



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Renewable Energy & Tax Tips Are Focus at Sen. Sanders' Community Clergy Breakfast

JAMES SANDERS JR. January 27, 2017



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) today held his Community Clergy Breakfast at the Greater Rescue Church of Christ in Jamaica, where the topics were tax tips and preparation and using renewable energy to reduce heating and cooling costs.

“Today’s breakfast is all about saving money,” Senator Sanders said. “Whether it’s getting a bigger tax return refund or installing solar panels to reduce your electric bill. Saving money

is always a good thing, especially for clergy because they can use that savings to expand their outreach in helping the community, so there is a real ripple effect.”

Representatives from the IRS focused on three key topics: the Earned Income Tax Credit and how it can save money for qualifying residents, the Taxpayer Advocate Service, which advocates on behalf of those who believe they were incorrectly charged or have other filing issues, and taxpayer rights, the basic guarantees to which all taxpayers are entitled.

The IRS representatives also stressed the importance of going to a reputable tax preparer when filing one’s taxes, such as a certified public accountant or tax attorney. They also advised to accurate bookkeeping and saving receipts in order to document deductions.

“Don’t be afraid of the IRS,” said Brenda Stuart-Luke, stakeholder liaison, with the IRS. “We are your friends.”

Also providing a presentation at the clergy breakfast was Richard Hamilton, president of RCC U.S. Corp, who co-sponsored the event. He spoke about how renewable energy such as solar, wind, water and geothermal can reduce or eliminate utility bills. It also lessens our reliance on fossil fuels, which pollute the environment and can cause health issues.

Converting houses of worship from fossil fuels to renewable energy through retrofitting or new construction has many benefits including: job creation, income creation, community revitalization and the reestablishment of shrinking congregations, Hamilton said. The saved money could be used to help churches create affordable housing, senior housing and transitional housing for veterans as well as to provide services in the community such as urgent care, child care, adult care and community centers, Hamilton added.

Senator Sanders' Community Clergy Breakfasts are aimed at educating clergy and giving them the tools and information they need to help themselves and their congregations.