



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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A Statement of Solidarity with Anyone Who Faces Discrimination First Presbyterian Church Opposes House Bill 2

The Session of First Presbyterian Church Durham
April 25, 2016

"As members (of named churches), we may and must speak with one voice in this matter today. Precisely because we want to be and to remain faithful to our various Confessions, *we may not keep silent*, since we believe that we have been given a common message to utter in a time of common need and temptation."

- *The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 1934*

The Theological Declaration of Barmen, penned by Karl Barth in Germany in 1934 during a time of increasing discrimination and persecution of the Jews, reminds us that the church today cannot keep silent regarding House Bill 2 and the discrimination it espouses.

In a Called Meeting on April 18, 2016, the Session of The First Presbyterian Church, Durham, issued the following statement:

Because we believe and profess that every person has been created equally in the image of God, and because we stand in solidarity with our LGBTQ+ members and friends, we, the Session of The First Presbyterian Church, Durham, deplore House Bill 2 and the discrimination it espouses.

This statement is grounded on the most basic tenant of our Judeo-Christian faith: the creation of humankind by God, in his image; equally in his image, and thus blessed by God. (Genesis 1: 27-28) The Session deplores any law, word, or action that discriminates against the treatment of LGBTQ+ persons, or any persons, in regard to their civil liberties, human rights, and protections under the law.

This statement is grounded in First Presbyterian Church's *Core Values*, which profess a commitment: "to invite and nurture a diverse and inclusive community;" to advocate "for social justice and respond to the 'cries of the poor';" and "to love and care for one another, nurturing mind, body and spirit throughout life's journey." The Session, therefore, stands in solidarity with our LGBTQ+ members and friends and with anyone who has been discriminated against for any reason, providing unwavering support and protection against any unjust laws that violate the principle of neighbor love.

This statement reaffirms and puts into practice the *Welcome Statement* of First Presbyterian Church, which "honors and celebrates the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Christ. We welcome individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church." The Session believes the adoption of House Bill 2 directly contradicts a sense of welcome to entire segments of our population in North Carolina in denying them equal protection as citizens. Therefore, the Session of First Presbyterian Church affirms its opposition to House Bill 2, and commits to seeking that it be repealed.

FPC Session

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