

Lynching Site/Execution Site Prayer Vigils (Western Region)
Friday, January 22, 12:00 pm

Modern-day death penalty is birthed out of Virginia's history of slavery, lynching and Jim Crow segregation. As we prepare to support legislation to abolish the death penalty, thank you for participating in our prayer vigils throughout the state. Please share pictures and videos of your prayer vigil with our Communications Director Roberta Oster at roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

Please take a moment and read the safety suggestions listed below:

- Please stay home if you feel sick.
- Please stay home if you have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#). Anyone who has had [close contact](#) with a person who has COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health. If you live with those at higher risk, you should also consider the potential risk to your loved ones.
- Please wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- When you arrive, please minimize gestures that promote [close contact](#). For example: don't shake hands, don't give elbow bumps, and don't give hugs. Instead wave and verbally greet each other.
- Please maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more.

PRAYER VIGIL LITANY

Leader: As people of faith and goodwill, we are grateful for our world rich with difference and diversity. We are thankful for all people, the connection we have with each other, and the connection we have with the Divine.

People: For all this, we give thanks.

Leader: For historical acts of injustice and oppression perpetuated against Aboriginal communities, Black, and various Asian communities in this abundant land of the First Nations:

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: For the times we have failed to recognize racism in ourselves, in our faith community, in our society, and the times we have failed to take action,

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: For complicity in systems of privilege and power over those whose skin color, culture, or creed differ from those of the majority, even today:

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: For the one hundred plus lives that were violently taken through lynching all throughout the state of Virginia:

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: Grant us patience in enduring periods of non-action, persistence in resisting the evil of radical oppression, and faithfulness in working toward racial justice among your people, in the church, and in the world:

People: We beseech you, Eternal Spirit.

Leader: Let us speak the names of those who lost their lives to lynching in our region:

People:

John Henry James (Albemarle)

Robert Burton

Robert Lewis

John Scott

Charles Miller

Columbus Miles

James Carter

Thomas Hodges

Abner Anthony

H.W. Terry

Jerry Jackson

Henry Pennington

Henry Mason

Mack Howlet

E.D. Atchinson

George Lowry

Pinkney Murphy

Andrew Dudley

Unnamed African American male

William Lavender

Thomas Smith

Jesse Edwards

Unnamed African American male

Martin Rollins

Unnamed African American male

Burgess

Lucas

Samuel Wood

George Halsey

Bluford Smith

Jerry Brown

Sam Ellerson (McDonald)

Spencer Branch
John Johnson
Unnamed African American male
Sam Blow
Charles Morgan
John Peters
Paris Suits

Wiley Guynn
David Hunt
Leonard Woods
William Crockett
William Henry Smith
Daniel Long
Raymond Bird

Leader: We stand before this Wall of Injustice in solidarity with all men and women condemned to a state sanctioned death. Based on our understanding of redemption, love and mercy, we reject retribution or collective vengeance as a reason for taking human life. Will you work and pray for the abolition of capital punishment in our country?

People: We will with help from the Divine.

Leader: We stand before this Wall of Injustice recognizing that capital punishment is an expensive, racist, classist, error-prone system with no internal consistency. While we give thanks for the exonerated men and women whose lives have been spared since 1973, we rend our hearts over the individuals who remain on death row. Will you pray for all who are imprisoned on death row, that their lives may be spared?

People: We will, with help from the Divine.

Sources: —A litany suitable for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by Wehn-In Ng, from That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward Racial Justice (The United Church of Canada, 2004); Litany for Capital Punishment from Episcopal Peace Fellowship