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On behalf of the New York State Council of Churches, I bring you greetings during this Christmastide. We give thanks for the ministry we share with all of you. As we approach the end of the year, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a contribution to support our work. As you think about our request, allow me to offer a brief overview of the ministries of the Council.

**First, the Council certifies and supports chaplains in state institutions** including state prisons. Should people in your parish or community have the misfortune of being incarcerated, it is really essential that they receive pastoral care from well-trained chaplains inside the system. Your contributions help support our staff and volunteers which manage the certification process while providing support services and visits to chaplains and prisoners in the system.

**Second, the Council advocates for the poor and disenfranchised in the public square.** We publish legislative reports and sponsor trainings which shed light on proposed legislation and help churches focus their advocacy efforts. We also build coalitions across the state among faith based and secular groups. Examples of our collaborative work include successful advocacy for the raise the age law where New York will no longer prosecute and incarcerate most 16 and 17-year olds as adults. We also advocated successfully for 2.5 billion dollars in the state budget for affordable housing. More recently, we have been working hard to stop Federal and State budget proposals which could adversely affect the health care and financial well-being of the citizens of New York. We also focus on immigration reform and environmental policy.

**Finally, the Council offers opportunities for faith formation.** At present, the Council sponsors a well-attended United Nations Conference for high school youth. This year's conference will be held on February 20 to 22, 2018. The Council also held a conference this last summer on Bridging the Urban Rural Divide. We are planning another conference for next summer.

All of this work is born out of strong passion to work together ecumenically to offer the good news of the Gospel to the poor and disenfranchised, to instill hope in those who are incarcerated, and help us learn and grow together in faith.

**Would you consider supporting the Council?** Please [click here to make a donation](#). We also invite recurring donations which help us have a more predictable stream of income. For your reference, I include links to [a detailed description of our work](#) and [a donation response sheet](#). Checks may also be sent to our office at [1580 Central Ave. Albany, NY 12205](#).

Thank you for your kind consideration. If you have any questions or wish to share thoughts about the work of the Council do not hesitate to contact me at [508-380-8289](tel:508-380-8289).

In faith,  
Peter Cook, Executive Director