

2017 Legislative Seminar
Monday, March 27
St. Mark's United Methodist Church
4801 Six Forks Road, Raleigh

8:30 a.m. – Check in (Light breakfast provided by Partners in Health and Wholeness)

9:15 a.m. – Opening Worship, led by the Revs. Jill and Rick Edens, United Church of Chapel Hill

Choice of one Workshop per Session

10:15 -11:15 a.m. Workshops – Session 1

Stresses on Elections: Press Millen, Attorney, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice; counsel for voting rights advocates

- *Legislators unhappy with Roy Cooper's win over Gov. Pat McCrory want to overhaul the state's election oversight machinery. Examining consequences if the courts allow these changes; also looking at Republican complaints that the 2016 elections were tainted.*

Health Care Decisions: Willona Stallings, Director, NC Get Covered

- *What's at stake in the ongoing debate over health care reform; how can more low-income NC residents get routine care? Is there a workable alternative here to Obamacare if it's repealed?*

Immigrants Among Us: Lori Fernald Khamala, Immigrants Rights Program Director, American Friends Service Committee

- *Will the legislature's hostility toward immigrants be reinforced by new federal policies? Status of anti-immigrant efforts such as obstacles to resettlement and a ban on sanctuary cities.*

Engaging Young Adults: Jennifer Copeland, Executive Director, NC Council of Churches

- *How can churches help convince more young people to get involved in the political process -- at least, to become informed and to vote?*

Governor's Powers Under Attack: Chris Fitzsimon, Executive Director, NC Policy Watch

- *The legislature has moved on a broad front to restrict Gov. Cooper's powers. Which efforts are likely to succeed, which to fail? Which are most significant? Cooper's responses, in and out of court.*

Taxes and Budget: Alexandra Sirota, Director, Budget & Tax Center of the NC Justice Center

- *Ongoing impact of tax cuts and shifts; effects on working families. Gov. Cooper's budget priorities -- what would change? What should progressives see as most important?*

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Lunch, Award Presentation, and Keynote – The Faith Active in Public Life Award will be presented to U.S. Rep. David Price and to Lisa Price, founder of North Carolinians Against Gun Violence. David Price will provide the keynote on the impact federal actions are having and will have on North Carolina.

1:00-2:00 p.m. Workshops – Session 2

Redistricting and Elections: Anita Earls, Executive Director, Southern Coalition for Social Justice

- *What's the outlook for a special legislative election in 2017? Were legislative district maps redrawn, in compliance with the March 15 deadline, or was that requirement lifted by the Supreme Court? Prospects for nonpartisan redistricting to curb racial and partisan gerrymanders.*

Organizing in Churches/GOTV: T. Anthony Spearman, President, NC Council of Churches; Vice President, NC NAACP

- *What can and should churches do to boost the number of voters? Parameters for church-based voter education and encouragement; why such efforts matter.*

A Shared Fate: Rural and Urban NC in an Age of Economic Divergence: Jason Gray, Senior Fellow, NC Rural Center

- *Despite the common phrase of the "rural-urban divide" there is far more that unites than divides rural and urban in NC. Still, the economic divergence is a reality. We'll discuss this and strategies that work for deeper connections and solutions.*

Creating Communion with Elected Officials on LGBTQ Issues: Brent Childers, Director of Faith Outreach, Equality NC

- *Recent polling data indicates a majority of persons of faith in North Carolina are opposed to legislation that targets the LGBTQ community with discrimination but those faith voices for equality need more visibility, particularly in rural and non-urban areas of our state. Strategies for affirming faith communities and individuals to be seen and heard by their elected officials.*

Privatizing Public Schools: Kristy Moore, Vice President, NC Association of Educators

- *The "school choice" movement gathers steam despite mixed academic results; impact on public school systems. Church/state issues. How NC's education governance dispute comes into play.*

Spotlight on the Courts: Rob Schofield, Director of Research, NC Policy Watch

- *State and federal judges are considering major lawsuits over voting rights, redistricting, election administration. Implications of court roster changes; partisanship vs. judicial independence.*

2:15 -3:15 p.m. Workshops – Session 3

Advocacy 101: Beth Messersmith, Campaign Director, NC MomsRising; Jennifer Copeland, Executive Director, NC Council of Churches

- *Whether you are brand news to grassroots advocacy or just in need of a refresher, this workshop will provide effective strategies for progressive, faith-based action.*

Voting Rights: Allison Riggs, Senior Staff Attorney, Southern Coalition for Social Justice

- *Ongoing legal efforts to ensure full, fair access to the polls. Effects of recent court victories. Will the legislature try again with voter ID or cutbacks in early voting?*

Election Results – How They Broke Down: Brad Crone, President, Campaign Connections

- *Drilling into 2016 election results; who voted for whom, and why? Implications for progressives.*

Environmental Conflicts: Brooks Rainey Pearson, Staff Attorney, Southern Environmental Law Center

- *Can a new governor strengthen environmental policies weakened by a conservative legislature? Alternative energy sources, coastal and stream protection, air quality.*

North Carolina's Rightward Turn – A Status Report: Chris Fitzsimon and Rob Schofield of NC Policy Watch

- *North Carolina has now endured six-plus years of conservative rule. Where do things stand? How extensive is the damage? Where does the ideological battle of ideas stand? Is the Right spent or just getting started? More importantly, what are the prospects for the progressive resistance and what should caring and thinking people be doing about it?*

3:30 p.m. Benediction and Charge