



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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We are saddened and troubled by the news that after a seventeen-year moratorium, our Federal Government has decided to resume state-sponsored and sanctioned execution at the Federal Correctional Institution in Terre Haute, Indiana. The murder of a human person by another human person is abhorrent and deeply painful. Like you, we grieve the murder of any person and reach out in pastoral care for those who mourn their deaths. However, it is important to underscore that the United States of America is the only developed nation that continues to believe that state-sponsored execution is a deterrent to others who commit violent crimes including murder. Earlier this summer, at the request of the Attorney General, the Supreme Court, in a 5 to 4 decision, supported the notion that the state can humanely execute persons on death row. For more than 60 years, our faith traditions have affirmed their opposition to the death penalty, that it is repugnant and an affront to God which diminishes all of us. It is also true that the death penalty is disproportionately applied to the poor, to black, indigenous and other persons of color. The life and teachings of Jesus remind us again and again that every person is made in God's image and likeness and that loving God and our neighbor requires us to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation. We are committed to seeking ways to end this kind of violence and to work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

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