



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Community Engagement Leads Discussion at Senator James Sanders Jr.'s Clergy Breakfast

JAMES SANDERS JR. March 15, 2018



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) hosted his monthly Community Clergy Breakfast on March 15, 2018 at Springfield Gardens United Methodist Church. The topic was community engagement and the objective was to train clergy leaders on how to be active in the community with social, economic and political issues. The special guest speaker was the Reverend N. J. L'heureux Jr., Executive Director of the Queens Federation Of Churches.

"The role of the church ecumenically is to tear down walls and to remove barriers," L'heureux said. "People have very kindly said that the role of ecumenism is to open windows and doors so we can, within our safe confines, look out at the 'other.' Maybe we might open a door to invite somebody in for a dinner party but then we let them go back to where they came from. I dare say that if we are to be faithful to the call of the gospel, we must tear down the walls and those are the walls of economy, of politics, of race - the boundaries that we have created to say that 'we are we' and someone else is the 'other.'"

L'heureux added that the role of church leaders is to bring people together to meet the needs of the community. However, one of the problems today, L'heureux, said, is that faith leaders follow other peoples' agendas.

"Leadership in any biblical sense arises out of community," L'heureux said. "People who become leaders rise up from the community. They grow up in the community. They know the people of the community. They know what's going on in the community, and they can sense the needs of the community. And as they become leaders, they're leadership is to convene, to bring together the community, to address these common community needs and that is our role as clergy."

Senator Sanders has assembled committees of faith-based leaders to address social, political and economic issues. Every month they will meet outside of the clergy breakfast to discuss and collectively address their specific issue and then they will report their findings every month to the leaders at the breakfast.

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.

Our special thanks to this month's breakfast sponsor Cocoon Homecare.