Noted author, Dr. Mindy Fullilove spoke at Union Theological Seminary on Discovering Joy in a Root Shocked World. In her presentation, she invited congregations to take a deep interest in their neighborhood and their cities to build more socially and economically inclusive communities. Healthy communities nurture human connection and strong and hospitable neighborhoods. True to its mission, the church can offer leadership to nurture these kinds of communities.

Ø Do you wish your church could do a better job connecting with your neighborhood, town and city and widening its matrix of relationships?

Ø Are there architectural, zoning, financial and social barriers in your community which perpetuate inequality and exclusion you would like to address?

Ø Do you feel like your church building limits your mission and ministry because of deferred maintenance or a design configuration which does not work any more?

Ø Have you ever considered renovating your property while, at the same time, building affordable housing, creating arts and community spaces, and/or building schools and educational programs.

Ø Would you like to be with experts and colleagues who can help fire your imagination while offering the financial and practical tools you need to fulfill that mission and place your church in a stronger spiritual and financial position?

New York State Council of Churches, the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church, Goldstein Hall Attorneys at Law and Pace University Land Use Law Center and growing list of other partners are designing a workbook, seminars, and a consultation network to offer the very best expertise to faith communities which want to enhance their mission and have their assets better used to strengthen their financial position and be a blessing on their neighborhoods, towns and cities.

We would like to schedule four to five one-day seminars for the fall of 2019 around the state in rural, suburban and urban settings.

As we describe these seminars to church leaders, we generate a lot of interest and inquiries about next steps.

We would like to hear from you as to whether you would like to attend and identify a location which would work for you by filling out this brief form. We are also seeking additional financial sponsors to underwrite this effort. Please click here to indicate your interest in this initiative. We will follow up with more information and resources. You can also call Peter Cook at 508-380-8289 or write to him at Pcook@Nyscoc.org if you would like to discuss your situation further.
RESOURCES & COMING EVENTS ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING USE

There are few events coming up soon which might be of particular interest to you as you think about your mission and how your church can extend that mission:

Click here for Dr. Fullilove’s presentation Finding Joy in a Root Shocked World.

Nuts and Bolts of Faith Based Development: A Webinar on Tuesday, May 21 from 11 to 12

Click here to register.

Modern Approaches for Traditional Buildings: Creative Opportunities for Religious Real Estate through Development or Adaptive Reuse: A Panel Conversation on Wednesday, May 22 from 10 to 12 in the Bronx. Click here to register and for more information.

2019 Planners Network Conference NYC is sponsoring a A two-day, multi-city conference bringing together researchers, community groups and others interested in progressive planning from Friday, Jun 21, 2019, 8:30 AM – Saturday, Jun 22, 2019, 1:00 PM Higgins Hall - 61 Saint James Place, Brooklyn, NY 11238. Click here to register.

LEGISLATIVE REMINDERS

SEPARATION OF CHILDREN ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSE ACT

We are urging you to contact both your Assembly Member and State Senator right away to urge them to be a co-sponsor of the SCAR Act. The SCAR Act is on the agenda of the Senate Committee on Families and Children on May 21 at noon in Room 915 of the Legislative Office Building. We are seeking the Assembly Committee, chaired by Assembly member Ellen Jaffee, to also vote on the bill.

We also urge you to write letters to the editor. Click here for a sample. To further aid you in shaping your arguments, take note of this editorial which appeared in the New York Daily News which was authored by The Reverend Chloe Breyer, Executive Director of the Interfaith Center of New York. For more background on the SCAR Act click here to see it on the New Sanctuary Coalition web site.

DRIVER’S LICENSES FOR IMMIGRANTS

Join the #GreenLightNY campaign in our FINAL PUSH to win #DriversLicensesNOW before the end of the 2019 legislative session in June! Register today at http://bit.ly/GL5-21 for the action on May 21 and stay tuned for more details about our program of activities.

CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT

The New York State Council of Churches is joining with Green Faith and many others to invite faith communities to support the Climate and Community Protection Act. Both Green Faith and the Council are among approximately 170 co-sponsors of the act as part of the New York Renew coalition. For the past two years, our state government in Albany has had the chance to
adopt climate legislation - the Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA) - that embodies our values of compassion, love and justice.

**Sign a letter to Gov. Cuomo and the state legislature calling for climate action now.**

The CCPA sets an ambitious emissions reduction goal, invests in frontline and vulnerable communities, and protects workers. It is aligned with our values and is a beacon of hope.

**GREEN NEW DEAL**

The New York Conference of the United Church of Christ at its annual meeting overwhelmingly lent its support for a resolution in favor the Green New Deal which will be considered by the General Synod. **Click here** for a copy of the resolution and **click here** for frequently asked questions. This may be the kind of resolution that needs to be considered by other denominations if they wish to support the Green New Deal. **Click here** for a back ground piece from the Christian Century.

**FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT**

The Interfaith Climate Justice Community of Western New York continues its letter campaign for divestment of fossil fuel stocks from the state pension fund.

**Make a copy of this letter and ask others in your place of worship to sign the letter (a sign on sheet is enclosed). Organizations can also sign (for example, your Social Justice Committee).**

*If you wish to sign on click here. Here is* the growing list of signers from Western New York. **The goal is to collect hundreds of names and WNY faith affiliations and send them to Comptroller DiNapoli. Please mail the names and congregational affiliations to Riverside-Salem UCC/DC, P.O. Box 207, Grand Island, NY 14072-0207. We will add the names to the growing list. Mail your list by Monday, May 19th. We also continue to collect signatures for the statewide Faith Leader Fossil Fuel Divestment letter: You can sign on by clicking here.**

**NEW YORK HEALTH ACT**

Please remember to attend the first hearing on the New York Health Act on Tuesday, May 28 at the Capital. **Advocates for universal health care are mobilizing to turn out for the hearing, bear witness to the proceedings, and show support for this bill. Buses and car pools are being organized from across the state. People can learn more and RSVP for travel here.**

**PAROLLEE VOTING**

Join Let NY Vote and Restore the Vote in Albany on Wednesday, May 22 as we advocate for voting rights for people on parole. Reserve your seat now. Click the link here: **RSVP NYC buses will leave at 6:00 am SHARP from 4th Ave, between 13th and 14th Streets in Manhattan. Returning at 9 pm.**

Our work reforming New York’s antiquated voting laws is not complete if we leave Jim Crow laws on the books, disenfranchising thousands of New Yorkers. Grassroots activists across the state held over 100 meetings with your representatives so far this year — and because of your advocacy, we were able to achieve historic victories. Your voice will be the catalyst for change,
once more, as we urge our representatives to pass voting rights for people on parole and finally kick Jim Crow out of New York.

Join people from across the state on May 22 as we gather in Albany to meet with our representatives and urge them to restore the right to vote to people on parole.

Over 30,000 New Yorkers are on parole at any given time. Criminal disenfranchisement laws disproportionately impact people of color, removing the voice of entire communities. The Governor’s 2018 executive order was a good temporary measure, but S1931/A4987 would make restoration permanent.

Note: If you have any questions, please contact: Patrick Berry, who is cc on this email (berryp@brennan.law.nyu.edu)

SMALL DONOR MATCHING

Elected officials in Albany didn't pass a small donor matching program in this year’s state budget, but they committed to forming a commission that would outline New York's small donor matching program by December 1st. Now a month later, we’re still waiting for the commission to be set up! With the clock ticking on the public financing commission, urge your state legislators to act. Email them now. >

While we seek to have the legislature seat the commission, there is a companion effort to encourage the Senate to introduce a bill for small donor matching which will offer guidance to the commission about what we would like to see in their final recommendations. The bill will also be important in shaping deliberations of the deliberation if they choose to convene in December to revise any recommendations made by the Commission.

Together, we can ensure New York has fair elections that work for all of us, not just big donors. Thank you for helping keep up the pressure when it counts. In faith,

Peter Cook
Executive Director
New York State Council of Churches

Remember to visit our website

We value your partnership in ministry with us. The New York State Council of Churches relies on contributions to carry out its ministry,

please donate.

Also, like us on facebook and follow us on twitter.