

Presiding Bishop Curry, the Rev. Jim Wallis issue letter on Reclaiming Jesus Declaration

May 17, 2018

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Jim Wallis of Sojourners have issued the following letter to church leaders about the [Reclaiming Jesus Declaration](#).

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are writing to you as church leaders: specifically in your roles as heads of denominations, local bishops, regional executives, or heads of national faith-based organizations.

Many of you have already heard about the declaration called [Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis](#), which has been commended to the churches by a group of elders from across the traditions of our Christian families. Conceived and discerned during an Ash Wednesday retreat, written and prayed over during Lent, announced to some colleagues and a few publications at Easter, it will finally be launched to the churches at Pentecost--when the early Christians took their faith to the streets in the public square. Those who have come together did so on the basis of relationships more than formal representation, are all in their sixties or seventies, and are either current or former heads of churches or church organizations.

The declaration, as well as a summary version that has been published in both church and secular publications, are [here](#). And we also want to draw your attention to a short but moving video [here](#) with several of our elders speaking to the need to reclaim the name of Jesus in a time such as this. That video was just released and in just over a day has been viewed by almost half a million people because, we believe, there is a great hunger in the churches and beyond for an alternative faithful Christian voice to what many people are hearing or not hearing at this historical moment.

What we have now heard from many current heads of communions, bishops from many parts of the country, and leaders of faith-based organizations is that they would like to “sign on” to the statement the elders have made. The elders, who have decided to stay together, have met to ponder that question and decided that any other church leaders, of any age or leadership position in the churches, are welcome to sign on IF they are willing to send the Reclaiming

Jesus declaration and video to all the pastors in their denomination, or to the diocese, region, or district where they have leadership responsibility. That is because this is not just a statement, but the beginning of a process of discernment, prayer, reflection, and action that we believe--and have been told by many others--our churches and their pastors urgently need. We believe the declaration and the resources we have created to support it, including a study guide available on [the website](#), are “discipleship tools” for the churches that we are commending as elders.

Your names and titles will be added to a “sign on” list when you tell us you are willing to send Reclaiming Jesus to all the pastors of local churches that you have responsibility for, as it is pastors who most need to have and use this tool for faithful discipleship. So this is an invitation to SIGN and SHARE. You can sign on to the declaration by emailing your name, title, and affiliation here: jsimpson@sojo.net

Also, as a reminder, we previously invited you to join us for the service and vigil taking place here in Washington, DC, on Thursday, May 24 at 7:00 pm Eastern, which will be held at the National City Christian Church, 5 Thomas Circle, Washington, DC, 20005. Following the service we will lead a candlelight procession to and prayer vigil at the White House. You can find [more details about the service and vigil here](#). We encourage you to share the event details with your churches and networks and encourage them to join you—either in person or by watching the live stream of the service.

We have come together out of our deep concern and calling regarding the “soul of the nation” and the “integrity of faith” as we put it in the declaration. If you resonate with that concern and call, we would love for you to join us and share this with as many pastors as you can.

Blessings,

The Rev. Jim Wallis
President and Founder, Sojourners

Bishop Michael Curry
Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church