

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT OF ALAMANCE COUNTY'S FIRST MOSQUE

As religious leaders, community leaders and active citizens in Alamance County, we whole-heartedly welcome Burlington Masjid, Alamance County's first mosque. We celebrate with them as they begin this week holding formal Friday services. Most of the families who comprise the membership of the mosque have resided in Alamance County for some time without a local mosque, and we support their formation of this worshiping community.

We stand by the rights and privileges of this worshiping community and call upon the deepest tenets of our own faith traditions in urging everyone in our community to be welcoming and embracing of Burlington Masjid.

Our commitments and this call are based on the following:

1. Perhaps the most cherished amendment to our U.S. Constitution states,
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Some of our earliest forbearers from Europe braved the hardships of immigration to the American colonies to escape religious persecution in their home countries and to secure the freedom to worship according to their own conscience and conviction. Therefore, our constitution's support of protection for religious freedom is broad and deep. Freedom of religion was and is today among the most widely recognized "inalienable rights" that we grant to one another as Americans.

While our local government supports this right of the Burlington Masjid's presence in our community, we hope that all of our citizens can embrace the spirit of our Constitution.. When religious freedom is not willingly extended to one, it is a threat to us all.

2. The foundational principles of all three Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—are love of the One God, and love of the neighbor. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

The best of our respective faith traditions, therefore, call us to love the other—to respect the other's faith even though it is different from our own and to demonstrate tolerance for all. We affirm the words of The Common Word, a 2007 joint Christian and Muslim statement.

So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.

We deeply grieve the atrocities that have been carried out by religious fanatics of all faiths. None of the teachings of any of the Abrahamic faiths support these horrific acts of violence. We hope the community of Alamance County will not substitute the acts of a very small fanatical minority for the overwhelming peaceful majority.

3. We should not be at war with any religion, including Islam. Giving such an impression only fuels the propaganda of extremist groups and puts more innocent lives at risk. As citizens and leaders in Alamance County we believe that the best thing we can do to fight terrorism is to be accepting and welcoming of all faith traditions.

For these reasons we call on all the citizens of Alamance County to welcome and embrace the members of the Burlington Masjid.

Alamance-Guilford Section National Council of Negro Women	Rev. Dr. Jan Fuller, Elon University	Rev. Dr. Ray Pollard
Alamance Peace Action	Kaye Gates	Ed Purdy
Rev. Jackie Allen	Rev. Richard Goeres, Macedonia Lutheran	Jane Purdy, Alamance County Human Relations Commission
Amanda Anderson	Rabbi Meir Goldstein, Elon University	Noah Reed, NAACP
Dr. Brooke Barnett, Elon University	Rev. Phil Hardy, Life's Journey UCC	Paul Reeves
Dr. Laurence A. Basirico, Elon University	Wade Harrison	Jan Register, Elon University
Jin-Jin Blackburn	Rev. Dr. Joel Harter, Elon University	Peter Schoonmaker
Tom Blackwell	Rev. Judy Hosner, The Journey 8 Radio Show	Rev. Keith Sexton
Rev. Dr. Dray A. Bland, First Baptist Church - Apple Street	Dr. Lynn Huber, Elon University	Barb Sharpe
Vanessa Bravo, Alamance Human Relations Commission	Meg Huffman	Bill Sharpe
Judith Bobo	Carolyn Hunt	Rev. Ron Shive, Burlington First Presbyterian
Tom Bobo	Trung Huynh-Duc, Elon University	Rev. Adam Shoemaker, The Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter
Barrett Brown, NAACP	O'Neal Jones	Martin L. Shoffner
Mike Brown	Paul Keller, NAACP	Rev. Suzanne Shoffner, Macedonia Lutheran
Rev. Dr. Chris Burr	Rev. Beth Kennett	Dr. Gabie Smith, Elon University
Cindy Busick Maner	Rev. Jay Kennett	Ken Smith
Rev. John Bush, Front Street United Methodist	Rev. Dr. Gary King	Rev. Dr. Sharon Strickland
David Carter	Rev. Dr. Daniel H. Kuhn	Rev. Peter Thompson, Burlington First Presbyterian
Anne Cassebaum, Alamance Human Relations Commission	Latinos Unidos Promoviendo la Esperanza	Anna Torres-Zeb, Elon University
Rev. Lindsay Conrad, Burlington First Presbyterian	Robert Martin	Fr. Gerald Waterman, Elon University
Dana Courtney, MSW, NAACP	Bill Massey	Rev. Eddie Weathers, Southern Conference UCC, Staff
Rev. Frank Covington	Rev. Richard McBride	Dr. Randy Williams, Elon University
Rev. Edward Davis, Southern Conference UCC, Staff	Mr. Bart McCormick	Rev. Sharon Wheeler, Elon Community UCC
Rev. Courtney Davis Shoemaker, Elon University	Shannon McQueen	Norman M. Whitney Sr., Burlington First Presbyterian
Rev. Bob Ellis	Rev. Ervin Milton, Union Chapel UCC	Alice Wieting
Fairness Alamance	Rev. Katie Misz	Bill Wilkinson
Irene Fanelli	Dr. Tom Mould, Elon University	Adeel Zeb, Duke University
Rev. Nora Foust, Southern Conference UCC, Staff	Rev. Patrick Murphy, Front Street United Methodist	Blanca Zendejas Nienhaus
Rev. Suzanne Franklin	Rev. Phil Myers, First Reformed UCC	
	Rev. Jeanne Neal	
	Brian Nienhaus	
	Rev. Randy Orwig, Elon Community UCC	
	Dr. Brian Pennington	
	Rev. Dr. Rebecca Todd Peters, Elon University	
	Rev. Mark Pickett, First Christian UCC	