

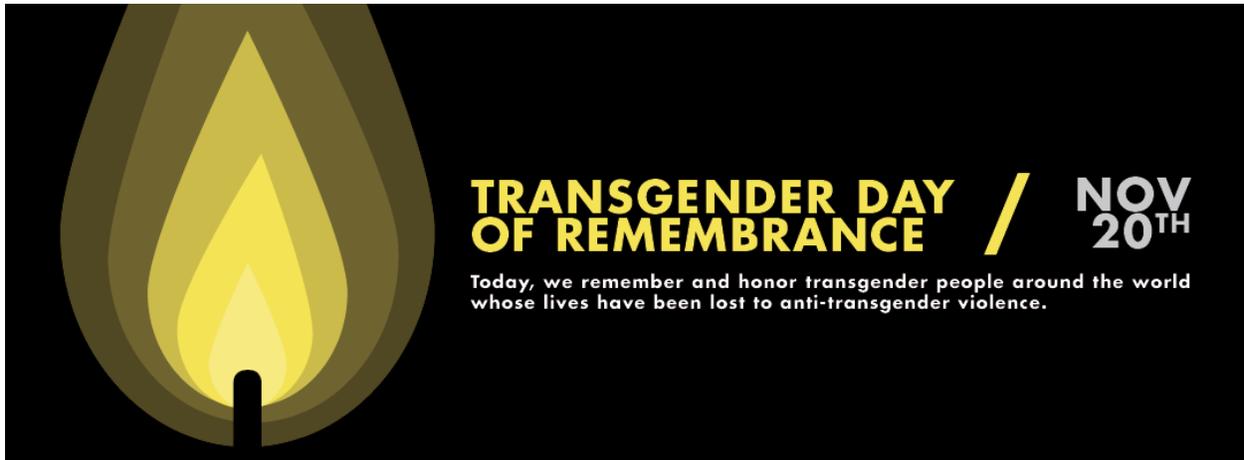
*I'm just me, I'm just free; Art created for **Trans Day of Resilience** 2016 by Asia-Vinae Jazzreal Palmer in collaboration with **BreakOUT!***

Evening Prayers on The Transgender Day of Remembrance

Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021

Convened by

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Trinity Church on the Green
New Haven, Connecticut



Why a Transgender Day of Remembrance?

Sadly, 2020 – the most recent full year available - saw at least 44 trans or gender non-conforming people shot or killed by other violent means. The majority of the dead were Black and Latinx trans women. That year, violence against trans or gender non-conforming people reached the highest level since the tracking this data began in 2013.

These victims, like all of us, are loving partners, parents, family members, friends and community members. They worked, went to school and attended houses of worship. They were real people -- people who did not deserve to have their lives taken from them.

To remember the victims of these acts of anti-trans violence, each year the Transgender Day of Remembrance is held on November 20. It is observed in late November in recognition of the 1998 murder of Rita Hester. Rita was a highly visible member of the trans community in her native Boston, MA where she worked locally on education around trans issues. On Saturday, Nov. 28, Rita was stabbed 20 times in her apartment. A neighbor called the police, and Rita was rushed to the hospital. She passed away from cardiac arrest only moments after being admitted. Almost two decades later, police still have not found Rita's murderer (or murderers).

In 1999, one year after Rita's murder, advocate and writer Gwendolyn Ann Smith coordinated a vigil in Rita's honor. The vigil commemorated not only Rita, but all who were tragically lost to anti-trans violence. In addition to the vigil, Smith launched the Transgender Day of Remembrance website to recognize and remember those whose lives have been lost to anti-trans violence. Organizations throughout the world have since taken to recognizing the day.

Gathering

Lisa Yarbor leads us in saying together

We come asking for mercy.

Meet us, merciful God.

We come in need of clarity.

Help us, teaching God.

We come angry at injustice.

Hear us, reconciling God.

Feed us, caring God

We stand surrounded in darkness.

Send us your Holy Spirit to light our way.

Veni Sancte Spiritus

WLP 832

The refrain is sung by all, repeatedly, with the cantor then singing the two verses over the sung refrain.

Ve - ni San - cte Spi - ri - tus.

Cantor

1. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, from heav - en shine forth

with your glo - rious light. Ve - ni San - cte Spi - ri - tus.

2. Come from the four winds, O Spir - it, come breath of God; dis -

perse the shad - ows ov - er us, re - new and strength - en your

peo - ple. Ve - ni San - cte Spi - ri - tus.

Translation: Come, Holy Spirit.

. Welcome

Rev. Luk De Volder
Fr. Tom Jackson

This is a special day.
Thanks be to God for this day!

Rev. Luk De Volder

Tonight, we join our global church to observe Transgender Remembrance Day.

People

The church engaged and united in Spirit-breathed prayer will see the powerful, healing effects of God's loving will for us.

Rev. Luk De Volder

Tonight, we remember our trans and gender non-conforming siblings who have been lost at the hands of hatred, evil and violence because of their gender identity and expression.

People

God joins us in our grief and pain.

Rev. Luk De Volder

Tonight, we restore anew our commitment to protect, support and remember our trans and genderqueer siblings.

People

God bears witness to our restoration.

Rev. Luk De Volder

Let our worship now honor our memories and reflect our renewal.

People

Amen!

Opening prayer

Lisa Yarbor God full of mercy, bless the souls of all who are in our hearts on this Transgender Day of Remembrance. We call to mind today young and old, of every race, faith, and gender, who have died by violence. We remember those who have died because they would not hide, or did not pass, or did pass, or stood too proud. Today we name them: the reluctant activist; the fiery hurler of heels; the warrior for quiet truth; the one whom no one really knew.

As many as we can name, there are thousands more whom we cannot, and for whom no mourning ritual may have been said. We mourn their senseless deaths, and give thanks for their lives, for their teaching, and for the brief glow of each holy flame. We pray for the strength to carry on their legacy of vision, bravery, and love.

And as we remember them, we remember with them the thousands more who have taken their own lives. We pray for resolve to root out the injustice, ignorance, and cruelty that grow despair. And we pray, God, that all those who perpetrate hate and violence will speedily come to understand that Your creation has many faces, many genders, many holy expressions.

Blessed are they, who have allowed their divine image to shine in the world.
Blessed is God, in Whom no light is extinguished. (*Kaddish by Reuben Zellman, adapted*)

First Reading

Genesis 1:26, 27

Jane Esmonde A Lesson from the book of Genesis.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in God’s image.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Psalm 27

Danisha Collins The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?
the Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?

When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who
stumbled and fell.

Though an army should encamp against me,
yet my heart shall not be afraid;

And though war should rise up against me,
yet will I put my trust in him.

Second Reading

Matthew 7:1–63

Connor Shields A Lesson from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

‘Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, “Let me take the speck out of your eye”, while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 22:30-40

Lisa Yarbor The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Moment of Reflection

Connor Shieldes

Reading of the Names

Jane Esmonde Remembering the names of those who have died from violence against trans or gender non-conforming people is central to our Transgender Day of Remembrance service. Tonight we remember the names of the trans people whose lives have been lost to anti-trans violence in a single year. We must remember that crimes against trans or gender non-conforming people are often misreported, underreported, or not reported at all.

Our Trans Brothers & Sisters Killed in 2020

Danisha Collins of St. Luke's and **Robert Windom** of Trinity Church will alternate reading the names. They will each read five names and then the other will read five names.

1. Dustin Parker
2. Neulisa Luciano Ruiz,
3. Yampi Méndez Arocho,
4. Scott/ Scottlynn Devore,
5. Monika Diamond
6. Lexi
7. Johanna Metzger
8. Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos
9. Layla Pelaez Sánchez
10. Penélope Díaz Ramírez
11. Nina Pop
12. Helle Jae O'Regan
13. Tony McDade .

14. Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells
15. Riah Milton
16. Jayne Thompson
17. Selena Reyes-Hernandez, .
18. Brian "Egypt" Powers,
19. Brayla Stone
20. Merci Mack
21. Shaki Peters
22. Bree Black
23. Summer Taylor
24. Marilyn Cazares
25. Dior H Ova
26. Queasha D Hardy
27. Aja Raquell Rhone-Spears
28. Lea Rayshon Daye
29. Kee Sam
30. Aerrion Burnett
31. Mia Green
32. Michelle Michellyn Ramos Vargas
33. Felycya Harris
34. Brooklyn Deshuna
35. Sara Blackwood
36. Angel Unique
37. Skylar Heath
38. Yunieski Carey Herrera
39. Asia Jynae Foster
40. Chae'Meshia Simms
41. Kimberly Fial
42. Jaheim Pugh Jaheim Barbie
43. Courtney "Eshay" Key
44. Alexandria Winchester

The Prayers

Robert Windom The Lord be with you.

Lisa Yarbor And also with you.

Robert Windom Let us pray together The Lord's Prayer For Trans Awareness.

Our mother and Father, our beloved parent, in whom we move and breathe and have our being,

The hallowing of your name shines forth in the diversity of your children.

May your peace and love, justice and equality, inclusion and belonging reign here on earth as in heaven.

Grant that our trans loved ones might have their daily needs met—that they might find gainful employment without discrimination; that they might have access to medical care without fear; that they might have their rights and lives protected, and that they might find a loving community to belong to and call their own.

Forgive us for the ways that we have fallen short and failed your trans children. Forgive us of the times we turned away, or did not care; for the times we laughed or judged their unique expression of your image; for the times we have misspoken, asked too much, or failed to hear

As we forgive those who might have failed us.

Lead us away from the temptation to be complacent in the face of injustice. But instead give us courage to stand up and stand with your beloved children. For your love and justice is to be made manifest now and forever. Amen. (This prayer was written for Central Congregational UCC (Atlanta, GA) Pride Sunday worship Services on October 9, 2016)

A.

Lisa Yarbor Show us your mercy, O Lord;

Connor Shieldes And grant us your salvation.

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. Let your people sing with joy.

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. For only in you can we live in safety.

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. Your saving health among all nations.

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

The Collects

Jane Esmonde God of love, you weep with us in our grief and fear. Enfold in your loving embrace all those in our trans community lost to death this year. You know their names, Divine Creator, even when they are misnamed or misgendered as a last act of violence and erasure. You see each one as beloved, and call them by their chosen name. You claim them as your children.

Connor Shieldes God of peace, give comfort to those who mourn. Give courage to our trans communities in the face of cruelty and harassment. Bring to justice those who perpetrate this violence.

Lisa Yarbor Challenge us, O Holy One, to speak out for those who are silenced, to stand with those who are bullied, and to go with those who face danger.

Fr, Jackson God of wonder, you are beyond gender. You made each of us in your image. Be with us today and always as we long for a day when every individual is safe and known and honored. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who brings us all together in one human family. May the church say: Amen. *(Prayer by Leo Bancroft, ReconcilingWorks Board of Directors)*

Affirmation of Faith

Danisha Collins Please join in this Affirmation of Faith.

As children of God, we celebrate the beauty and individual worth of all creation.

We believe in God: who created each of us, who breathed into us our uniqueness, who delights in who we are, and what we can still become.

We believe in the love of God: who laughs with us in our joy, who cries with us in our pain, who wants all creation to seek peace, reconciliation and love for each other.

We believe in the justice of God as revealed in the living Word, and through the lives of the prophets of yesterday and today. God alone created us.

We are not alone; God loves us. Nothing will separate us from the love of God.

Office Hymn

Christ, my hope, and Christ, my joy Sing three times

EOM 155

Refrain

Christ, my hope, and Christ, my joy, Christ, my strength, and my
light, Christ, my con - fi - dence a - lone, in you I
trust and have no fear; in you I trust and have no fear.

Words: Refrain, tr. from German by William Bradley Roberts; verses by William Bradley Roberts.

Music: Refrain, Spanish folksong from Taizé; arr. William Bradley Roberts © 1994 William Bradley Roberts.

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Prayers of the People

Robert Windom Let us pray: Jesus teaches: ‘Do not judge, or you too will be judged.’ We pray for Trans people who are suffering the effects of judgmental religions prejudice that blocks them from a safe and secure life as the person God calls them to be.

Danisha Collins *Creator God, transformational Spirit, we pray for change.*

Jesus says: ‘Ask and it will be given to you.’ We pray for Trans people who must overcome obstacles placed in their path by prejudice and hate.

Creator God, transformational Spirit, we pray for change.

Connor Shields Jesus urges: 'Seek and you will find.' We pray for Trans people who face the threat of violence when they seek to live as their true self.

Creator God, transformational Spirit, we pray for change.

Jane Esmonde Jesus assures: 'Knock and the door will be opened to you.' We pray for Trans people who face doors barred by bigotry, ignorance, and hate.

Creator God, transformational Spirit, we pray for change.

Twilight People Prayer

Fr. Jackson "As the sun sinks and the colors of the day turn, we offer a blessing for the twilight,

for twilight is neither day nor night, but in-between.

We are all twilight people. We can never be fully labeled or defined.

We are many identities and loves, many genders and none. We are in between roles, at the intersection of histories, or between place and place.

We are crisscrossed paths of memory and destination, streaks of light swirled together. We are neither day nor night.

We are both, neither, and all.

May the sacred in-between of this evening suspend our certainties, soften our judgments, and

widen our vision.

May this in-between light illuminate our way to the God who transcends all categories and definitions.

May the in-between people who have come to pray be lifted up into this twilight.

We cannot always define; we can always say a blessing.

Blessed are You, God of all,
who brings on the twilight."

The General Thanksgiving

Rev. Luk De Volder and People

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,

we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks

for all your goodness and loving-kindness

to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,

and all the blessings of this life;

but above all for your immeasurable love

in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;

for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Danisha Collins Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Jane Esmonde Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Connor Shieldes The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen. (2 Corinthians 13:14)*

Thanks to those who made tonight possible:

Danisha Collins

Rev. Luk De Volder

Jane Esmonde

Fr. Tom Jackson

Walden Moore

Rachel Segger

Connor Shieldes

The Rev. Heidi Thorsen

Robert Windom

Lisa Yarbor

Acknowledgements

Tonight's service was woven together following the form of Evening prayer (Rite II) in the Book of Common Prayer and using elements from these sources:

Believe Out Loud is a digital community working to move all people toward an expansive, transformative understanding of divine love. They center and sanctify queer spirituality across our programs, from online worship services led by LGBTQIA faith leaders to grant making program supporting faith-driven LGBTQIA peacebuilders around the world.

GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

Keshet works for the full equality of all LGBTQ Jews and our families in Jewish life. We strengthen Jewish communities. We equip Jewish organizations with the skills and knowledge to build LGBTQ-affirming communities; create spaces in which all queer Jewish youth feel seen and valued; and advance LGBTQ rights nationwide.

Liturgy for Transgender Day of Remembrance – Susan Gilchrist & Corrymeela, Ireland.

Music: E 155 — Arrangement: © 1994 William Bradley Roberts. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation advocates for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community.

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Founded with the Audre Lorde Project in 2014, the **Trans Day of Resilience** art project is an annual love offering to trans people of color everywhere. Led by Forward Together, its current name and spirit emerged from a 2015 call from New Orleans trans justice organization BreakOUT! to celebrate the resilience of our trans family.

Twilight People: Stories of Faith & Gender Beyond the Binary: 'Twilight People' is a landmark project that discovers and celebrates the hidden history of transgender and gender-variant people of faith in the UK past and present. Written by Rabbi Reuben Zellman of TransTorah.org, the 'Twilight People' prayer is often recited on the Transgender Day of Remembrance. It reminds us the twilight is not necessarily a place of otherness, but that it can also be a positive, plural space for everyone. The symbolism of the 'twilight' - the sacred in-between space – a moment of transformation and rebirth – has been used variously in many religions and faiths around the world.