

## **Statement to Metro Council on Funding the Louisville Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

By Rev. Steven Renner, Third Lutheran Church, on behalf of CLOUT  
(Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together)

Thursday, February 11, 2016

My name is Rev. Steven Renner and I live in Bill Hollander's district. I am the pastor of Third Lutheran Church, which is a member of CLOUT, Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together. I am here tonight to ask you to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund through a small increase in the Insurance Premium Tax. The ordinance needs to be passed by March 23 to provide funding for next year, and there are thousands of families like mine that will benefit from this investment in our Compassionate community.

You might be surprised to know that I am one face of Louisville's Affordable Housing crisis. When my family moved here so I could be the Managing Director of the Shakespeare Festival, we could not afford a safe house in Louisville and bought one in Jeffersonville. Eventually we bought a small one bedroom house on Interstate 65 where the roof would leak and the basement would flood. Three years ago I noticed that the house was uninhabitable due to mold. Two professionals could only afford this house by both working two jobs. We now live in Clifton, where our church owns a parsonage—if we weren't able to live there, I don't know where we could afford to live, even on two salaries. And many of my parishioners at Third Lutheran are part of the 92,000 families in Louisville who can't afford their rent or mortgage. That is almost 25% of our compassionate community's population. This is why we need a fully-funded Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

A newly ordained colleague lives in Lexington. We all know about the Louisville vs. Lexington sports rivalry. But when it comes to housing Lexington is already beating us, by a lot. Lexington started its Affordable Housing Trust Fund last year, and put \$5 million into it. They are already seeing results – they're in the process of building and rehabbing 433 new homes. We've created 49 homes in 7 years because we've never fully funded our Trust Fund. Lexington is moving forward at fast-break speed with its Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Louisville is playing a four-corner stall. And thousands of hardworking families in our city, like us and my member Karen, are suffering because of it. Please know that clergy are not immune to this affordable housing crisis.

That is why I am here to ask you: fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund by really just a small increase in the Insurance Premium Tax by March 23. Thousands of families like mine and my parishioners cannot wait any longer. In a compassionate community, everyone deserves a safe decent place to call home that isn't leaking and flooding.

Thank you.

