

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 demonstrations. Our call to speak grows out of these words that we prayed together: "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 protest the actions and direction of our General Assembly. Most have made their nonviolent witness within the bounds of the law. Some have decided to witness through acts of nonviolent civil disobedience and have in some cases been subject to arrest.

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 roles 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! "

For us this is not an act of political partisanship. This is a matter of keeping faith with 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 therefore speak and act in love and with humility from our understanding of the claim of our first citizenship in the Kingdom of God on our second citizenship as Americans, seeking the common good through the democratic process.

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