

## A Litany for “Black Lives Matter”

Leader: Today, we stand together in solidarity with our ecumenical brothers and sisters. Robed in black, we unite with all of those who have lost their lives to the unjust forces of police brutality, racial profiling and systematic oppression.

**People: *Together, we will stand, in order to affirm that as co-created ones, all Black bodies mirror the image of God.***

Leader: *Together, we will march.* In efforts to embody the prophetic command, “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream,” we will refute the stench of racial and social barriers in order to stand as one and march to the beat of peaceful protests, until Thy work is done.

**People: *Together, we will march. For Lord, through Your ministry, You’ve taught us how to march for freedom and justice too. From Galilee, through Samaria, to Jericho and Jerusalem, You marched. You marched for Legion, the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, and Mary Magdalene, empowering the powerless and dismantling unjust forces, so that all people – families, governments and nations – would turn towards Your truth.***

Leader: *Together, we will remember* Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Aiyana Jones, Akai Gurley, Romain Brisbon, Cameron Tillman, Reneshia McBride, Trayvon Martin, and so many others who have lost their lives at the hands of police brutality. We hear the ringing of the 12 shots that were fired at Michael Brown’s body. We see the horror in Eric Garner’s face as he uttered his last words, “I can’t breathe.” We grieve the unfulfilled dreams of Aiyana Jones, who was only seven years old.

**People: Our souls perpetually lament, and compel us to petition your response as Christ did: “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” But *together, we will remember* how the story ends, for “He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden His face from him, but has listened to his cry for help.” Therefore, as we mourn the ones we have lost, draw our cries of suffering closer to Your crucified body, so that our pain is heard alongside your pain, and is redeemed and Resurrected at the site of Your cross.**

Leader: *Together, we will boldly name* the unjust acts throughout our nation, the unwarranted deaths and shamelessly prejudice acts. Yet, we’re honest enough to also name the reality that resides within these four walls. For we too, have been unjust. In our ignorance, we too have persecuted. Without warranty, we too have closed doors, consequently silencing certain voices in order to idolize others.

**People: Together, in your mercy, Lord, we seek your forgiveness. For *together, we name* the truth that we too have foolishly prayed the prayer, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector.” For *together, we name* our role in playing the tax**

**collector, in playing the judge, in playing the Pharisee, and ignoring the cries of those whose stories did not beckon the media's response, whose graves went unmarked, and whose bodies remain missing.**

Leader: *Together, refresh our labor with humility.* For although our labors may take on different forms and settings, we are called to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

**People: *So together, give us a renewed fortitude to labor. May we persist zealously, may we sacrifice selflessly, and may we persevere unwaveringly towards the mark of justice.***

Leader: *Together, we will proclaim the value of Black bodies.* We will deconstruct the discriminating stereotypes that have legalized Black death, criminalized our black boys and girls, and dehumanized our women and men.

**People: Together, we will proclaim, "*Black lives matter.*"**

Leader: For the mother who is still grieving the child she will never hold again. *We will proclaim:*

**People: Black lives matter.**

Leader: For the child who lives in fear because his neighborhood is now barricaded with police. *We will proclaim:*

**People: Black lives matter.**

Leader: For the father who feels forced to teach his son how to hold his head down rather than hold his head up. *We will proclaim:*

**People: Black lives matter.**

Leader: For the sister who is doubly-subjugated because her skin and gender is labeled ugly by outsiders and unworthy by her own community, *we will proclaim:*

**People: Black lives matter.**

Leader: Throughout our churches, our cities, our classrooms, our jobs, and our homes, we will continue to declare Your everlasting truth, that "who the Son sets free is free indeed." This is a promise that America cannot give and cannot take away. *We must proclaim:*

**People: *Black justice matters, Black freedom matters, and Black lives matter.***