

A Joint Statement by Delaware Church Leaders

As the leaders of Delaware's largest churches we join to speak with a single voice. Our General Assembly is now considering a bill to end capital punishment in Delaware. We hope and pray that Governor Markell and our elected representatives will conclude that the death penalty should be abolished in the First State.

This is the right time for capital punishment to end. People in our pews are telling us that they support this decision. Studies show that capital punishment is not a proven deterrent to serious crime. Statistics now raise real questions about economic and social discrimination in applying the death penalty. We know that there are acceptable alternatives to capital punishment. When capital punishment does end in Delaware, we will no longer face the unacceptable risk that an innocent person could be convicted and wrongfully put to death.

We are now only days away from the beginning of Holy Week. As pastors ourselves we have profound respect and compassion for all those who have been victims of serious crimes. At the same time believe that every human life has dignity and an inherent worth – even those convicted of the worst offenses. We stand together with all who work for a just and safe society that protects its citizens and upholds the sanctity and dignity of all human life.

We hope and pray that Governor Markell and members of the General Assembly will vote to end the death penalty in Delaware. You have our support and prayers as you make this important decision.

Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane
Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson
Peninsula-Delaware Conference
The United Methodist Church

Bishop W. Francis Malooly
Diocese of Wilmington
The Roman Catholic Church

The Rev. James L. Moseley
Executive Presbyter, New Castle Presbytery
The Presbyterian Church, USA

Bishop Wayne P. Wright
Diocese of Delaware
The Episcopal Church