

Media Release - Kansas Area United Methodist Church
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EIGHT KANSAS BISHOPS SIGN LETTER OPPOSING DEATH PENALTY

WICHITA – Eight bishops leading The Episcopal Church, Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church and United Methodist Church in Kansas signed a letter to members of the Kansas Legislature asking for reconsideration and repeal of the Kansas death penalty.

Bishops James M. Adams Jr., Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas; Paul S. Coakley, Catholic Diocese of Salina; Ronald M. Gilmore, Catholic Diocese of Dodge City; Michael O. Jackels, Catholic Diocese of Wichita; Scott J. Jones, Kansas Area United Methodist Church; Gerald L. Mansholt, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Joseph F. Naumann, Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City, and Dean Wolf, Episcopal Diocese of Kansas signed the letter dated Jan. 28.

“As bishops leading the Episcopal Church, Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church and United Methodist Church in Kansas, we write to share our deep concern about the continuing practice of condemning persons to death Kansas,” the bishops write.

The churches are united in teaching that capital punishment should no longer be practiced or threatened, and that human life is sacred to God and should be respected by all humankind, including governments.

“When governments execute persons, our society is weakened because the value of life is cheapened,” the bishops write. “All of us are diminished when our state punishes in this way.”

The bishops share a deep concern for all victims of violent crime and their families and commit to do everything possible to comfort and assist victims and their families to cope with the aftermath of violence.

In the letter, the bishops recognized that some persons have committed despicable crimes and deserve serious punishment. The bishops believe there are other means of punishment that would still protect society. The bishops also believe that innocent people are sometimes sentenced to death and that the death penalty is more often applied to those who are poor.

“In difficult economic times, the additional money spent on capital punishment should be redirected to more beneficial causes,” the bishops wrote.

In closing the letter, the bishops say they will continue to pray for wisdom and courage for the legislators as they lead the state of Kansas.

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