

# A Liturgy on the Day of an Execution

*Prepared by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Huntsville, Texas*

LEADER: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name, through Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

FIRST LESSON

PSALM

SECOND LESSON

THE SERMON (optional)

CONFESSION OF SIN

LEADER: Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

**ALL: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

LEADER: Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. ***Amen.***

## LITANY FOR AN EXECUTION

LEADER: We pray for God's justice, mercy and grace.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For our brother/sister, \_\_\_\_\_, for his/her sincere contrition and his/her confidence in Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: For his/her family, in their sorrow.

RESPONSE: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: For his/her victims, \_\_\_\_\_, that they may have eternal peace.

RESPONSE: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: For their families, that they experience healing and find forgiving hearts.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For the correctional officers who guard and prepare him/her, that they be led to perform their duties with compassion.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For the chaplains who guide and comfort him/her, that you sustain them.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For the wardens and officials who oversee his/her punishment.

RESPONSE: Give them peace.

LEADER: For judges, juries, and attorneys who argued, heard and decided his/her case.

RESPONSE: Give them peace.

LEADER: For the executioners who represent us.

RESPONSE: Give them peace.

LEADER: For the Board of Pardons and Paroles and for the Governor, in all their deliberations.

RESPONSE: Let loving justice be in their hearts.

LEADER: For the people of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, who carry out this sentence.

RESPONSE: Show us the way to justice and mercy.

LEADER: For the people of the town of \_\_\_\_\_, that we may remain distressed and avoid complacency.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For those awaiting execution, that they may find forgiveness for their sins and true faith in your compassion.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For those who have been executed. May their souls rest in peace.

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Lord Jesus Christ, in this dark night, we know that you are with us in our distress. Help us to see all the wrongs we do, to repent of them sincerely and honestly, and to build your kingdom here in our lifetime. Guide us to true justice, help us to move away from anger and retribution, and remind us that whatsoever we do to the least of these our brothers and sisters, we do to you — our brother who endured the last necessary execution. We pray in your name because you told us to. **Amen.**

LEADER: O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**