A Guide for Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)

www.roomforall.com
According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 9% of transgender people reported being physically attacked in the year prior because of being transgender.

The National Center for Health Statistics has observed that, for the general population, 1 in 19,000 people will be murdered every year. For young black trans women, the chances are 1 in 2,600.

Since 2013, the Human Rights Campaign has tracked more than 250 violent deaths of transgender people here in the United States of America, 4 out of every 5 being transgender women of color.

Neither the FBI or any Government agency tracks data relating to violent crime connected to gender identity consistently.

Since the murder of Rita Hester, a Black Transgender woman in November of 1998, the Transgender community has observed Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on November 20th every year. Gwendolyn Ann Smith, a transgender Advocate, started TDOR in honor of her friend. Marked with solemnity and grief, this is the day we remember all of the lives of vibrant, beloved transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people lost to violence and to suicide in the year before.

Each year, the transgender community reads the names— the true names— of our siblings, remembering them as who they were. 3 out of every 4 names we will read were misgendered, called by the wrong name and pronouns when remembered or reported on by police, the media, and their families of origin.

It is not enough to merely acknowledge the losses, but rather we must honor the memories of our trans siblings with a new commitment to action. That might look like consistently shutting down anti-transgender rhetoric in conversation with your neighbors, partnering with your local LGBTQ+ Resource Center to offer assistance in whatever capacity you can, or vocally opposing the myriad of hostile anti-transgender bills attempting to become law across the United States. The growing violence this community faces thrives in the silence of our allies.

To learn more about legislation regarding the transgender community, visit https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps

We invite you and your communities of faith to observe TDOR with us here at Room for All, whether it’s something you’ve done before or something brand new.

On the evening of Saturday, November 19th, we will be posting our observance for Transgender Day of Remembrance that will be available to view on our Facebook page @RoomforAllRCA and website from that point on.

Either as part of or after worship on Sunday, 11/20, we encourage our churches and communities to view this observance if not participating in another this year.

To learn more about legislation regarding the transgender community, visit https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps
How do we welcome the Trans community?

When considering outreach to the transgender community, please run down the following list to make sure your church is able to be a truly safe, welcoming space:

- Provide a way for folks to share their names and pronouns passively i.e. name tags, pronoun pins, badges, etc. When speaking with someone, introduce yourself with your name and pronouns, and ask for theirs.
- Whether temporary or permanent, designate a single use gender neutral bathroom option, or at least post signage that lets bathroom users know that people can use the bathroom that best aligns with their gender and others should not police bathroom choice.
- Be aware of and if possible, maintain a referral list of transgender-affirming supports in your area, or have printouts of the included resource page available.
- Have a plan to address incidents of conscious or unconscious bias, and make it known individuals can report such incidents to identified clergy or laity in confidence.
- Take a look at your artwork and materials and strive to use images that depict people of many different races, genders, abilities and sexual orientations.
- In your language, acknowledge all genders and all pronouns, and clearly state your and God's overt welcome of all.
- Consider flying or displaying prominently the Transgender Pride flag, or the Progress Pride flag, which includes the trans community as well as people of color.

Optional: Biblical Reflection & Prayer

From this year’s Lectionary: Jeremiah 23: 1-6

When injustice and oppression reign, the flock are exiled and scattered, and Jeremiah the prophet shames those accountable for that. The days will end when shepherds who only care for themselves remain in control. God will intercede, and go to find those scattered sheep and rescue them from danger, as well as call new shepherds to lead. These new leaders will be wise, and will execute justice and righteousness. When this leadership comes, the herd will be together in their rightful home again.

The passage ends with a direct confrontation to despair, promising us the leader called “the LORD is our righteousness,” the good shepherd, Jesus Christ. To those who lead, this verse asks: how have you provided for protection and sustenance, promoted peace, or searched for and rescued the lost?

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God of love, God of peace,  
Come and comfort all who are grieving.  
Weep with those in sorrow.  
Gather round the circles of remembrance.  
Hear the choirs of gratitude,  
and make Holy all that pours from broken hearts.

May your eternal embrace,  
your forever love,  
your Divine Presence that is before death,  
companions through death,  
and rises after death,  
be the resting place –  
the place of return –  
where we can always find each other.  
Amen.  
– Rev. M Barclay, enfleshed
The Reading of the Names

While this is the heaviest and hardest part of Transgender Day of Remembrance observances, the reading of the names of all those lost in the year before is the center of these events.

Some organizations choose to only read the names of lives lost in North America, but there is a global list of people as well that are often read in full.

While data collected often includes details of what happened to each person, to avoid triggering people in our communities we read only the name, age, and place of death of each person on the list. The Names will be released just about a week ahead of TDOR, and at that time, a list will be made and shared via Room for All’s website.

To do your own Reading of the Names, you will want to gather a few volunteers, so no one person is responsible for more than one or two pages.

It is important to practice saying names ahead of time, especially ones from other languages and cultures that may be unfamiliar. Looking up individual names to find pronunciations is an option, with the understanding that you will likely find news articles and obituaries that may have potentially triggering information.

You may choose to ring a bell, light a candle, or place a flower or transgender pride flag for each name, or simply hold each in a moment of stillness.

Alternatively, you may choose to display the names only, either briefly as part of your service, on screen, or via print outs.

Resources for the Transgender Community

Trans Lifeline (for transgender adults in crisis):
https://translifeline.org/ US (877)565-8860 Canada (877) 330-6366

The Trevor Project (for youth in crisis):
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/ Text START to 678-678 or Call (866) 488-7386

National Crisis Hotline:
Call 988

NYC Anti-Violence Project:
https://avp.org/

National Center for Transgender Equality:
www.transequality.org

Sylvia Rivera Law Project:
www.srlp.org

Trans Women of Color Collective:
www.twocc.us

Transmission Ministry Collective:
https://transmissionministry.com/

FORGE (Resources for trans survivors of abuse):
https://forge-forward.org/resources/trans-communities-2/
Supporting Trans POC-led Organizations

Beyond Transgender Day of Remembrance, there are organizations that seek to uplift and protect queer and trans people of color all year long.

Two such organizations, based in New York State, are:

**In Our Own Voices**
https://ioov.org/

“It is the Mission of In Our Own Voices to work for and ensure the physical, mental, spiritual, political, cultural and economic survival and growth of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people of color communities.”

In Our Own Voices provides Direct Services, Training and Technical Assistance, and Systems Level Advocacy to support the communities they serve.

**Next Generation Men of Transition**
https://www.ngmt18.com/

“Next Generation Men of Transition’s (NGMT18) quest was to establish an active support system, provide visibility, and create a community for men throughout their transitions. We continue to break barriers, make history and stand on visibility for all Trans Masculine folks. Especially Black and Brown Trans Masculine folks.”

NGMT leads support groups as well as participates in community education via forums and panel discussions.