

November 6, 2015

Dear Friends,

As you already know, the NC Council of Churches is the primary voice for a progressive ecumenical vision in our state. In my three months on the job as your new Executive Director, I have been simultaneously impressed and overwhelmed by the work we do and the issues we address. The work ranges from care of creation to care for the creatures and everything in between; the issues we cover include peace advocacy, voting rights, health care, workers' rights, and that's just a normal week on the job. Often, individuals and groups solicit our voice because our voice – all of our voices together – has long-standing credibility across this state. We willingly lend our voices to any cause that falls within the purview of the Council's issue statements (www.ncchurches.org/issue-statements/), most recently Medicaid expansion and work against gun violence.

All this advocacy and education is possible because of your willingness to support the Council with your time and dollars. We need your money to continue speaking aloud the call for reconciliation with God, each other, and our selves. A contribution card and return envelope are enclosed or you can donate at www.ncchurches.org.

We also need you to tell others what you know about the work of the Council. We've included some handouts to start the conversation with friends and acquaintances who might be kindred spirits. I believe the Council is one of the best kept secrets in the state of North Carolina, and we need to tell our story. We are a vast network of allies and supporters who often feel our call for open-minded theology and progressive policies is a voice crying in the wilderness. Yet, our voices together – more than 6,200 congregations – can make a difference across North Carolina. Please help us tell people this good news.

One of the great features of the faith that called the Council into being more than eight decades ago is the simultaneous focus on the community and the individual. The way we know we are loved by God is through the community that expresses God's love to us. My own sense of calling has been framed by this dynamic reality. It is through the affirmation and connection of community that I have most keenly felt God's claim on my life. That claim has been lived out in places that require a balance between faith and practice. For nearly a decade I have pastored churches large and small in rural communities and urban areas, places that call for practices grounded in faith. For a decade and a half I worked with and taught students on a college campus, a place that introduces faith in order to elicit practice. The Council is a vibrant integration of the places that have fed my faith and determined my practices. We work at the intersection of faith communities and individual believers seeking to live together into the Reign of God. I feel privileged to stand at this intersection with you.

Thank you for being a part of this good work.

Peace,
Jennifer E. Copeland
Executive Director