

NEW HOPE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A CALL TO ACTION

We Presbyterians believe that each person on earth is a child of God and is, therefore, worthy - worthy to be free to be all that he or she can be or become.

However, by conservative estimates, 21 million people worldwide are now living and working in conditions of forced labor. They are not free; they have lost their future. HUMAN TRAFFICKING occurs when someone is forced to work without the freedom to leave.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING, which includes both labor and sex trafficking, is right here where you live. North Carolina is among the top ten states in what is now recognized as the fastest growing criminal industry in the world.

For every story of a child sold to a trafficker by his heroin-addicted mother, there's also the story of a teen from a good home who was lured by the prospect of a modeling job or was drugged and raped at a sleepover. The internet, especially the dark web, gives traffickers the anonymity never possible before. And the frightening thing is that most children and youth feel completely safe in cyberspace!

Our Christian teachings demand that we recognize and address this problem. Many groups in government, churches, and non-profits have organized to fight this mushrooming criminal activity. Members from churches in our presbytery have formed the New Hope Presbytery Roundtable on Human Trafficking. You are welcome to join our group.

We invite - no **urge** - you and your congregation to help us eradicate this scurrilous activity from our world. Bring the problem of human trafficking out of the shadows by becoming knowledgeable about it. Pray for its victims. Spearhead efforts to address the root causes and find solutions. Here are just a few ways you can help:

- Spotlight Human Trafficking in worship. Present a minute for mission.
- Include inserts in your bulletin. There are some good ones ready for download.
- Conduct programs for children, youth, and parents.
- Engage in *Seven Days of Prayer and Action to End Human Trafficking*. (pcusa.org/humantrafficking)

To help you implement these and other action ideas, the Roundtable has created a tab on the Presbytery website (nhpresbytery.org). Click on HUMAN TRAFFICKING to find an overview, brochure, suggestions for action, and links to a wide array of resources. Roundtable members are also available to help you navigate this new territory. Our contact information is on the website.

In the words of Hebrews 13:3. "Remember the prisoners – those who are mistreated – as if chained with them, since you yourselves are in the body also." (New King James Version)

Do your part to confront the horrors of human trafficking. Speak up for its many victims, especially those right here in our midst. Join thoughtful Christians everywhere to restore justice and freedom to those ensnared in this modern-day slavery.

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