

Rittenhouse Verdict Responsive Litany

On Friday November 19, 2021, Kyle Rittenhouse was found not guilty of all the charges with which he was indicted for the killing and injuring of activists who gathered in Kenosha, Wisc., to protest the shooting of Jacob Blake by police in August 2020.

Sunday, November 21, 2021, will be celebrated by many Christian communities as Reign of Christ Sunday, the festival that marks the liminal space in the liturgical calendar between the seasons of Pentecost and Advent. This feast day was first celebrated in 1925 as a counter to the sovereign claims of fascism.

This litany, created by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, hopes to offer congregations a way of responding to the Rittenhouse verdict, and other similar verdicts, using the symbolic and theological resources of this feast day. (with references to Revelation 1:4-8)

Leader: Holy One, Ruler of rulers, Sovereign of sovereigns, Judge of judges,
we come to you with feelings more than with words,
trusting that there is nothing that a prayer is better suited for
than the weariness or rage or confusion
that lives in our breath and bones, our cells and sighs.

Assembly: **O God, we need your fierce love,
Christ, we need your tender rage,
O God, we need your collective power,
so we can know freedom.**

Leader: We pray with those of us whose anger ignites at this miscarriage of justice,
whose deep hurt at the reminders of how little some lives matter
and how broken our systems remain,
has become the bright light of rage.

Assembly: **Christ, who is our only Ruler, we are desperate for your reign of prophetic
fire.
Empower us to pledge our hearts to embody the kind outrage
that turns the tables on the violence inflicted on your beloved children.**

Leader: We pray with those of us who are not surprised by this verdict,
who know what a mostly white jury means,
who recognize how small and furtive justice must be in a system bound by white
supremacy.

Assembly: **Christ, who is our only Sovereign, we are longing for your kingdom to come.
Find us in our pessimism and lead us in the ways of accountability that
transforms
that our hope may be renewed by your vision of just mercy.**

Leader: We pray with those of us who trust this decision,
who have confidence that this outcome shows us the truth of what happened,
who want to believe that equality and fairness are the heart of our legal system.

Assembly: Christ, who is our only Judge, we are praying for your righteousness.
Convert our unquestioning allegiance
and deepen our understanding of the histories that shape us,
that we may be convicted by your love
to change our minds about what is true, and right, and just.

Leader: To the one who loves us and frees us, we lift up our prayers,
that our anger might become sacred fire, cleansing and renewing the earth;
that our despair might become hopeful vision, guiding us toward freedom;
that our confidence might become humble curiosity, bringing your promised reign
closer to us.

Assembly: To God be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

Rittenhouse Verdict Responsive Litany was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, Join The Movement Curator, UCC.

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