

# FAITH & CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESOURCE GUIDE

April 2017



This document provides several tips and suggestions that you can use to help change the Criminal Justice system.

1. Commune with God. As people of faith, our power comes from our Source. Spending time with God helps ensure that we are walking and using our voices according to God's plan. Review the Bible Study: Mass Incarceration and the Gerasene Demoniac by Jay Godfrey, United Methodist Seminar Program ([download here](#))
2. Get educated about the criminal justice system. Books like [Slavery by Another Name](#) (Douglas A. Blackmon), [The New Jim Crow](#) (Michelle Alexander), [A Question of Freedom](#) (Dwayne Betts), or [Locking Up Our Own](#) (James Forman) are all good resources to better understand the Mass Incarceration epidemic in America and the impact that it has on our communities.
3. Contact your local, state, and national legislators to ask them what they are doing about mass incarceration and how they are working to restore voting rights for returning citizens. Use the Common Cause "Find Your Elected Official" web application to learn who your state and national representatives are. ([Get Started Here](#)).
4. Schedule an action on the 23rd of the month, symbolizing 23 hours a day in isolation: As a part of the **Together to End Solitary** campaign, join people throughout the U.S. who are holding monthly actions on the 23rd of each month to call for an end to the torture of solitary, at the recommendation of people incarcerated in Pelican Bay prison who led the momentous hunger strikes in California prisons. To see recent and upcoming actions on the 23rd of the month, and to share yours, go to: [www.togethertoendsolitary.org](http://www.togethertoendsolitary.org)
5. Use technologies like [Raheem.ai](#) or [Flikshop](#) to rate interactions with local authorities or to stay connected with incarcerated individuals.
6. Speak with your local Pastor or clergy member to ask how your congregation is addressing mass incarceration as a social justice issue.
7. Sign up to receive regular action alerts and updates from NRCAT -- go to <http://www.nrcat.org/torture-in-us-prisons/statement> For more information, visit: <http://www.nrcat.org/torture-in-us-prisons> or Follow NRCAT on Twitter @nrcattweets
8. Contact the Criminal and Restorative Justice Ministry for the Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church to learn about Healing Communities and how your congregation can participate in the Healing Communities training program. ([Email Rev. Dr. Brian Jackson](#))
9. Contact your local Police Department to learn how you can get involved to help educate and engage police officers about the impacts of mass incarceration, or unconscious

## Gethsemane United Methodist Church

Reverend Ronald E. F. Triplett, Pastor

910 Addison Road South, Capitol Heights, MD 20743

web [gethsemaneumc.org](http://gethsemaneumc.org) email [info@gethsemaneumc.org](mailto:info@gethsemaneumc.org)

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bias, or volunteer to mediate conflicts between the community and the police department.

10. Host a screening of NRCAT's documentary, **Breaking Down The Box**, a 40-minute documentary for communities of faith, to expose the torture of solitary confinement in the context of mass incarceration in the United States: to livestream, a DVD order form, an interfaith viewing guide, sample poster, full film and four short films are available at [www.nrcat.org/breakingdownthebox](http://www.nrcat.org/breakingdownthebox)
11. Participate in **Lifelines to Solitary**: NRCAT is partnering with Solitary Watch to train communities of faith to participate in on-going correspondence with people who are enduring solitary confinement. To schedule a training, contact NRCAT by emailing Laura at [ldownton@nrcat.org](mailto:ldownton@nrcat.org)
12. Ask yourself each day, "What have I done to challenge the status quo?"

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