

## Housing & Homelessness

From the Executive Director  
Dr. Ruy O. Costa

### ECM's Housing Legacy

Episcopal City Mission's commitment to housing the homeless is encoded in its institutional DNA. Already in the mid 1840s, ECM's first director, the Rev. E. M. P. Wells, was so moved by compassion for the homeless in the streets of Boston that he opened his own home in the city to house them.



Early in the 1900s ECM established the Mothers' Rest at Revere Beach and a little later

the Sailors' haven in Charlestown. In 1938, as the result of a bequest of \$200,000 and

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *All Things New* is also available on ECM's website, at [www.EpiscopalCityMission.org](http://www.EpiscopalCityMission.org).

## Episcopal City Mission Works on Housing and Homelessness

Homelessness has been on the rise for the last 20 years in Massachusetts. During this time the state's approach to this crisis has been reliant on emergency assistance for families and individuals in need. For many, this has meant time spent in shelter and relying heavily on state and federal programs, many of which were not created to support the working poor, whom we know are the majority of those in need today. While shelters provide temporary relief from cold and hunger, they are not the solution to this crisis.

Currently the state's 90 family shelters are full every night, including families and individuals installed long term in motels. This is a continuation of a reliance on emergency support rather than looking to long term solutions and homeless prevention.

### Organizing to end homelessness

In the fall of 2007 Rep. Byron Rushing, a longtime ECM ally and partner, co-convened a special commission of state and local leaders in community services including housing, mental health, social service and education, to evaluate current housing services and needs. The report of this commission, released in January 2008, set three goals:

1. Decrease shelter reliance and seek ways to prevent homelessness;
2. Increase and maintain or improve existing housing;
3. Encourage job growth and economic development.

### A regional approach with faith-based involvement

In response to this report, the Common-

wealth's office of Housing and Community Development re-commissioned the Inter-agency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) along with \$10 million in funding. The ICHH's mission is to adopt the Commission's recommendations and make them a reality. They plan to do this through a regional response to the crisis. This approach will allow communities to coordinate their work, share ideas, and utilize programs and resources already in place, to the best of their ability. Faith based communities, already focused on serving those in need, are seen by the ICHH as having a critical role to play in ending homelessness, including the shaping of plans to address the problem locally.

In January 2009, eight regions were awarded funds to begin the work of reducing homelessness in their communities. (See sidebar for list of communities)

### ECM's focus on housing and homelessness

By the time the ICHH was re-commissioned ECM's Affordable Housing Program had been engaging parishes, for over two years, in the work to build affordable housing. The program provides grants to parishes to help them discern their options and then recruit the right consultants to implement the appropriate project for their community.

The commitment of state resources to end homelessness in Massachusetts opens new opportunities for parishes and others to work with ECM in addressing this perennial challenge in this Commonwealth. So, in the spring of 2008 ECM began to focus its Public Policy Program on the work of the ICHH and its' mission to end home-

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a house left by Mr. Robert Morville, the first Morville House was opened on Clarendon Street in downtown Boston. That first Morville House was restricted to “decent women of meager means.” In the late 1960’s, ECM persuaded a court to lift that restriction, permitting us to build the



second Morville House in the Fenway, with 146 units of affordable housing for low income elderly. Recently, ECM re-syndicated the Morville House and built another tower adding 30 new units to it.

Another major ECM initiative on housing was a loans fund. In the words of ECM historian David Dillon, “in the 1970s, under the leadership of Gilbert Avery, the Episcopal City Mission made one of its most creative and riskiest decisions: to use a portion of the principal of its endowment for a Housing Seed Money Loan Program to help nonprofit community organizations become developers of low-income housing.” (Dillon, p.40) That program enabled the development of over 4,600 units of affordable housing through the recycling of loans totaling over \$2.4 million in a period of 25 years. (Wibiralske, p.1)

In 1982, ECM produced a policy paper titled “Housing as a Basic Human Right” which has informed much of its advocacy and practice since then.

In the 1980s, when the Federal Government cut funds for HUD, some of which covered Section 8 subsidies for Morville House residents, former Executive Director Joe Pelham called for the creation of “a presence on the Hill,” i.e., an advocacy program by which ECM would engage in

lobbying government agencies to do their part in addressing the needs of the poor. Joe Pelham died before he could implement such a program. In 1999, however, ECM established the Public Policy Program and began to invite Episcopalians and others to be part of a network of people who work together for the wellbeing of the urban poor and oppressed.

Our track history, transforming the initial Morville bequest into a first rate tower residence for low income elderly and the expertise gained in the years securing adequate resources to maintain and develop it, has earned ECM both respect and credibility among those who work for affordable housing as well as in the church. Such credibility is part of the

legacy that ECM is able to share with its partners in mission and use for advocacy when needed.

In 2004, after a year and a half process of long term planning, ECM’s board of directors adopted new goals, including the development of new affordable housing in partnership with parishes.

**Notes**

1. Dillon, David, “Episcopal City Mission: A Voice for the Voiceless,” in Duffy, M. J., Editor, *The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts 1784-1984* (Boston: the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, 1984)
2. Wibiralske, Charles, “Housing Seed Loan Report,” ECM, 1999.

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and parish along with your tax-deductible contribution to:  
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# ECM's Affordable Housing Program—Recent Grants

## New Rental Housing—Family

**1. Coming Home, Inc., or CHI,** plans to build 13 affordable family apartments and a childcare center in South Groveland on land next to St. James' Episcopal Church. The land has been acquired from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and private party.

CHI is a nonprofit partnership between St. James' and Trinity Church, Haverhill, the next town north of Groveland. CHI, with the help of Alice Krapf, Housing Consultant and Brett Donham, Architect, is in the process of putting together a package. Trinity Church, Haverhill, has agreed to lend approximately \$200,000 from its endowment to cover predevelopment activities.

ECM has awarded \$32,500 in recoverable grants over the last two program years to cover predevelopment expenses.

## 2. Church of the Holy Spirit (CHS),

**Boston—Mattapan:** With the assistance of Jeff Brown, Consulting Architect, and a year of careful planning and discernment, the CHS planning team is ready to hire a developer to build a 40-unit affordable rental development on vacant church-owned land behind the sanctuary.

ECM awarded \$8,500 in recoverable planning grants in program years 2006–07 and 2007–08.

## 3. St. Andrew's, Methuen:

ECM's predevelopment funding has led the City of Methuen's Community Development Department to designate St. Andrew's as one of its top three affordable housing development sites. The City will complete a financial feasibility analysis for building approximately 40 affordable family apartments.

St. Andrew's is a historic landmark Henry Vaughn church, along the Spicket River. The new housing would be created by demolishing the rectory and parish hall, acquiring abutting property and relocating the church parking lot.

ECM awarded \$19,500 in recoverable



grants in program years 2006–07 and 2007–08.

## New Rental Housing—Individuals

**4. St. Paul's, Brockton:** The congregation owns a dilapidated commercial property next to the church and is in the process of acquiring two more that abut the church on the opposite side. Concord Square Development, an affordable housing planning and consulting group, helped St. Paul's newly formed nonprofit social service subsidiary, St. Paul's Community, Inc., create a partnership with Caritas Communities to acquire the additional property and begin planning a 30-unit studio apartment development for very-low income individuals.

ECM awarded \$37,500 in recoverable grants; \$17,500 for predevelopment expenses and \$20,000 for refundable deposits for property acquisition.

**5. Grace Church, Newton:** Grace Church owns a vacant half acre lot next to the church in Newton Corner. An ECM feasibility study grant allowed the congregation to understand different trade offs between selling the property at market and selling the property to an affordable housing developer. The congregation has asked a

nonprofit group home agency to prepare an offer to buy the land to build a group home for individuals with disabilities.

ECM awarded \$7,500 in recoverable grant funds in program year 2007–08.

**6. Plymouth Task Force for the Homeless:** PTFH is a faith-based collaboration of seven congregations in Plymouth, including Christ Episcopal Church. PTFH hopes to develop permanent housing for 10 homeless men by purchasing property somewhere in Plymouth. The Committee has selected Father Bill's Place, Quincy, a faith-based nonprofit as its development partner.

ECM awarded a \$4,950 in recoverable planning grant in program year 2007–08.

## Homeownership Opportunities

**7. St. James' Church, Cambridge:** ECM's recoverable planning grant enabled St. James's to enter into an agreement with OakTree Development to lease church land to create a 48-unit condominium development including 7 affordable homes. The development site will include a former car wash that abuts the church, a small section of the church's garden and the entire church parish hall and parking lot.



St. Stephen's Towers, Lynn

OakTree Development, a Cambridge for profit housing developer is known for green construction. Since the St. James' is located just two blocks from the Porter Square Red Line T stop, this is a mixed-income, green, transit orientated housing development. The development will be built without government funding; the

market apartments will subsidize the affordable homes.

ECM awarded a \$15,000 recoverable planning grant in program year 2007-08.

**8. Bridge Housing, Inc. Martha's Vineyard:** This nonprofit housing developer and project originated at Grace Church,

Vineyard Haven. The plan is to develop 22 affordable homes for home ownership in a land trust model. We expect the recoverable grant will be repaid from the construction loan.

ECM awarded a \$20,000 recoverable grant for predevelopment expenses in program year 2006-07.

**Preservation—  
Elderly Rental Apartments**

**9. St. Stephen's, Lynn—St. Stephen's Tower, Lynn:** The Tower is a HUD Section 236, elderly building with 130 apartments, 52 subsidized by the Rental Assistance Program or RAP.

ECM awarded St. Stephen's \$15,000 of grant funds: \$7,500 in 2006-07 and \$7,500 in 2008-09.

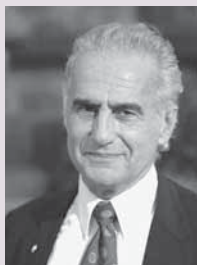
We anticipate that this property will be eligible for a preservation refinancing and rehabilitation transaction through the MassHousing Finance Agency in 2009. The next step is for the church controlled General Partner to assemble a preservation transaction team that is acceptable to the Limited Partner.

## SAVE THE DATE

# ECM's Annual Meeting

**Tuesday Evening, June 9, 2009**

George Sherman Union, Boston University



We are proud to announce that the Keynote Speaker will be **Phillip Mangano, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.**

Prior to this Washington, DC appointment in 2002 Mr. Mangano became known as a champion for the **abolition of homelessness** in the tradition of past generations abolitionists, who defied the odds against the prevailing ideology that proclaimed the necessity of the status quo and the impossibility of change.

In 2007 Mr. Mangano was nominated as one of TIME Magazine's *100 Most Influential People*.

**For more information about Annual Meeting**

please contact Lucena Daley at [ldaley@diomass.org](mailto:ldaley@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826 ext 206

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# Four Parishes Engage their Communities

**E**piscopal parishes are responding to the needs of the homeless in a variety of ways, from supporting soup kitchens and day shelters, to investing in affordable housing and participating in various local and regional boards, task forces, ecumenical councils and other partnerships. In this issue of *All Things New* we are showcasing the ministries of St. Paul's, Peabody; the Church of the Good Shepherd, Wareham; Christ Church, Plymouth; and St. Paul's, Brockton, all parishes in cities faced with serious economic and social challenges. There are soup kitchens, day shelters, community revitalization projects. And all four are in some stage of engagement with the challenge of housing for the homeless.

## **St. Paul's, Peabody**

Like the other churches in this story, St. Paul's is part of a community facing serious challenges: a 42% increase in homelessness between 2005 and 2007, a drug and alcohol abuse rate 427% higher than the state's, and a cost of owning a home that is higher than the median income. Joyce Caggiano, rector at St. Paul's, says that St. Paul's members "are surviving and even doing well, but many are one paycheck from foreclosure." As such they are even more aware of the needs of their neighbors and their community.

St. Paul's is part of the "Healthy Peabody" initiative, working to reduce drug and alcohol use among youth. They participate in providing food for Haven for Hunger, the largest food pantry and hot meal provider on the North Shore, and they also have a modest assistance program for those in need. St. Paul's Preschool offers reduced tuition to support parents in the community with the help of Community Partners, a social service agency.

Caggiano also serves as St. Paul's delegate to the North Shore Community Action Program (NSCAP), working with other faith-based and community groups. (NSCAP was recently named the North Shore Regional

Council for the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness [IHCC].)

## **Church of the Good Shepherd, Wareham**

Wareham is an economically depressed community, where many are barely able to pay their bills for food, heat, and housing. Rector, David Fredrickson said "The people of Good Shepherd live in the community, know its needs, and have the heart to help. Throughout its 140 year history the church has answered the call of the local community, ministering to this particular place."

The list of Good Shepherd's services is long: a food pantry, a drop in center, the oldest Alcoholics Anonymous group in the Commonwealth, space for food and sex addicts groups. Good Shepherd's Pat Probert Friendship Tables offer a meal six days a week, and the parish has led other churches to offer meals as well. In the early 1990s Good Shepherd started the Community Resource Network, which provides rapid response to those in need of services, and the Network meets at the church.

As for housing, Good Shepherd helped form the Wareham Area Committee for the Homeless (WACH), an ecumenical group. Out of WACH came Turning Point, a day resource center for homeless people. Fredrickson said "without question Turning Point has become the focal point for helping the homeless, with a food bank, meals, and help finding shelter. Turning Point people are willing to work 40 hours/week for nothing." Recently Turning Point, which continues to lead efforts against homelessness, was able to secure state funding for its administrative expenses thru a block grant to the town of Wareham.

Fredrickson serves on the Advocacy Committee of the Interchurch Council of Greater New Bedford, while Good Shepherd remains focused on service at the town level. He quotes a history of the town that portrays the parish's leadership in service, and the extent to which it inspires action from the rest of the commu-

nity. "This comes from being in Wareham for generations," he says. "It's a privilege to be a priest here."

## **Christ Church Plymouth**

Christ Church is a mid-sized church with an average Sunday morning attendance of 170-200. Its outreach is centered on vigorous shelter and food programs which, said the Rev. Ted Cole, interim priest, "are at the heart of our parish life."

## **Shelter and Housing**

In 2002, Christ Church offered its Parish Hall to house single homeless men in response to a request by the Coalition for the Homeless, an organization serving homeless families, looking for a host site. The previous winter, a man had died in a dumpster in which he had sought shelter. The Coalition provided the staffing and the meals. During that first season Christ Church was sole host. A parish member went door to door in the neighborhood, informing and reassuring residents about the project.

In the fall of 2004, parishioners began to reach out to other churches to assist in taking on an emergency shelter program. Now seven congregations, rotating weekly, provide nightly shelter for as many as 20 guests, with an average of 10 per night. The program is called "Overnights for Hospitality," and is based on "Room at the Inn," a concept originated in Tennessee by Charles Strobel, which brings churches together to share their resources—and their property—in giving shelter that is welcoming and supportive of guests as well as an efficient and an ingenious use of the strengths that churches have to offer: available space and generous hearts. As a host site, a church provides two or three staff on site with multiple parishioners as chaperones. Christ Church also provides volunteers to other churches and a synagogue.

Christ Church launched the Plymouth Task Force for the Homeless, which has become an ecumenical group with 501(c) 3 status and a regional leader in tackling

the challenge of homelessness at all levels. Connie Melahoures, a lay leader and Task Force member, described its wide range of work not only in shelters but in permanent housing, working with state and federal funding, the Plymouth County Housing Alliance, and the ICHH.

### **Food Pantry**

Christ Church's food pantry has been in operation for many years. Originally run out of small spare rooms in the church campus, "the pantry continued to be active and grow," said Cole, and now has its own small house, built "Habitat for Humanity" style with donations of time and materials

Paul's Kitchen, has been in operation since the early 1980s, serving lunch to the hungry and homeless. Today St. Paul's Table has a volunteer professional chef, a paid associate director, and about 80 different volunteers on weekdays. On weekends 30 different churches and organizations rotate responsibility for meals.

### **Providing shelter and reviving the neighborhood**

As the parish works to address needs for food and respite, St Paul's seems drawn inexorably toward the whole life of its larger community, aware at the same time that (as its website says), "If there is a future

Wentworth, clerk of St. Paul's Community, said "People need a place they can call their own, where they can feel safe and get the help they need to live productive lives. Everyone has something to give."

### **Housing**

St. Paul's has now begun to explore the possibility of providing housing for its neighbors. With ECM's support, discussions are underway with faith and secular organizations about "Opportunity Housing." This model would provide studio-condominiums at low cost to "graduates" of rehabilitation programs such as the Salvation Army's, with supportive services,

**“for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the King will answer them ‘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.”** —Matt.25: 35-40 NRSV

from a large team of volunteers. Bishop Thomas Shaw came for the dedication in 2004. In 2008, volunteers at the pantry distributed 57,000 meals as of November 30, up by 15,000 for the same time last year. Out of the pantry have grown two other programs, including Thanksgiving dinner baskets and a "Family to Family" gift program for the holidays.

### **St Paul's, Brockton**

St. Paul's has been a part of Brockton for over a century, but has been divided by conflict. As it works to recreate itself, the parish also works to strengthen the community that surrounds it. "The future of St. Paul's as an Episcopal worshipping community, and of St Paul's as a place of social mission and outreach, are intertwined," said the Rev. Jackie Schmitt, Vicar. "This isn't just about charity, but is essential to the life of the church."

### **Feeding the community**

St. Paul's Table, formerly known as St.

for a worshipping congregation at St. Paul's Church, [the neighborhood] must be improved in appearance, safety and productivity for the community at large."

In February, 2007, St Paul's conducted a survey of its meal guests, which revealed that most were living marginally, in very modest circumstances and at risk of homelessness. Many responded positively to the need for a place to go during the day, for socializing, conversation, recreation and safety.

In response, the congregation formed "St. Paul's Community," to support its community outreach and development. While respite and shelter for St. Paul's Table guests was an initial concern, longer term goals are to provide a safe and healthy community day center, called Pleasant Green and named for streets in the neighborhood. The center will be for all those at the margins, and will support work to end homelessness. Schmitt said, "our goal is to get other churches, as well as secular organizations, involved in the center, which ought to be owned by the whole community." Ellie

to enable chronically homeless single adults to be able to live and work on their own. St. Paul would be a part of the supportive services needed by residents, who would have the Pleasant Green Community as a part of their daily lives.

Warden Joanne LaiChoy describes St. Paul's as a church "really for the people, living in Christ. You can't help but feel how strong a sense of community and spirit we have, so inclusive, with tireless volunteers putting on a great meal. It's not just St. Paul's itself, but St. Paul's and the community."

### **Parishes and Homelessness**

These four active parishes, so attuned to the needs of their neighborhoods, are only some of the many churches engaged in working not only to help the homeless but to end homelessness itself. ECM continues to build our support for these churches in their work. We offer guidance and consulting for those seeking to create permanent housing, and for those wishing to become involved.

# Parishes Across the State Respond to Homelessness

According to an ECM survey completed in the fall of 2008, Episcopal parishes across the Commonwealth are responding to this call, and actively working to help those in need. Over 100 parishes responded to the survey and shared with ECM an overwhelming number of services and programs they support. Each church, like any strong community, has its own ways of serving. Since space is limited, every parish can't be acknowledged, but the following is an example of the incredible work being done across the state by Episcopalians.

## Many different services

Trinity Church, Haverhill, has a weekly meal program called "The Joyful Ladle." They have provided financial support for housing and child care, and support local organizations working to help the homeless. Parishioners at the Community Episcopal Church in Southwick support the local food pantry, run a Thanksgiving food drive, work with the department of Social Services to help children with needed items, prevented one family from losing their home by doing much needed repairs, and volunteer and cook at the local soup kitchen.

St. Thomas in Taunton operates a five-day a week soup kitchen, feeding over a hundred people each day. St. Phillips in Easthampton, Church of the Holy Spirit in Fall River, and St. James in Great Barrington, among many others, serve hot meals on a regular basis. St. Mary's in Dorchester and St. Stephens in Lynn are among the many others who run food pantries. Whether these programs are large or small, they all illustrate how churches, as faith-based organizations, are ready to serve as the rock-solid base for community service, especially in ending homelessness.

## Churches working actively to end homelessness

Churches have long provided care to those in need, so it's not surprising to see

so many listing thrift shops, donations of warm coats, weekly hot meals, food pantries, and even nightly shelter. What is most remarkable is the number of churches already involved in providing permanent housing and support services, whether as participants in local or state organizations, or converting their own property to housing, or both. Church members increasingly recognize that ending homelessness starts with providing a permanent home. They also recognize that new residents often need help, in the form of social services and counseling, to remain in their homes.

## Church property donated to housing

Many are exploring the possibility of using church property to provide permanent housing. Trinity Church, Concord, for example, purchased property and donated it to the Concord Housing Authority. St. James, Groveland, is building very low income rental housing. St. Elizabeth's, Sudbury, is raising resources and dollars for a Sudbury Habitat house, and is working to ready its rectory for a family with a housing voucher.

## Churches and civic organizations

Many parishes are engaged in local, re-

gional, or state organizations centered on ending homelessness. St. Andrews, Framingham, for example, last year hosted a panel with local housing organizations and the Massachusetts Coalition to end Homelessness, and is working with local agencies to help homeless families find housing. Several Worcester churches (All Saints, St. Luke's, St. Matthew's, and St. John's) support "Hope for Housing" a program that provides flexible dollars for homeless prevention. The rector of Trinity Church, Marshfield, sits on Marshfield's Affordable Housing Board. St. Andrews, Framingham, hosted a panel with local organizations and works with the local Interfaith Hospitality Network to house and help homeless families find housing.

Katie Campbell Simons, ECM's Associate Director for Public Policy, said "We were overwhelmed by how engaged people are in addressing homelessness all across the state, including the Diocese of Western Mass. The dedication of these parishes is the inspiration for ECM's work. Because we know how much these parishes care, we seek to support them in any way we can in caring for people in need and, starting in 2008, working directly to end homelessness."

## "Share, Learn and Celebrate!" Episcopal Parishes Addressing Homelessness

Saturday, May 9, 2009  
10:00am to 1:00pm  
All Saints Church, Worcester

Keynote speaker: **Representative Byron Rushing**

Please join us for a luncheon forum to **celebrate** how our congregations are responding to homelessness and **learn** from each other as we hear from a panel representing parishes across the state working on this issue.

TO REGISTER, or for more information please contact Katie Campbell Simons at [kcsimons@diomass.org](mailto:kcsimons@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826 ext 224

# Episcopal City Mission Works on Housing and Homelessness

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lessness in Massachusetts. The goal of ECM's work in this area is to educate and engage the Episcopal community about the mission of ICHH and to help build a groundswell of support for this shift from a reliance on emergency shelter to a response focused on homeless prevention and housing based solutions.

## **Statewide Collaboration and the Future**

In an effort to collaborate statewide, ECM met with Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts to explore possibilities of engaging Episcopal parishes in that

diocese in this effort. Bishop Gordon Scruton welcomed ECM to the parishes of the Diocese of Western Mass, creating a powerful statewide coalition of parishes.

Through this collaboration and across the Diocese ECM seeks to engage the Episcopal Church in the ICHH's work via:

### **Public advocacy:**

To support the shift of about \$80 million in state

funding from temporary shelter to housing construction.

**Regional Leadership:** Episcopal parishes involved in regional efforts being funded by the ICHH can help communities utilize the ICHH grants to their best ability and help ensure that new efforts are designed to meet the specific needs of the community.

**Individual Parish Efforts:** Construct or manage housing with funds awarded through the ICHH grants, (possibly match-

## **Regions Awarded Funds by the ICHH**

- Boston
- Metro Boston
- South Shore
- Cape and Island
- North Shore
- Merrimack Valley
- Greater Worcester
- Greater Pioneer Valley

ing funds provided by the parish). Or operate direct service programs in collaboration with other programs operating in the region.

## **What the future holds**

Dr. Costa observed that ECM "flies with two wings," one being the funds that ECM can raise or leverage to support parishes and communities interested in investing in affordable housing, and the other being the advocacy and organizing work intended to create systemic change for the permanent solution of issues like homelessness. This approach integrates ECM's programs: the Affordable Housing Program supports parishes and community partners with recoverable grants, technical assistance and when feasible, investments; the Burgess Fund helps to organize communities who are advocating for adequate funds from the state; and, the Public Policy Program helps engage Episcopalians and others in support of these campaigns.

Together these programs are building the social and political will to bring about systemic change. ECM invites Episcopal parishes and individuals to join in this effort.

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# “Housing: A Basic Human Right” Policy Statement

Adopted by the Executive Committee of The Episcopal City Mission in 1982

## A P P E N D I X A

In response to the housing crisis which confronts individuals and families of low and moderate income in the City of Boston and other urban areas, the Episcopal City Mission affirms that access to decent, affordable housing is a basic human right.

The opportunity to live in safe, sanitary and decent housing cannot, therefore, be determined by the forces of the marketplace alone. The role of government at federal, state and local levels, as well as Churches and other private sector institutions, is crucial to the securing of this right for all persons. Nothing less than such a partnership in commitment to this basic right will adequately address the crisis which confronts our cities

### **Housing As A Basic Human Right**

The Episcopal City Mission bases its conviction that access to decent, affordable housing is a basic right on the belief that human rights to which persons may lay claim have their source in a reality transcending all organizations, institutions and systems. They have their origin in God, and may be claimed by virtue of humankind's status as the creation of God.

Human rights are the claims of men and women which find their legitimation in persons' status as sons and daughters of God. Such rights may be withheld or denied by political tyrannies, economic exploitation or social and class discrimination. They remain, however, the just possession of all, and may be claimed by all.

The extension of basic human rights to all persons is that standard which determines the legitimacy of any political, economic or social system, and is the standard by which a determination is made as to whether such systems are living up to their obligation. To protest the denial of any basic human right and to hold

systems accountable for the extension of such rights is the appropriate role of the Church and for its individual members.

### **The Biblical Tradition and Human Rights**

A human right is what justice requires in response to a particular human situation or need.

In seeking to define the content of basic human rights and to determine the requirements of justice in relation to particular human situations and needs, persons of Biblical Faith turn to that tradition and to the insights of the social sciences in regard to those realities which contribute to the health, well-being and welfare of individuals, families and communities, and are, therefore, imperatives of social justice.

That Biblical Faith which defines the content of human rights declares that God is a God of justice whose special concern is for those who are the victims of injustice, and those who are the victims of neglect, discrimination and deprivation.

To be persons of Biblical Faith who respond to God's initiatives means to share God's concern and engage in God's action to correct wrongs which have been perpetrated on our neighbors, and to overcome every form of injustice. To ignore the plight of our brothers and sisters who, because of lack of income or class and racial discrimination live in unfit housing is to fail to participate in the life and mission of God in the world.

Biblical Faith also recognizes the inherent dignity, worth and value of each person, regardless of income, status or any other personal characteristic or attribute. That dignity and value is not earned or merited, but is given by a gracious God to all human beings.

That which is given by God is denied by those human actions and social poli-

cies which denigrate the worth and value of individuals. For persons to be denied access to the necessities of life such as livable housing is such a denial.

That Faith declares also that the whole created world is under the ownership of a God who has committed into our hands the use of its resources. We are not ultimately owners but stewards of the world and its resources. Human systems which deny access to resources such as housing are not forms of responsible stewardship, i.e., stewardship responsive to God's ownership of all that God has created.

To withhold from any human being access to the resources of the created world, by direct design or by indirect result, is nothing less than a form of idolatry for it suggests that certain things may be held in absolute ownership by some and not shared with others. God alone owns the world and it is God's choice to share it and its abundance.

To see that the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, and the homeless given shelter has long been recognized as at the heart of the moral expression of Biblical Faith.

Indeed, Christ declared that the way we respond to the needs of those who lack food or clothing or shelter is the way we respond to Him. Biblical Faith suggests that religious commitment is expressed through commitment to our neighbors. The Scriptures declare that to act justly toward our neighbors is to know God.

To fail to respond to the human needs of the men, women, and children who, with us, are sons and daughters of God is to deny God Himself. Whether persons of limited income have access to adequate shelter is thus for us at its heart both a question of justice, and a religious and theological question of central importance.

## Faith Summit on Homelessness—A Success!

**O**n Thursday January 22nd over 130 people came together at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Framingham to learn, discuss and strategize about ending homelessness in Massachusetts. Episcopal City Mission along with the event's co-sponsors; One Family, Inc., The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance and United Way of Mass Bay and the Merrimack Valley have labeled the event a "tremendous success."

Attendees came from all corners of the state, from the Pioneer Valley to the North Shore and Cape Cod. Included in the crowd were members of Episcopal congregations, shelter providers, affordable housing consultants, state employees, the New England Regional representative from the White House's Faith Based Initiative's office, several local elected officials, and the Governor's Director of Grassroots' Initiatives.

Bishop Gayle Harris began the program with a rousing welcome. With her words she created a mood of understanding and compassion, and prepared the audience to hear the hope and new innovations being proposed to end this crisis in the Commonwealth.

The keynote was given by Robert Pulster, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH).



*Attendees fill the room at St. Andrew's*

Mr. Pulster gave an overview of the mission of the ICHH and their plans to shift the state's approach to homelessness from an emergency response to one focused on prevention and long term solutions. He shared how several state programs will be changing their outcome goals to be in line with this mission and that the administration recently awarded 8 regions a total of \$8 million to begin working on homeless prevention, housing creation and job growth and stabilization in their communities.

The Rev. Bob Bachelder, the Executive Director of the UCC Central Area Mission Society talked about how his community has collaborated with over 20 congregations in the Hope for Housing program, an initiative that raises unrestricted funds for homeless prevention, through rental

assistance, fuel assistance and other forms of support for families at risk of becoming homeless. This program was an excellent example of how the faith community can engage in this work to end homelessness.

The evening concluded with opportunities for attendees to talk with one another, sharing their own experiences, ideas and questions about their role in this work. Discussions were lively and just the beginning! ECM and its partners plan to follow up with all those who participated to provide action steps and even more information on the changes happening at the state level in their communities. Together we can help end homelessness in Massachusetts.

### **Housing As A Human Right**

The conviction that housing is a basic human right is, however, by no means limited to those of a particular religious tradition. In making that affirmation, the Episcopal City Mission joins with other groups concerned about the rights of persons.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on Decem-

ber 10, 1948—a time at which the influence of our own country over the U.N. was strong—declares that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself [sic] and his [sic] family, including housing

### **A Response To The Crisis**

In response to the housing crisis confronting low and moderate income persons and families, the Episcopal City Mission

affirms its longstanding and continuing commitment to housing as a basic human right. It will continue through the Burgess Urban Fund and the housing seed money loan program to make its resources available to those groups which seek to increase the opportunity of low-income persons to obtain the housing which should be theirs as a basic human right.

However, the Episcopal City Mission also pledges itself to use its influence to:

- mobilize its constituency to hold government at national, state and local levels accountable to the longstanding commitment of decent and affordable housing for all persons;
- urge the Churches and other private sector agencies to join with it in implementing a partnership involving government and such agencies in the development of adequate housing for all;
- work with others for the adoption of a housing policy in the City of Boston and other urban centers of Eastern Massachusetts which will be responsive to the needs of low and moderate income persons;
- support tenants' rights organizations and movements as they seek to influence public policy in regard to housing for low- and moderate-income persons.

The Episcopal City Mission also commits itself specifically to involvement in issues of public policy which determine whether the right of all persons to housing is extended or denied, including:

- the preservation and strengthening of rent control and the elimination of vacancy decontrol;
- the control of condominium conversion;
- the rehabilitation of existing public housing units and construction of new public housing, such rehabilitation and construction to be undertaken in consultation with tenants at all levels of decision-making;
- the prohibition of the sale of existing public housing units to private developers;
- the rehabilitation of public-owned, abandoned property for use as low and moderate income housing;
- the prevention of arson-for-profit and the criminal prosecution of arsonists;
- the prohibition of the use of any form of public support (grants, tax breaks, zoning changes) to any development which cause displacement or other negative effects (e.g., on health or physical environment) on low- or moderate-income communities unless compensatory measures are implemented.

As the Episcopal City Mission, through its Issues Committee, seeks to develop strategies for engagement in these public issues it will at all times be open to coalition initiation or building with other groups which share concern for the realization of housing as a basic human right.

## PEOPLE IN MISSION

### Philip Mangano

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**PM:** In a number of cities, communities of faith are forming teams of people to be close neighbors to those newly housed, supporting them with friendship, social capital, and resources to help them settle in. What this kind of work does for people of faith, especially for those who have been on the front lines of service, is to move them from seeds of charity to reap a harvest of justice. They become part of ending an injustice, and those deeds are in keeping with the intention of the Gospels. Scriptures from so many faiths are related to social justice. The message is not that God's intent is to manage a social evil, but to end it. So when a faith community works to end homelessness, they become even more fully a part of God's intent.

**JS:** *You and your colleagues speak often about those in need of homes as consumers, whose preferences we must attend to. Do you think that this is a side of charity that has been missing until now?*

**PM:** If we understand companionship rightly, our breaking bread together is also a responsibility to listen to our neighbors. "Neighbor" is the word Jesus taught us: Love them and do for them what we want done for us. The idea of the customer or consumer is simply an extension of being in companionship with our neighbor.

The economic concept that a business must talk to its customers or consumers is by no means a contradiction to the work of helping our neighbors. For 25 years homeless people were considered unable to identify what they wanted. But those who paid close attention saw that it was not pills, programs or protocols that were wanted, but a place to live. Smart business means offering a product wanted by the customer. That is why we sit with homeless people and learn what they want, and we involve homeless people in planning to ensure consumer preference in our work.

**JS:** *You've spoken about the rewards you find in being with homeless people. Is this one way you refresh your spirit? What other steps do you take to renew your energy and faith?*

**PM:** Listening to homeless people, and being a companion with them, like St. Francis, is one source of refreshment and strength for me. Another is the extraordinary number of people, especially government officials, who have stepped forward to join our abolitionist partnership. We become part of a conspiracy, a "breathing together," to do that which has seemed impossible.

Finally, I am inspired by the lives of my "patron saints," heroes who sustain me—St. Francis, William Wilberforce, William Lloyd Garrison, Susan B. Anthony, Malcolm X, and Simone Weil. Their words and deeds are an affirmation of the Good News of the Gospel in our world.

# Philip Mangano

**P**hil Mangano is the Executive Director, United States Inter-agency Council on Homelessness in Washington, D.C., and will be the keynote speaker at the ECM Annual Meeting next June 9. *All Things New* writer Jane Sherwin spoke with Mangano about his own spiritual life and what has shaped his journey.

**JS:** *Not everyone knows about your own personal journey. Would you talk a little about that?*

**PM:** I was in the music business in Hollywood, where I had done some volunteer work for the needy in the late 1970's. Then I happened to be in Boston and I saw Franco Zeffirelli's film, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" at the Harvard Square Cinema during a visit to Cambridge in the early 80's. The movie is about the early life of St. Francis. I went in thinking one way about my life and came out with a different direction. I knew about charity and compassion, but I never knew you could dedicate your whole life to the poor in companionship and the breaking of

bread. Robert Coles influenced me in that direction as well. I left Los Angeles with the intent of working with the poorest of the poor in companionship. The roots of the word "companion" have to do with sharing bread (*com*, meaning *with*, and *pan*, from *bread*).

So I moved back to Boston, thinking that I might become a Franciscan monk. But as I worked with the priest instructing me he told me the three vows—poverty, chastity and obedience. I asked him, "Would one for three be good enough?" At the same time I learned that Boston's first bread line since the Great Depression was starting at that church. I volunteered and spent three years every day volunteering on that bread line, being a companion to the hungry, working at evening meals, meeting and getting to know homeless people and giving them shelter in my apartment. That was also the time when I realized there was a problem: the lines for food were getting longer, not shorter. There were hundreds of people waiting for sandwiches. Growth, in this case, was in the wrong direction. Something was wrong with our good intentions.

**JS:** *Do you remember what enabled you to make that leap from individual care to system change?*

**PM:** I think my discovery of St. Francis was the most important factor. A professor in seminary indicated that we should be concerned less about what God's will was for our individual lives and more about joining up with what God was already doing in the world. So I began to invest my life in companionship, being with the poorest on Boston's streets, being together in breaking bread. This, of course, has another level of meaning in our faith. I was also reading about the Abolitionists. They lived in a time when many people said that, if we could just make conditions better, our work on slavery was done. The Abolitionists said no, slavery was a spiritual wrong and we needed to right it.

**JS:** *You've said that communities of faith provide the friendship that sustains the housing arrangements you are working to provide. Would you say more about what you mean?*

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