

In the Image of God:

A Transgender Day of Remembrance Service

This service was created by Jordan Sullivan for the General Council Office's weekly chapel service. It was used on November 22, 2017.

In preparation, set up half a dozen stations for reflection. See page 4 for examples of materials for these stations.

Visit <https://transrespect.org/en/research/trans-murder-monitoring> for current statistics, and prepare a reflective slide show with the names of the deceased.

Welcome & Introduction

The annual Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) honours the lives of individuals who have died throughout the world in the previous year because of anti-transgender hatred.

This morning we publicly mourn and honor the lives of those who might otherwise be forgotten, giving their silenced lives new voice. It is an opportunity to meet hatred and indifference with love and respect.

Acknowledging the Traditional Territory

(Use an acknowledgement appropriate to your area. For more information, search "acknowledging the territory" at www.united-church.ca.)

Opening Prayer

All: O God, whom no image can encompass, no definition encircle, and yet who meets us in the gentle touch of love, the beauty of a butterfly's wing, and the laughter of children, help us to move beyond our attempts to limit You, intellectualize You, or to eliminate You from all that is earthy, sensuous, or vibrant, so that we may greet You in every particle of this spectacular universe which You are creating. Amen.

(Created by the More Light Presbyterians Retreat & Mission Weekend New Orleans, LA, 2006. Reprint permission granted for congregational use on www.welcomingresources.org/openingworship.htm.)

Hymn

"Spirit, Open My Heart" (*More Voices* 79)

Spoken Reflection

(State your own personal identity at the beginning. Names and stats for the current year are posted in early November at <https://transrespect.org/en/research/trans-murder-monitoring>.)

I am a trans man. A White trans man. A White, educated, able-bodied, middle-class, trans man. The vast majority of people we are here to honour and uplift today are trans women of colour. My experience is not theirs. This morning is a time for us to hear a few of their stories.

But before we move into a time of silence and prayer, I want to share just a few statistics with you. All statistics shared are from the [2017] Transgender Europe's Trans Murder Monitoring Project.

There have been [325] reported killings of trans and gender diverse people between [Oct. 1, 2016] and [Sept. 30, 2017].

In the last [9] years [2,609] trans people have been reported murdered. (Data on hate crimes and state-sponsored violence against LGBT people is non-existent in a lot of countries.)

These reported killings are just the homicides that have been documented. They don't include trans or gender diverse people who ended their own lives; or cases in which the victim may have been misgendered. They also don't include transgender people who were attacked and left for dead but survived.

The annual lists show overwhelmingly that transgender women of colour bear the particular brunt of anti-transgender violence.

The violent manner of their killings expresses the ignorance, hate, fear, racism, and transmisogyny behind their murders. [983] were shot; [517] were stabbed; [272] were beaten. [62%] were sex workers.

While absolute number of killings show the highest numbers are in [Brazil, Mexico, and the USA], the relative numbers (number of reported murders per million inhabitants) show that the highest numbers are in [Honduras, El Salvador and Brazil].

I would like to invite you to take the next 10 minutes to rotate through a few of the stations that have been set up. They will remain throughout the day, so you don't have to see them all in the next 10 minutes. (*See page 4; identify where each station has been set up.*)

Please note that the two stations here in the chapel describes violence, including sexual violence, and sexual language. Discretion is advised. If at any time you find it all too much and need someone to speak to, please see me or (*identify others available to speak to*), or reach out to someone you trust and feel safe with, or you may choose to return to your seat for quiet reflection.

Stations

(Invite people to rotate through the various stations that have been set up; allow approximately 10 minutes, and if possible, leave them set up for the day.)

Silent Reflection

We now honour, by holding in our hearts and uplifting in prayer, the victims of transphobic killings over the past year.

(One way to honour each person is by creating a PowerPoint slide show with name, age, manner of death, and location for each person killed over the past year. You can have that slideshow playing along with reflective music. The first two pages of the 2017 silent reflection are attached, as an example of what a slide show might look like. It took just over nine minutes

to view. You'll find names and other information about those killed this past year, posted in early November, at <https://transrespect.org/en/research/trans-murder-monitoring>.)

Prayer for Transgender Day of Remembrance

by Reuben Zellman

www.keshetonline.org/resource/prayer-for-transgender-day-of-remembrance

Hymn

“We Are a Rainbow,” by David Kai

Lyrics and lead sheets are available to download at

www.sites.google.com/site/davidwkaismusic/home/we-are-a-rainbow

Sending Forth

It is sacred work to make sure that in this world, all are treated equally, all have the right to live a safe life, and every person is counted as a whole and complete person created in the image of God. Let us do this work with our whole selves. Let us stand together and act together so that no one may remain broken.

Material to Use for the Creation of Stations

Prayers:

- The Lord's Prayer For Transgender Awareness (Believe Out Loud)
www.believeoutloud.com/latest/lords-prayer-transgender-awareness
- Standing Against the Headwind of Hatred: A Prayer of Cisgender Confession and Commitment (Transfaith) www.transfaithonline.org/tdor/resources/prayers/headwind/
- Trans Day of Remembrance Prayer (Transfaith)
www.transfaithonline.org/tdor/display/article/tdor-prayer
- Twilight People Prayer (Twilight People: Stories of Faith and Gender beyond the Binary)
www.twilightpeople.com/twilight-people-prayer
- Prayer of Confession for Transgender Day of Remembrance (Transfaith)
www.transfaithonline.org/tdor/display/article/prayer-of-confession-for-transgender-day-of-remembrance

Other Resources:

- A reading by Dr. Jill Weiss from *A Jewish Guide to Marking Transgender Day of Remembrance*
www.transfaithonline.org/tdor/resources/readings
- Jesus dies on the cross, artist Mary Button. See Station 12 at
www.flickr.com/photos/believeoutloud/sets/72157632873157887

News Stories:

Search online using the names provided by The Trans Murder Monitoring project, to find 2018 news stories from around the world. 2018 names and stats should be available in early November at <https://transrespect.org/en/research/trans-murder-monitoring>. Here are some story titles from 2017:

- Torture and Killing of Transgender Woman Stun Brazil
- Transgender woman dies in Chennai, found burnt outside a police station
- Two-spirit woman Jamie Lee Wounded Arrow is 2017's second transgender homicide victim,
- Two transgender Pakistanis 'tortured to death' in Saudi Arabia
- Human Rights Campaign Mourns Kenne McFadden, Trans Woman Murdered in San Antonio
- 28-Year-Old Chay Reed is the 9th Trans Woman of Color Murdered This Year
- Trans advocates call for protection of sex workers after Pointe St. Charles murder

The first two pages of the 2017 silent reflection follow, as an example of what a slide show might look like.

Silent Reflection



*This year - among the many whose names
we may never know . . . We honour . . .*

Kitkat Mae Fermin (18)

Philippines - shot

Name unknown (20)

Mexico

Itzel Durás Castellanos (19)

Mexico - stabbed

W. Rodrigues Alexandre

(age unknown)

Brazil - beaten to death

Yasmin Montoy (20)

Brazil – beaten to death

Name/Age unknown

Mexico - shot

La Cheva Herrera Aceves

(age unknown)

Mexico – shot

Alessa Flores Mendez (23)

Mexico - suffocated and beaten

Name/Age unknown

Brazil - suffocated

Name/Age unknown

Brazil

Zizi Shekiladze (32)

Georgia – beat and stabbed

Name/Age unknown

Mexico - beaten

