Pastoral Letter | September 23, 2025

Dear friends,

The violence, hatred, divisions, and tensions in America continue to ramp up in ways we never would have believed possible ten years ago. Blatant lies are presented as truth in order to increase the divide between people on every issue and topic that can be imagined.

This week, NC native William Barber and our Durham neighbor Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove put out a call for Christian communities to shine the light in the dark hallways and corners where lies and deception develop and fester with the intention to separate us and turn us against one another.

In an article they wrote this week, they called the Christian community to step up and call out the lies. They wrote:

> Lies that are told to divide people for political gain always seed political violence. But moral movements know that the truth will set us free.
> When we say, "Stop lying," we are saying no to the violence that has too often plagued this nation.
> When we say, "Stop lying," we are pledging our allegiance to the freedom that can only come by insisting on the truth.
> When we say, "Stop lying," we are loving our country, where people who disagree can work out our differences in open debate and fair elections.
> When we say, "Stop lying," we are also committing ourselves to tell the truth that those in power are trying to suppress and distract us from paying attention to. . . .
> When Fannie Lou Hamer led Black and white people in singing "This Little Light of Mine" together, they weren't just defying the silence of Jim Crow's lies. They were committing, however small their individual efforts might seem, to use what they had to shine a light on the immoral acts that were being done under the cover of darkness. They would expose segregation's violence by nonviolently sitting in. They would show reporters what happened to Schwerner, Goodman, and Cheney when they tried to investigate a church burning in Philadelphia, Mississippi. They would nonviolently insist that the press corp at the Democratic National Convention bear witness to the way Black people had been excluded from the democratic process in Mississippi.
> In short, they took nonviolent direct action to shine a light on the violence that the regime was trying to deny. . . .
> [W]e do not have to be afraid . . . . When a whole lot of little lights get together, they can drive out the deepest darkness and illuminate a way to something better than any of us could achieve by our own strength. It's why we sing, "*Let* it shine."

Light has an inherent power to drive out darkness. They say it's the best disinfectant. The truth is light, and it will show us the way whenever and wherever we let it.

Let your light shine, friends, in every corner you can. Call out the lies. Stand in the place of truth. Wherever, whenever, however you can. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Let your light shine.

With love, Mindy

For Rev. Dr. Barber's full interview with NPR's Michael Martin, click here:
https://www.npr.org/2025/09/17/nx-s1-5543129/progressives-grapples-with-how-to-respond-to-vitriol-blame-following-kirks-death?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email