

Maine Council of Churches

*Inspiring
Peace,
Justice &
Compassion
through
collaborative
action*

A priest, a rabbi and a minister walked into a ...sweatshirt factory

STANDING UP TO ICE

How the “God Squad” helped our immigrant neighbors



Photo credit: Patty Wight, Maine Public

7:15 every morning. 3:15 every afternoon. In the freezing cold. **Every day of the ICE surge in Maine, clergy stood guard outside an old textile mill** in Westbrook to make sure the immigrant employees of American Roots made it safely to and from their cars and avoided capture by the masked agents in unmarked trucks terrorizing our neighborhoods. **Your support—financial and spiritual—made this public witness of solidarity possible.** Without you, the connections that brought a priest (Father Mike Seavey), a rabbi (Rachel Simmons), and a Presbyterian minister

(MCC Executive Director Jane Field) together with the owner of American Roots, Ben Waxman, never would have happened. **Thanks to your commitment to stand with and for neighbors in harm’s way, MCC could fulfill our mission to “connect people within, through, and beyond the church to build a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world.”**

When the ICE surge began, Father Mike, former MCC Board member who has served on our Public Policy Committee, encouraged Waxman to reach out to MCC for help, and the rest, as they say, is history.

To hear NPR’s coverage of this story, go to npr.org, “Maine immigrants protected by God Squad.” To watch a sermon by five of the clergy involved, go to Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church’s YouTube channel, April 26, 2026, worship service.

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Faithful. Tireless. Advocate.

John Hennessy Retiring from Episcopal Diocese (But not from MCC!)



After 10 years as the **Public Policy Director for the Episcopal Diocese of Maine**, John Hennessy is retiring at the end of May.

For most of his time on the Diocesan staff, John has also been the **co-chair of MCC's Public Policy Committee.**

A well-known and well-connected figure around the State House in Augusta, John isn't your run-of-the-mill lobbyist. A member of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke in Portland where he is a Verger and the Senior Warden, **John's deep and abiding faith infuses his advocacy** with a clear vision of how public policy can and should protect the vulnerable, ensure justice, and promote equity.

He has generously shared his time, energy, and expertise as **the guiding force behind MCC's prophetic voice in Augusta.** John's vision inspired our first "Faith-based Advocacy Days" training 9 years ago. And his infamous bill-tracker spreadsheets have kept faith-based advocates' eyes on the ball during legislative sessions, letting them know when to speak up and show up at the State House.

We celebrate with the Episcopal Diocese as together we recognize John's extraordinary service to God's people and the common good. And **we give thanks for the many ways John has supported and will continue to support the work of MCC so faithfully.**

Inspired by John's example of faith-based advocacy and prophetic witness? Sign up for our e-news so you get those action alerts. And go to MCC's YouTube channel to watch recordings of past workshops as well as our "how-to" video.

Your Values, Your Legacy

Consider Including MCC in Your Will

Planned giving helps you ensure a legacy of continuing to create a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world for years to come. There are also tax benefits! Consult with your legal advisor, bank, or financial planner. Call us at (207) 772-1918 if we can be of help.

A special evening to benefit MCC

Bishop Mariann Budde Speaking in Maine

Save the date: Thursday, October 8

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde (Episcopal Diocese of Washington DC) was nearing the end of her sermon for the inaugural prayer service on January 21, 2025, when she took a breath, looked directly at the President, and with grace and without fear, **pleaded for him to have mercy on people who were frightened** by his threats, especially immigrants, children, and LGBTQ+ people.



The backlash was immediate, vicious, and included death threats. Because speaking with conscience in a culture of contempt where mercy and compassion have become partisan issues comes at a cost. Bishop Budde believed the cost was worth paying. **And she showed us all what courage looks like.**

“One final plea, Mr. President. ... In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now.”

Her sermon lasted only minutes. But her example endures. And now, **Bishop Budde is coming to Maine to deliver a keynote address to benefit the work of the Maine Council of Churches.** Details about location and ticket sales coming soon, but **mark your calendar for the evening of Thursday, October 8. We hope we'll see YOU there!**

Community Plate Suppers Kick Off in Houlton



Your gifts helped make room at the table

When everyone is at the table, change is possible. That's the premise of the Community Plate model of potluck storytelling events. Thanks to your generosity, MCC has been able to partner with MIRC, MCAN, Presenté Maine, and Mano en Mano to host dinners around the state featuring storytellers from Maine's immigrant communities. Here are some scenes from the first dinner, held in Houlton on April 18.

Maine
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- Participate
- Advocate
- Witness
- Give

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Spring has sprung!

Plant Seeds Now

Ensure a good harvest this November

Is the heaviness of the daily news cycle weighing you down? Or has the annual surprise of spring resurrection lifted your spirit as daffodils pushed their way up through the snow? Maybe it's both?



If you're feeling weighed down but hopeful, it could help to plant some seeds now in preparation for the fall election.

What hangs in the balance this November is nothing less than the health and future of our democracy.

Can you “plant some seeds” today for harvesting in the fall? Your gift will help give Mainers of faith the tools they need to defend democracy and protect “the least of these.” With your support, we can equip local congregations to help their members get registered and stay registered to vote, and we can provide online information sessions to be sure folks understand the referendum questions on the ballot.

You'll be glad you took action today—and so will we! (See envelope inside for three easy ways to give.)