

Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson issues statement on the initial planned livestreaming of an execution

Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse, but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3: 9)

For more than 50 years, the United Church of Christ has advocated for the abolishment of the death penalty. The killing of 13 soldiers at Fort Hood by Nidal Malik Hasan is without question a heinous crime. The announcement by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth that Hasan will be killed by firing squad is a perpetuation of the evil that Hasan inflicted. The initial intention of the Secretary to publicly broadcast his execution through a live stream is even more disturbing. While the decision by President Trump to not livestream this execution is welcome, even the fact that this was a possibility is morally troubling. To turn murder into spectacle and invite the world to gawk as a life is extinguished is a disgusting display of immorality which threatens harm to those who are forced to participate, to the reputation of the United States of America, and to a watching world. The trauma of such a moment is not easily undone. It communicates not strength, but moral and virtuous weakness. This callous disregard for human life and basic human decency is a rejection of Christian values. No death should be fodder for public entertainment, making mockery of God who is the source of life and of Jesus whose will is for life abundant.

The National Council of Churches has issued this statement, "[A Call to Choose Mercy Over Spectacle](#)." The United Church of Christ is a member of the NCC and endorses this statement.

Dear God, in these days where peace is ever elusive, we pray for its arrival. We pray for peace that takes deep root among your peoples. True peace, we know, must come with justice, and justice, too, remains among our fervent prayers. Remove the veil from our hearts that mistakes retribution for justice, so that in our pursuit of justice we do not make peace an impossibility. Spirit guide us in our continued quest for peace and for a just and peaceful living.

Amen.



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