

# Maine Council of Churches

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**Maine Can Do Better Rally, December 14, 2011  
Hall of Flags, State House, Augusta**

In the Bible, the Hebrew prophet Isaiah spoke the word of the LORD, saying, ***“is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice. . . Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? (Isaiah 58:6-8.)***

Our own kin. Members of our own family. Brothers and sisters; parents and grandparents; children and grandchildren.

People of many faiths, including those from the Maine Council of Churches, have come to our State House today, to say: “tens of thousands of our kin, members of the one human family of Maine, will be hurt by these cuts, including many who are elderly, who are children, who are living with disabilities, who are low income, who need health care, who need shelter. We will not hide from them; we will not forget that we are all one kin, we are all members of one family.”

A week ago, the Maine Council of Churches put out a Statement of Conscience opposing these cuts. As of yesterday, 521 people have signed on to this Statement. They are people from all over the state – Bangor to Brunswick, Auburn to York, East Millinocket to Kittery Point. They are clergy and laypeople: Jews, Christians, Buddhists, interfaith and non-denominational. Rabbis, priests, nuns, ministers and members of faith communities all over the state. All have said that they oppose these cuts not just bad policy or bad economics, but as morally wrong. And more signatures continue to come in.

Many of us will be here at the State House, from now until the hearings end, holding a prayer vigil that begins right after this rally ends. All are welcome to join us, people of any faith or none, in prayer or in silence. We will be praying for our elected leaders. We will be, as the Quakers say, “holding them in the light.” We will be praying for compassion and justice. We will be praying for those of our neighbors whose lives would be most harmed by these cuts. As we’ve said so many times before in these halls, budgets are moral documents. Budgets are the choices we make together about how to take care of each other,

as one family. And the moral measure of any budget, of any society, is how well the most vulnerable among us is faring.

***In the Bible, the prophet Isaiah spoke the word of the LORD saying, “if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, your light shall rise in the darkness .,. you shall be like a watered garden, a spring ...whose waters never fail.”***

We are all in this together, every one of us here in Maine. However bad things get, it is possible for us not to fail one another. It is possible for us to stick together. It is possible for us to make it through these times, together, without abandoning anyone.

We are **not** islands of isolated economic activity. Our value as members of the family **cannot** be reduced to dollars and cents. We are **not** separate and we **shall not** be separated from one another. We shall not be moved. We are kin. We are family.

Take a look at the person in front of you. Take a look at the person on your left and the person on your right, and the person behind you.

Known to you or not, these are your brothers and sisters. These are your mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers. These are your children. These are “your own kin” and we are not to hide from one another. None of us shall be hidden and none of us ignored -- not by each other and not by the government that belongs to all of us and expresses our collective will.

And so I ask you, Are you my brother? Are you my sister? Are you my mother? Are you my father? Are you my grandmother? Are you my grandfather? Are you my child? Are we one kin? Are we one family? Are we going to stick together now, no matter what? Can we overcome fear? Can we overcome inequality? Can we overcome everything that wants to separate us and push us apart? Can we do this? Can Maine do better?