

My name is Rev. Sara Gavit and I am the priest serving St. Anne's Episcopal Church and the people of Calais. I strongly support LD3 and encourage our elected lawmakers to do all they can to provide emergency aid to those in need.

In the past three days, the church received six requests for fuel assistance. That's six families – our neighbors, families, and friends – who don't have enough money to heat their homes. Almost every day since mid-November, I have received pleas for help. People sign up for HEAP, and yet don't have interviews until January or February. The situation is particularly dire this winter due to high fuel oil costs, as well as other economic stressors. The folks who ask for help are desperate. Elders on fixed incomes, folks with disabilities, families with young children, are struggling the most. The most vulnerable members of our community. People are making hard choices between buying food and medicine, paying rent, or adding a few gallons of fuel oil to the tanks.

The people of Washington County take care of one another and, if they can, make donations to fuel funds available through churches, food pantries and non-profits. It still isn't enough. The need for assistance is much greater than the resources available.

As a faith leader, as a mother and grandmother, I implore you to help the people of Maine who need the most support. The health of our neighbors and the health of our communities in which we live, requires all of us working together. Please do your part and pass emergency relief measures.

Respectfully,
Rev. Sara Gavit