



North Carolina Council of Churches

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Dear Friends,

Over the past few months, it's safe to say the things clergy have been called on to do were probably not taught to us in seminary. Virtual worship, remote pastoral care, or social distance baptisms were never on any syllabus I had.

Knowing that you rise each day to meet the challenges before you, the Council would like to bring these resources to the foreground of your inbox. They relate to mental health and in particular to suicide prevention. We know the suicide numbers have risen over the summer and the Rev. Jessica Stokes, Partners in Health and Wholeness' Associate Director for Mental Health Advocacy, has been working with our coalition partners to help address the causes.

I hope you will find these resources valuable and I hope you will not hesitate to reach out to the Council staff as we strive to offer you the support you need.

Best,
The Rev. Dr. Jennifer E. Copeland
Executive Director of NC Council of Churches

From the Faith Connections on Mental Illness Task Force on Suicide Prevention/Reduction:

Dear Faith Leader,

Partners in Health and Wholeness and NC Council of Churches joins the efforts of the Faith Connections on Mental Illness Task Force on Suicide Prevention/Reduction to invite you and your congregation to observe September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. We trust that you and your congregation are doing well as we live through Covid19 and its many disruptions. We know that as people of faith, we are not immune to suicide in our community as well in our congregations.

Faith Connections on Mental Illness Task Force on Suicide Prevention/Reduction is sending you materials that we feel could provide helpful information including sample prayers and liturgies from different faith traditions. You can select something to use during your worship service as well as in your communications.

You may find other resources at the following:

1. faithconnectionsmentalillness.org
2. https://theactionalliance.org/sites/default/files/sample_prayers_v3_sm.pdf
3. The National Suicide Hotline number 1-800-273-8255

4. Suicide Prevention Resource Center Web: <http://www.sprc.org> • E-mail: info@sprc.org • Phone: 877-GET-SPRC (438-7772)

By recognizing September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, you will be helping to destigmatize suicide so that your faith community can become a place in which suicide is prevented or reduced and members who have lost a loved one to suicide can receive compassionate ministry.

We invite you to reach out to let us know ways that our team can support you in your ministry and members in your congregation, and how your faith community recognized Suicide Prevention Month.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Rev. Jessica Stokes, Associate Director of Partners in Health and Wholeness, with a statewide focus on mental health advocacy at jessica@ncchurches.org.

With gratitude,

Task Force on Suicide Prevention/Reduction Members

Minister Yvonne Addison, LCMHC

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Elder

The Rev. Jessica Stokes

Elder Gloria Rentrope, MSSA

Mr. Larry Bernstein, LCSW

Task Force Mission Statement: Realizing that suicide is a reality in all communities, we offer opportunities for congregations to increase their awareness of suicide. Believing that awareness leads to discussion and networking, we anticipate our faithful efforts can lead to reductions and/or preventions of suicide.

FYI- Save The Date

The SURVIVORS Walk takes place on the 2nd Sunday in November. It is being revamped this year because of the coronavirus. Check www.TriangleSOS.org for updates to participate and support our community of survivors of suicide loss, and the call to action for suicide awareness and prevention. Together, we are stronger. Amen.

Attachments:

1. [Sample Prayers](#)
2. [The Role of Faith Community Leaders in Preventing Suicide](#)