

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | November 30, 2017

When we read apocalyptic texts generically, it is helpful to think of them as crisis literature. Something about a given moment—a crisis—calls into question the righteousness of God. But apocalyptic texts remind us of God’s transcendence in the face of difficulty.

Last week ten thousand theologians and preachers gathered at an academic conference and signed a statement of solidarity. It was a moment reminiscent of when, in 1934, Karl Barth, Martin Niemöller, and pastors of the Confessing Church released the Barmen Declaration calling out the German Church’s complicity with Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Regime. Inspired by that Barmen Declaration, this newly-signed [Boston Declaration](#) contends that following Jesus today means fighting poverty, economic exploitation, racism, sexism, anti-LGBT hatred, and all forms of oppression. It is from the deepest wells of our faith from which this call for justice comes.

A portion of the statement reads:

“The Christianity Bonhoeffer denounced is the Christianity we denounce today. It is a Christianity that literally enables hate, hate for people of color, for immigrants, for those of other religions, for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender human beings, for women and girls, for the poor and the most vulnerable among us. And why do these so-called Christians do this? Not out of obedience to the teachings of Jesus, because Jesus taught the exact opposite of their hate-mongering. No, they do it for power, for political gain. We are not here merely to denounce, however.

The most important thing we can do as Christian theologians is announce the good news of the Gospel. The good news is the radical inclusivity of God, for God so loved the world. Not just some in the world who are white, or rich, or male or heterosexual. God loved the whole world of animals and plants and the entire ecosystem that is a victim of this same rapaciousness and nearly mindless drive for political domination. The good news, and it is very good news, is an invitation to turn away from greed and turn toward love of neighbor.”

In this new church year, we are encouraged to claim the Advent proclamation and take Advent into the world. God is here, God is near, and that is good news. We are called to point out God’s activity in the midst of difficulty and spread the Word that God’s activity is love. As advocates for our neighbors, we are called to share the Gospel message with all people, and at times, particularly our political representatives. This was true for the Confessing Church of the early nineteenth century and true for the Confessing Church of today.

ADVOCACY ASK

The Senate bill that is currently being debated would raise taxes on Americans earning less than \$75,000 annually by 2027, while giving permanent tax cuts to millionaires and corporations, according to an analysis by the Republican-led Joint Committee on Taxation. It also would leave thirteen million additional Americans without health insurance, including 340,000 in New Jersey, by eliminating the requirement that everyone carry insurance or pay a penalty, according to analyses by the [Congressional Budget Office](#) and [New Jersey Policy Perspective](#). The elimination the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction would be particularly painful for New Jerseyans.

This week, call our senators. Share your faith through advocacy by letting our senators know that this tax bill offends you and hurts your neighbors. You can call the capitol switch board at [\(202\) 224-3121](tel:2022243121).