

A Joint Statement by Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United Methodist Leaders
in North Carolina

As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Matthew 25:4

We speak as bishops and Christian leaders in North Carolina about the moral issues highlighted by the Moral Monday events. Our call to speak grows out of these words that we prayed together at our meeting on June 6: "May we be a more vivid symbol of unity to all the faithful. May the witness of our lives proclaim the Kingdom of God."

As you may know, people have been gathering on Monday evenings to offer vigilant witness on moral issues being considered by our elected state officials. We share their concern for many of the issues they are bringing forth.

The Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler of Union Seminary (Charlotte) recently summarized the effect of pending and enacted legislation especially on the poor, the aging and children.

"As you read this letter, the North Carolina General Assembly is passing bills that will remove 500,000 people from the Medicaid rolls leaving them without health insurance; that will remove 170,000 people from unemployment when unemployment rates remain at historically high levels; that threaten to replace the graduated state income tax with a consumption tax that will adversely impact the poorest North Carolinians who will face increased prices on basic goods; that will force college students to return to their often distant homes to vote or cost their parents their \$2,500 dependency deduction.... These and many other bills will adversely impact those who can least afford it and therefore demand a fervent response from people of faith!"

Our concern about the legislative actions cited by Rev. Dr. Sadler is not an act of political partisanship. Rather it is a matter of faith with respect to our understanding of the biblical teachings and imperatives to protect the poor, respect the stranger, care for widows and children and love our neighbors (Isaiah 10:1-2, Hebrews 13:2, James 1:27, Matthew 22:39, Galatians 5:14). We recognize and respect other Christian brothers and sisters who may seek to apply these biblical teachings in different ways and through different means.

We speak and act in love and through our understanding that our first citizenship is in the Kingdom of God, and we do so always as faithful citizens of the democratic process. We urge all Christians to witness to their faith in seeking justice and mercy for all.

The Right Reverend Michael Bruce Curry, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
The Reverend Dr. Leonard Bolick, Bishop, Synod of North Carolina, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Reverend Ted Churn, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of New Hope, Presbyterian Church (USA)
The Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh
Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church
Bishop Larry Goodpastor, Western North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church
The Right Reverend Alfred "Chip" Marble, Assisting Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
The Reverend Anne Hodges-Copple, Bishop Suffragan-elect, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
The Right Reverend Porter Taylor, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina
The Reverend Betty Meadows, Transitional Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Charlotte, Presbyterian Church (USA)