
Say Their Names

Welcome | Joseph Penny, MDiv '25

Leader: Good Evening and Welcome! Thank you for joining us tonight as we remember those who have fallen victim to police brutality and acts of senseless violence. Tonight's vigil carries with it a particular heaviness. With that being said, please be gentle with yourselves and with one another. I now invite you to begin to quiet your mind, open your heart, and settle into whatever posture you find most conducive to prayer.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... Amen.

When the world's deep wounds remind us how precious but fragile life is,

we remember that our lives depend on one another.

When we grieve.

When we are afraid.

When we no longer know what to feel.

We remember this is our sanctuary.

There is no depth of doubt or despair we can't bring to God and one another.

The Holy One is here, sharing in our longings, bearing witness to our lament.'

Our God does not abandon us!

Amen.

Please rise and join us in singing the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing.

Black National Anthem | Lift Every Voice and Sing

Byron Wratee, doctoral candidate | Lauren Warner, doctoral student |
Joseph Penny, MDiv '25

Scripture | Deacon Damian Torres-Botello, SJ., MDiv '23

Leader:

A reading from the book of Exodus...

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has not come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you

that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”

The Word of the Lord...

Thanks be to God.

Sermon | Joseph Penny, MDiv ‘25

“I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings...”

I have observed the misery...

I have heard their cry...

I know their sufferings...

Breonna Taylor | Ahmaud Arbury | George Floyd

Three names

Tops Friendly Market Buffalo, New York | Robb Elementary Uvalde, Texas | Michigan State University

Three places

Church, we need not look far to recognize that we live in a world bruised and scared by brokenness, violence, and despair. These three names and these three places echo across the globe.

So, we come here tonight to grieve the deaths of our brothers and sisters.

We come here to pause long enough to give ourselves permission to feel.

Pausing long enough to join them in crying out, “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?”

We might even come here like Moses asking ourselves, “Who am I that I should go to the Pharaoh’s of this world?”

As I was preparing myself to preach, I found myself asking that very question. Like Moses, I began to question myself wondering, “Why me? What could I possibly have to share.” But tonight, I stand before you testifying to the fact that we worship a God who hears the cries of God’s people. We worship a God who brought the Israelites out of slavery, and that same God lives and dwells within each of us. Amen?

Church, your presence here tonight speaks volumes. It stands as a living witness to your yes. Your yes to a God who called you here tonight. And so tonight, we lift our voices and cry out to God.

A God who has observed our misery...

A God who has heard our cries...

A God who knows our sufferings...

Amen?

Amen.

Litany of Names | Catherine Mooney, PhD

Please respond to each line with: “*You are a child of God*”

Leader: You deserve to be able to walk alone. We remember Clifford Glover.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to visit family out of state. We remember Emmett Till.

All You are a child of God

Leader: You deserve to be able to ask the police a question. We remember Randy Evans.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to cash a check. We remember Yvonne Smallwood.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to take out your wallet. We remember Amadou Diallo.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to hold a hairbrush. We remember Sean Bell.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to party on New Year's Eve. We remember Oscar Grant.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to walk home. We remember Trayvon Martin.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to play loud music. We remember Jordan Davis.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to ask for help. We remember Jonathan Ferrell and Renisha McBride.

All: You are children of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to sleep. We remember Aiyanna Jones.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to shop at Walmart. We remember John Crawford.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to walk from the store. We remember Michael Brown.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to play cops and robbers. We remember Tamir Rice.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to run. We remember Walter Scott.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to live. We remember Freddie Gray.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to get a traffic ticket safely. We remember Sandra Bland.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to have car problems. We remember Corey Jones.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to go to Bible study. We remember the Charleston 9; Rev. Clementa Pickney, Cynthia Hurd, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lee Lance, Susie Jackson and Daniel Simmons.

All: You are children of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to sleep safely in your own bed. We remember Breonna Taylor.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to sell CDs. We remember Alton Sterling.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to lawfully carry a weapon. We remember Philando Castile.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to stand next to your car. We remember Terrence Crutcher.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to read a book. We remember Keith Scott.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to leave a party. We remember Jordan Edwards.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to talk on a cellphone. We remember Stephon Clark.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to sell products. We remember Eric Garner.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to relax in your own home. We remember Botham Jean.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to look out of the window. We remember Atatiana Jefferson.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to stand outside your apartment. We remember Tony McDade.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to go jogging. We remember Ahmaud Arbery.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to drive your car. We remember Desmond Franklin.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to gather in a parking lot. We remember David McAtee.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to buy something from the store. We remember George Floyd.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to take your car to the car wash. We remember Daunte Wright.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to shop for groceries. We remember the victims of the Tops Friendly Market shooting in Buffalo: Roberta A Drury, Margus D. Morrison, Andre Mackneil, Aaron Satler, Geraldine Talley, Celestine Chaney, Heyward Patterson, Katherine Massey, Pearl Young, and Ruth Whitfield.

All: You are children of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to get a traffic ticket safely. We remember Tyre Nichols.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to attend a college class. We remember the victims of the Michigan State shooting: Arielle Anderson, Alexandria Verner, and Brian Fraser.

All: You are children of God.

Leader: You deserve to be able to serve the community. We remember Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell.

All: You are a child of God.

Leader: We remember all who have been killed in senseless violence and we respond together...

All: You are children of God.

All: Amen

Hymn of Praise | Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Byron Wratee, doctoral candidate | Lauren Warner, doctoral student | Joseph Penny, MDiv '25

Closing Prayer | Jacqueline Regan

Leader:

Once again, I invite you to settle into a posture of prayer.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... Amen.

God, how many times must we cry out, “how long?!”

How many times will the cycles repeat themselves?

Headline after headline, the news of lives lost to gun violence repeats itself.

Heartbreak, reaction, effort, no change, heartbreak, reaction, effort, no change, heartbreak, reaction, effort, no change.

Every life unique, but patterns all too much the same.

Hear our cries, God! Open your ears to our lament. Weep with us when we weep. Listen! We are calling to you.

In the person of Jesus Christ, you walked a world where the powerful were not held accountable, the poor were made vulnerable, and violence was used as a tool of fear and control. Though there were no guns, the same spirits of destruction and fear hovered over life. You know, in your own bones, the grief we bear. Receive our cries, not of hopelessness or of resignation, but of truth. In all of its ache, of sharing in grief and anger and hard realities, the truth keeps us awake to what is so that we can work for what could be. Help us make it so.

Amen.

Thank you for joining us for the “Say Their Names” vigil. I hope you have a blessed evening!