability or compensation for costs and damages to society and the environment.
- Since 1993 the Gini index¹, a measure of household income inequality across the nation, has increased 5.2% to 0.477 in 2012. (DeNavas-Walt, 2014)
- “The level of wealth inequality in this country has gotten so far out of hand, the quality of compassion so thoroughly diminished, that the very future of American democracy is at stake.” (Smiley 2012)
- Loss of influence in the political process that disproportionately disenfranchises minorities and the poor along with the middleclass. (Gilens, 2012)
- The increasing power accorded to corporations under the interpretation of corporate personhood such as in the 2010 Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.
- Federal and state policies have driven up the incarceration rate over the past thirty years (Kearney, 2014)
- There is nearly a 70 percent chance that an African American man without a high school diploma will be imprisoned by his mid-thirties (Kearney, 2014)

We reject any use of the Bible as a weapon of exclusion or domination. And we challenge an economic system and way of living that disregards the earth’s interconnected ecology such that conditions of life for future generations of all species, including humans, are forcibly destroyed and the livability of the entire earth is threatened as described below:

- The fossil fuel industry is granted large subsidies while alternative energy companies receive relatively little government financial support by comparison.
- Climate change through anthropogenic warming of the earth causes sea level rise and more severe storms and droughts creating disproportionate economic burdens to third world nations and their communities around the world. (IPCC, 2103)
- We are in the midst of a human-caused sixth great mass extinction of species caused by our population growth and consumption of resources at an unsustainable rate far beyond the carrying capacity of the earth. (Kolbert, 2014)

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