An Open Letter from Clergy and Leaders of Faith Communities
to Governor Dannel Malloy
and members of the Connecticut General Assembly

We, the undersigned clergy and leaders of faith communities, urge you to take a different approach to the current budget you are about to impose on Connecticut residents.

We urge you to reject the dominant narrative of fear and scarcity, especially as it is proclaimed by the representatives* for the wealthiest of our state’s residents- and instead consider the individuals, the children and the families whose lives you will profoundly impact with your decisions and actions. (We use the word “representatives” because we believe there are many wealthy and privileged in Connecticut who would be proud to pay their fair share.)

The crafting of our state’s fiscal policies to meet the interests of the economically privileged, specifically the top 1%, is myopic and immoral. An austerity budget as it is being crafted will benefit the few, who by no means live on an austerity budget, and will deprive the many, who do.

It is not too late to reverse course.

Budgets are moral documents. A great religious leader proclaimed that “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Budgets can lift millions out of poverty; budgets can consign millions to poverty. Budgets can provide access to a vibrant network of “public goods” such as quality affordable health care, public education, health insurance and other essential human services. Budgets can also bury us deeper into a system of income inequality that commonly reveals the fault lines of racism, classism, ageism, and an insidious fear of “the other” however defined. Budgets can strengthen the mechanisms that make a democracy more inclusive. Budgets can also dismantle those mechanisms, weakening the fabric of a democracy that promises “liberty and justice for all”.

Governor Malloy and members of the Connecticut General Assembly, the choices you make today are moral ones, with a profound impact on us all.

- Cutting access to needed services, reducing access to child care programs, eliminating Earned Income Tax Credits, laying off or eliminating the opportunity for the very workers who provide these services to continue to work, while proposing that 100 Connecticut residents receive a tax break of $100,000 through a repeal of the estate tax? This is a moral choice.
- Cutting 9,500 HUSKY parents from the Medicaid program, eliminating basic dental services for the poor and elderly, and taking actions that will erode Connecticut’s
Medicaid program as a health guarantee for our low-income, elderly and disabled, while refusing to seriously consider a .01% revenue increase on the incomes of extraordinarily wealthy individuals? 
This is a moral choice.

- Balancing our state budget on the backs of low and moderate income families, while allowing large profitable corporations to pay their workers poverty wages without consequence. 
This is a moral choice.

We understand that the projected budget deficits are daunting. We understand that the choices you face are not easy. We also understand that those who benefit most from a system of inequality generally exercise their power and privilege to protect their interests, their wealth, and a system that indulges them every day, whatever the long-term negative consequences for a larger quality of life for the majority of Connecticut’s residents.

We call on you to resist the temptation of serving those who are wealthy and powerful, and instead—root your actions and choices to serve the greater good.

We urge you to reconsider the current course of our state budgeting and to embrace policy alternatives that will create greater equity and justice in our state. You can do so by:

- Modernizing our current sales tax system;
- Broadening the services taxed while lowering the rate of sales tax, thereby raising $730 million;
- Reforming the wealth and income tax systems, thereby generating $238 million from our wealthiest individuals;
- Assessing a low wage employer fee on large profitable corporations, thereby generating $305 million;
- Passing a sugary beverage tax that will promote health choices, while raising up to $105 million.

The above reforms alone could generate $1.38 billion in additional revenue!

The voice of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King sounds for our own time: “We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

As leaders of faith communities, as residents of this state, and as your constituents, we urge you to heed the wisdom of Dr. King the simple morality of “The Golden Rule”; and the visionary social, economic, and political viability of a new course.

In faith and finance,
Rev. Cheryl P Anderson
First Congregational Church, UCC
Washington, CT

Pastor Brian C. Baeder
Church of the Good Shepherd, Congregational
West Woodstock, CT

The Rev. Diann H. Bailey
First Church
United Church of Christ (UCC)
Suffield, CT

Rev. Martha Bays
Congregational Church in Killingworth, UCC
Killingworth, CT

Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett
Temple Sinai of Newington
Newington, CT

Rev. Bradley J. Bergfalk
First Congregational Church of Litchfield
Litchfield, CT

The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, Senior Pastor
First Congregational Church
Southington, CT

Rev. Dr. Steven E. Burt, retired UCC clergy
Lyme, CT

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson Bull
Unitarian Universalist Minister
Meriden, CT

Rev. Ruth Chartier, Farmington Valley Association, Connecticut Conference
First Church of Christ, Congregational
Farmington, CT

Rev. Denise Clapsaddle
Co-Pastor, Broadview Community Church (UCC)
Hartford, CT
Rev. Leonard G. Clough  
Member of First Church of Christ, Congregational  
Simsbury, CT

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Retired  
First Church in Windsor, UCC  
Windsor, CT

Rabbi Tony Eaton  
Congregation Simchat Yisrael  
West Haven, CT

Reverend Ronald T. Evans, Retired  
Senior Minister Emeritus  
First Congregational Church of Darien, UCC  
Darien, CT

Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager  
First Church of Christ, Congregational  
East Haddam, CT

Rev. Lucille L. Fritz, Pastor  
Huntington Congregational Church United Church of Christ  
Shelton, CT

Rev. Abby Gackenheimer  
Congregational Church of Plainville  
Plainville, CT

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey M. Gallagher, Senior Pastor  
United Congregational Church of Tolland, UCC  
Tolland, CT

The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Kennard  
Lynwood Road Church  
Storrs, CT

Rev. Janice Kimball  
Hadlyme Congregational Church, UCC  
Hadlyme, CT

Rev. Gini King  
First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ CT  
Guilford, CT
Rev. Sara Lamar-Sterling
United Methodist clergyperson
Yale New Haven Hospital
New Haven, CT

Rev Matt McCaffrey
Waterford Congregational United Church of Christ
Waterford, CT

The Rev. Ruth E. McCarty
First Congregational United Church of Christ,
Bristol, CT

Rev. Ineke K. Mitchell, Retired
Canton, CT

Rev. James H. Latimer
North Madison Congregational Church, UCC
Madison, CT

Rev. Barbara J. Libby
Authorized Minister of the CT Conference,
Serving as Conference Minister for the RI Conference, UCC
Resident of New Haven, CT

Rev. Frank Newsome
Senior Pastor of First Congregational Church
Norwalk, CT

Rev. Dr. Patricia Nicholas (retired)
New Milford, CT

Rabbi Stacy Offner
Temple Beth Tikvah
Madison, CT

Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals
Co-Pastor, First Congregational Church
New London, CT

The Rev. Dr. Sandra L. Olsen,
Middletown, CT

The Rev. John W. Olson.
Bridgeport City Council
Democratic Town Committee
Bridgeport, CT
Rev. Josh Pawelek,
Unitarian Universalist: East
Manchester, CT

The Rev. Dr. Allie Perry
Worship Coordinator
Shalom United Church of Christ
New Haven, CT

Rev. Suzanne Personette
Interim Pastor
Middlefield Federated Church
Middlefield, CT

Rev. Ellen Petersen
Riverton Congregational Church
Riverton, CT

Rev. Mark Pilletere
Center Congregational Church
Torrington, CT

Rev MaryAnn Purtil
Marlborough Congregational Church
Marlborough, CT

The Rev. Dr. Virginia McDaniel, Senior Minister
First Congregational Church of Granby
Granby, CT

Rev. Carol Rawls
Fairfield East association
Member of First Church of Christ Congregational
Redding, CT

Bishop John Selders
CT Moral Mondays
Hartford, CT

Rev Kent Siladi ,Conference Minster Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
Hartford, CT
Rev. Barbara Shaffer-Bengston  
Hospice Chaplain  
VITAS Healthcare  
Middlebury, CT

Rabbi Jeremy Schwartz, Temple Bnai Israel,  
Willimantic, CT

Reverend Toni Smith,  
Membership United Church of Chester  
Chester, Ct

Rev. Dr. Eileen Sypher (Retired)  
Membership in United Church of Chester  
Chester, CT

Rev. Stan Youngberg  
Interim Minister  
Prospect Congregational Church UCC  
Prospect, CT.

Rev. Rodney Wade  
Long Hill Baptist Church  
Waterbury CT

Rev. Dr. Alida Ward  
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church  
Fairfield, CT

Rev. Cynthia Willauer,  
Ministry for the Care of Creation,  
First Congregational Church  
Old Lyme, CT