Worship Resources

for incorporating Guaranteed Livable Income in Advent services, as provided by Barry Morris.

Advent season provides uncanny help for related issues like the crises of the climate; addictions and toxic drugs; decent sick benefits for precarious work such as long-term & home care and processing plants; and for many, income insecurities.

Consider, please, the following week's Advent gospel texts in relationship to our UCC advocacy for a Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI).

Week One and Matthew 24:36-44

What of the caution to "keep awake", as one remains "ready for the Son of Man/Human One coming"?

Personally, liturgically, financially, vocationally, bio-rhythmically, ecclesiastically, we seem to long for integration into a whole — hoping that the whole is greater than the sum of its weary parts. Decades, now generations, of advocating for a GLI within and beyond the churches affirms, as it seeks, an integration of those resources and policies that redress unfairness — being dealt a dirty hand — and affirm equality. As do *Truth & Reconciliation* calls; to wit:

"Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians" [*Truth & Reconciliation: Calls to Action*, Principle #5]

Week Two and Matthew 1:18-25

What of the designated name of "Emmanuel": the God with us in flesh, pitching tent in our midst's?

Over against us, even within us — let's name the pressures, if not principalities and powers — **which bear down upon us yet** signify something of the nature of God with us, and provide an energy reserve for one more push and pull for justice as equality, liberty and order.

Week Three and Matthew 11:2-11, Luke 1:47-55

What of the query "Are you the One who is to come?" and, "blessed is anyone who takes no offense at (him)"?

Biblical students, Rabbis and monastics affirm that we seek God until the Holy One, beyond the many, finds us; yet, if a GLI resolution looms as the catalyst, would we trust it **to be** so? Luke's resounding Magnificat signs so (Lk 1: 46-55).

Week Four and Matthew 3:1-12

What of "even now the axe is lying to the root of the trees"?

Offensive to some economists, patches of politicians, perhaps ethicists, and generations of battle-weary activists, a GLI resolution may well "axe" otherwise entrenched policies which normalize inequalities, its accompanying indignities, and, alas, feelings of inevitable fate-ness.

Oh that an Augustine's confession guide the Advent ax**e**, that charity is no substitute for justice withheld. Let us welcome, then, the leavening and levelling GLI *kairos* moment.

Fact Sheet on GLI

Poverty can happen quickly, to anyone, which is why the United Church of Canada has been fighting for national economic, social and personal stability since the 1970s.

Why? A **Guaranteed Livable Income** (GLI) is a payment to individuals or families by government that covers the cost of basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing, transportation and community participation) and is not conditional on meeting employment criteria. It allows everyone to live with dignity and security, regardless of their work situation. Since the 1970s, the United Church of Canada has called for a universal GLI that is non-discriminatory and accessible, particularly for Indigenous peoples.

Why now? As we shift into a different phase of the COVID fight, now is a unique opportunity to build on the heightened awareness of the importance of community health and well-being and on the demonstrated success of basic income programs. Low-income racialized communities have been hit the hardest by COVID and its economic impact. A guaranteed livable income would benefit all, especially those in our society who are economically disadvantaged by manifestations of systemic racism. Organizations and politicians recognize this: in recent months, Bill C-223 (in Parliament) and Bill S-233 (in the Senate) are being debated. You can contact your Member of Parliament and Senators and urge them to support Bill C-223 / S-233 to establish the first national framework for an unconditional GLI for all persons over 17 across Canada. You can write your own email or use this template from UBI Works.

How: Governments use two methods for designing and administering guaranteed incomes: a demogrant, a fixed amount unaffected by income level; and a refundable tax credit, a maximum benefit reduced as other sources of income increase. There are multiple sources the governments could use to pay for a GLI, including: closing tax loopholes, increases or additions to income taxes (particularly corporate), and removing some income transfer programs/non-refundable tax credits (ie the Working Income Tax Benefit, the GST Credit).

The biggest governmental barrier to implementing a GLI is likely the cost, particularly in light of the pandemic, but studies show **GLIs pay off in many ways**. They increase participation in the labour market; improve academic performances, mental health and housing/food security; result in fewer visits to clinics or hospital emergency rooms (easing government expenditure on public health); and lower rates of criminal activity. **The benefits of a GLI, as drawn from lived experience[1], include**:

" knowing I had a purpose, and being able to make a plan because of the extra financial resources does something profound to your mental health."

"I would not turn the heat on until December. In November I would be in my place with winter clothes on and shivering because I am trying to hold off the heating bills."

" I didn't view it as just a handout. I still worked hard...but it was the cushion...I wasn't stressing about his I am going to pay my bills the next month."

"it was very much dignifying. I was trusted for once."

For more info: email justice@united-church.ca or search "GLI" at www.united-church.ca.

[1] **D**rawn from past-Senator Lois Wilson's notes on the Southern Ontario's Basic Income Experience Report, March 2020.