



# Faith Community Resources

## Telling the Truth about the Death Penalty

February 2016

*In 2015, the Nebraska Legislature replaced the death penalty with life in prison without the possibility of parole. On November 8 2016, Nebraskans will vote whether to retain this action, or bring back Nebraska's broken death penalty. Many faith groups have studied the scriptures and contemporary society, and have adopted teachings or position statements on capital punishment. Here are some resources congregations and individuals can use for study, discussion and advocacy.*

**A Word about Advocacy** – Churches may teach and advocate on issues, legislative matters and ballot issues without jeopardizing their non-profit tax status. Churches may not endorse or work against candidates for office.

### What churches can do:

Educate members –

- Inform members of your denomination's teaching about the death penalty.
- Distribute information, study guides, etc. and encourage congregations to use them.
- Encourage every congregation to have a study and/or guest speaker.

### Resources

- NADP Religious Study Guide (*available from NADP, [griffith@nadp.net](mailto:griffith@nadp.net)*)
- Invite speaker to your congregation or group –
  - ✓ Pastor Bob Bryan, Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, [bob.bryan@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:bob.bryan@nebraskasynod.org)
  - ✓ Rev. Stephen Griffith, NADP, [griffith@nadp.net](mailto:griffith@nadp.net), 402-730-8927
  - ✓ Pastor Ruth Karlsson, Released and Restored, [ruth@releasedandrestored.org](mailto:ruth@releasedandrestored.org)
  - ✓ Journey of Hope Tour, July 15-24, with exonerees, victims family, etc. (contact NADP)
- Death Penalty Information Center, [www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org), non-partisan facts
- Occasional bulletin inserts, short informational paragraphs, etc.
- Prayers, litanies, scripture comments, etc.

### Help start a conversation in your church:

- Sponsor a dialogue on topics related to the death penalty—reconciliation and forgiveness; innocence & wrongful convictions; bias and unfairness in the criminal justice system. – Use this discussion guide.
- If your faith group has study materials on the death penalty, use that for a study class.  
e.g. United Church of Christ, [www.ucc.org/ucnews/junjul08/new-death-penalty-curriculum.html](http://www.ucc.org/ucnews/junjul08/new-death-penalty-curriculum.html)  
ELCA, <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Death-Penalty>  
Roman Catholic, Catholics Mobilizing Network,  
<http://catholicmobilizing.org/what-we-do/educate/publications>
- Read and discuss a book, such as:  
Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*  
Marlowe & Davis-Correia, *I Am Troy Davis*  
Shane Claiborne, *Executing Grace* (in book stores June 6)
- Host a guest speaker who can share more information and experiences. NADP can provide speakers, including exonerees and victims' family members. [info@nadp.net](mailto:info@nadp.net)
- Screen a film about the death penalty and host a "talk back" afterwards.  
NADP can suggest several films and videos: [info@nadp.net](mailto:info@nadp.net)
- Gather materials (fact sheets, etc.) and organize a table to educate church members and get them more involved. NADP can provide resources: [info@nadp.net](mailto:info@nadp.net)

### You can find lots of helpful information at:

- Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty [www.nadp.net](http://www.nadp.net)
- Death Penalty Information Center [www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)
- Catholic Mobilizing Network [www.catholicmobilizing.org](http://www.catholicmobilizing.org)
- The Innocence Project [www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org)

Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Foundation

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