



West Virginia Council of Churches

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February 9, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Flint,

It is with much grief and sympathy that we have watched the events concerning the lead contamination of Flint's water supply unfolding in the news. Please know that beyond all else, our thoughts and prayers are with you, and especially the children of Flint.

West Virginia has been no stranger to contaminated water. Two years ago, Freedom Industries spilled thousands of gallons of a chemical called MCHM into our water supply. 300,000 people, including children, were impacted by the spill. In addition to the chemical spill, families in the community of Prenter have suffered from coal slurry contamination of their water, and for years, DuPont released a chemical called C-8 contaminating the city of Parkersburg's and surrounding communities' water supplies.

We remember all too well not being able to use the water for cooking or bathing or washing. We remember how our children lost access to the food served at school and the vulnerable among us calling for help.

A wise Bishop of West Virginia once wrote, "The Church that extends the Incarnation always asks, who is sick? Why are they sick? Who is hungry? Why are they hungry? . . . We will be for them . . . We will be on their side – on the side of the victims."

When we ask, "Who is thirsty? Why are they thirsty?" we believe that the questions have power in and of themselves, reminding us of our neighbors and our failure to love manifested in neglect, exploitation, classism, and environmental racism.

We also remember that God "has come down to deliver" in the midst of our suffering (Exodus 3: 7 – 8) and that with God, we are not powerless. We know that by speaking out, sharing our stories, and organizing, we can increase accountability and grow stronger as the beloved community.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do. We hope to visit one day and hope that you will come visit us, too. There are many communities who have been affected by water contamination. Together, we can make a difference.

May God's blessing be with you.

Yours in Christ,

Jeffrey S. Allen
Executive Director

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