Dear Friend,

I'm writing to you with an exciting invitation: will you partner with the New York State Council of Churches to bring together congregations, planners, advocates, developers and other leaders to strategize on how we can build more inclusive communities?

I know this is a hot-button topic right now--but the NYSCOC has been talking to congregations across the state over the past two years, and it is clear to us that when it comes to the local community, people are yearning to move beyond political rhetoric and begin to strategize together.

- We know that our communities need to include housing for seniors and disabled adults and low-income workers. Can we become more effective advocates for these projects?
- We know that we need to get creative and find new uses for abandoned lots and foreclosed properties. Can we become catalysts for redevelopment efforts?
- We know that the property that houses of worship own--buildings and land--often feels like a burden. Can we find new ways to use our property so that we can become part of the solution to the challenges facing our cities and towns?

In 2019 to 2020, we will be leading a series of regional conferences where we connect our social and theological insights with hands-on training in design and advocacy that we speak directly to what we already know--and what we are wanting to do. We've formed a new partnership with the Pace University Land Use Law Center that will allow us to bring their deep knowledge base to congregations who are ready to take steps to develop property to the benefit of the communities where they live.

We are now looking for organizations and companies who will join us as Sponsors of this new initiative that we are calling "Who Is My Neighbor?" Goldstein Hall Attorneys at Law and the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church have already signed on. Will you join them?

Here's what we can offer: Between October 2019 and May, 2020, we will be hosting five regional conferences for leaders of congregations and other community members. We expect between 40-50 participants at each event, representing between 10 and 20 congregations who are motivated to engage with issues related to community development. The conference will also draw local officials, planners, advocates and others interested in connecting to new partners in their communities.

The conversation won't end when the conference ends. Each participant will receive a workbook and that they can bring back to their community. And we'll stay in touch through social media and direct emails, building new networks for collaboration.
Here’s what our Sponsors will receive:

- An opportunity to connect with faith communities who are looking to expand their mission while making better use of their property to build housing, arts centers and other community spaces.
- You can attend each conference—or send information that we will provide to participants. We’ll include you in a resource and participant directory with contact information and a description of your organization.
- Your logo will appear on our website with a link to your organization. We will also feature the names, logos and contact information for each of our Sponsors in our opening presentation as well as in the print workbook.

Please consider one of the following levels of Sponsorship:

- Regional Sponsor (per conference) $1,000 Lead Sponsor, $500 Supporter
- Series Sponsor (all 5 regional conferences): $4,500 Lead Sponsor, $2,000 Supporter
- Workbook Lead Sponsor: $6,000

The five seminars will be held 9 to 5 at the following locations:

- Tuesday, October 22, White Plains, Pace University Land Use Law Center
- Tuesday, November 12, Medina, First Presbyterian Church
- Tuesday, January 28, (Wednesday, February 5 snow date), Western Long Island, Location to be announced
- Tuesday, March 17, Saratoga Springs, New England Congregational Presbyterian Church
- Tuesday, May 19, Syracuse, University United Methodist Church

For more information about the "Who Is My Neighbor" Initiative, please see the enclosed flier or go to www.nyscoc.org. For more information about Sponsorships, please contact The Reverend Peter Cook at 508-380-8289 or pnysccook@gmail.com or The Reverend Heather Kirk-Davidoff, Program Coordinator at 240-281-5005 or kirkdavidoff@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you! As The Rev. Dr. William Wilkinson, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Medina, said at our program launch at Union Theological School a few months ago, "Participation is emancipatory!" Together, we can help congregations across the state build communities with a stronger sense of connection, responsiveness and openness.

Yours Sincerely,

The Rev. Peter Cook
Executive Director