

TOOL KIT

flocc

faith|policy|vision

**The Truth About the American Death  
Penalty System, Race & Faith.**

# flocc

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) is a multifaith Black and Indigenous community dedicated to learning and supporting advocacy, legislation, and litigation challenging the use of the American Death Penalty system on a state and federal level.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition or (flocc) allows space for Black and Indigenous faith leaders to build community, ask questions, take action, and collaborate with movement leaders working to end the death penalty in America.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) was born out of a collaborative justice initiative when policy leaders, advocates, activists, lawyers, academics, and faith leaders desired to extend access of policy and execution information directly to Black and Indigenous pastors/clergy.

flocc honors the work, influence, and progress of Black/Indigenous pastors and faith leaders who were often on the frontlines of human rights movements- challenging systems of segregation, violence, oppression, and discrimination from the early 1600s to the early 2000s.

-

## **flocc is not:**

- a C4 organization
- a Political Organization
- a Church
- a For Profit Organization
- a Law Firm

# flocc

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) is a multifaith national organization dedicated to advocating for justice, equity, and interrogation into the American Capital Punishment system.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) allows space for Black and Indigenous faith leaders to build community, ask questions, take action, and collaborate with other movement leaders working to end the system of death in America.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) was born out of a cohort in 2021 when policy leaders, advocates, activists, lawyers, academics, and faith leaders desired to extend access of policy, legal, and execution information directly to Black and Indigenous pastors/clergy. This initiative which started as 21 people on a Zoom call, has now grown into an organization of more than 500 supporters, friends and partners.

## **flocc's d.n.a**

### **1. Advocate for Policies to Eliminate the use of the capital punishment system:**

flocc will work to eliminate the capital punishment system, addressing racial discrimination, intellectual disability, wrongful convictions, felony murder, innocence claims and inhumane conditions on death row.

### **2. Empower Faith Leaders:**

flocc will empower Black and Indigenous clergy to use their moral authority and spiritual teachings to advocate for an end to state-sanctioned death in their communities and nationwide.

### **3. Cast Vision:**

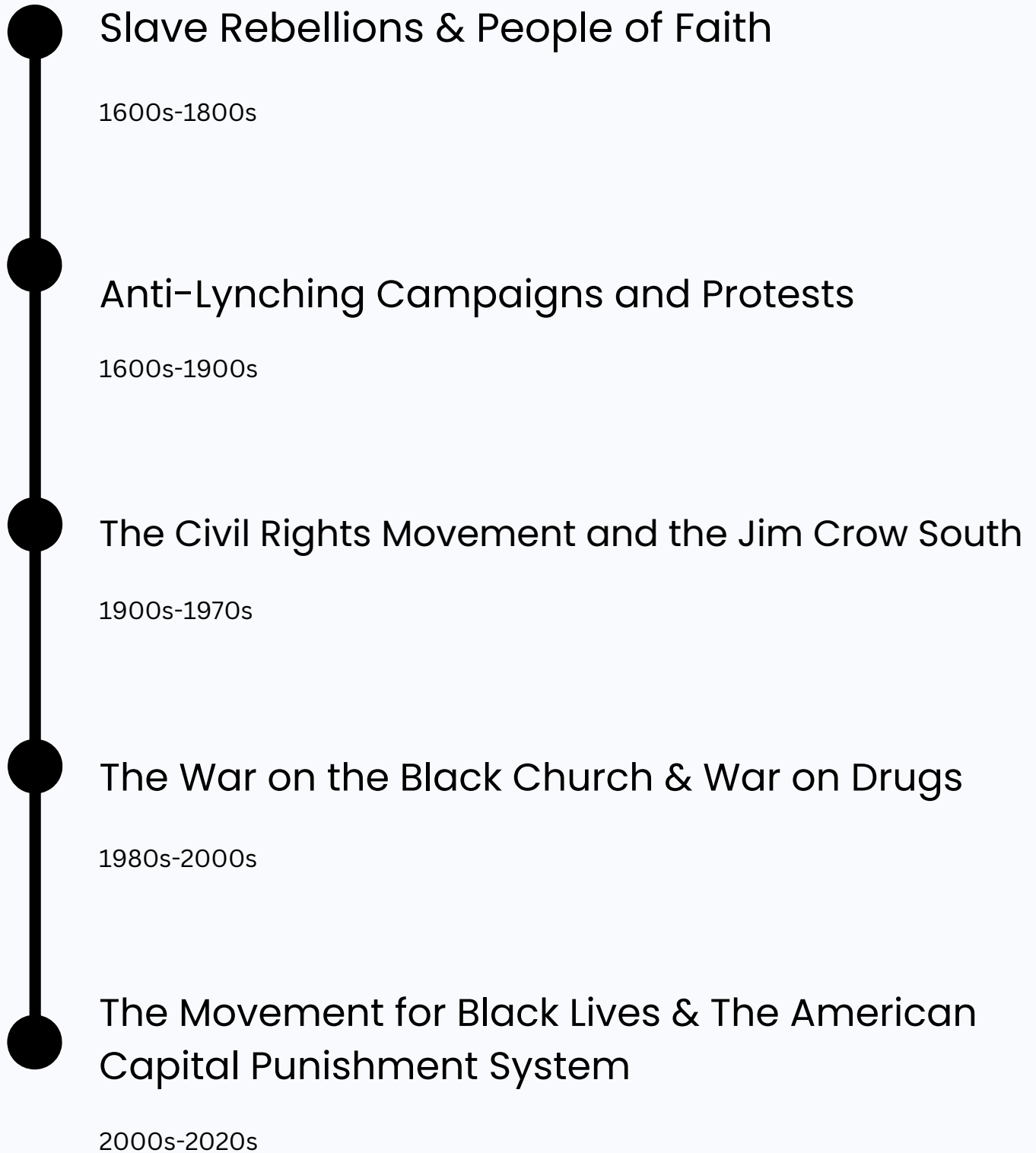
The coalition aims to educate the public about the injustices and uneven applications when death sentences are applied, particularly with white victims. flocc will introduce ways to hold district attorneys and municipalities accountable for authentic public safety.

### **4. Promote Healing:**

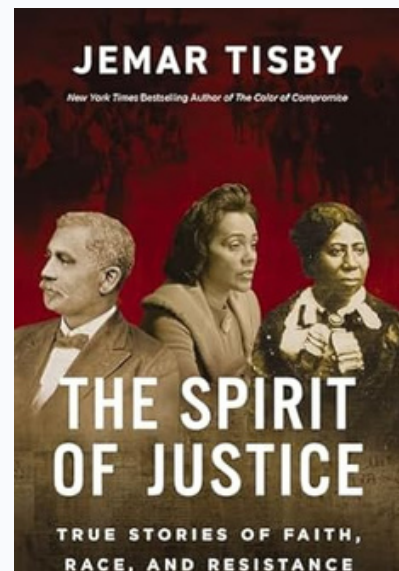
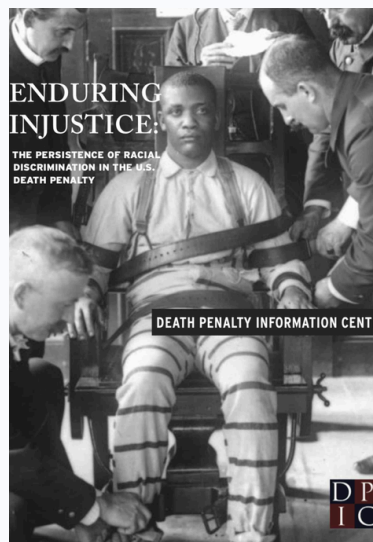
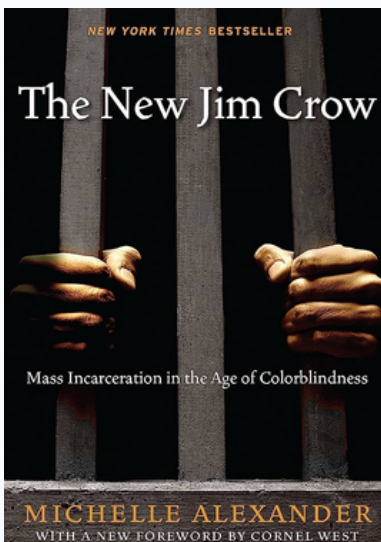
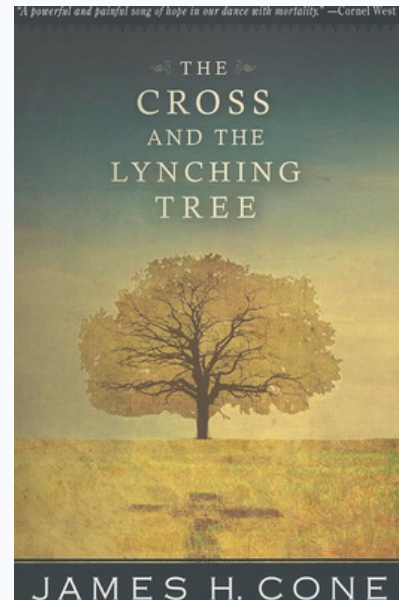
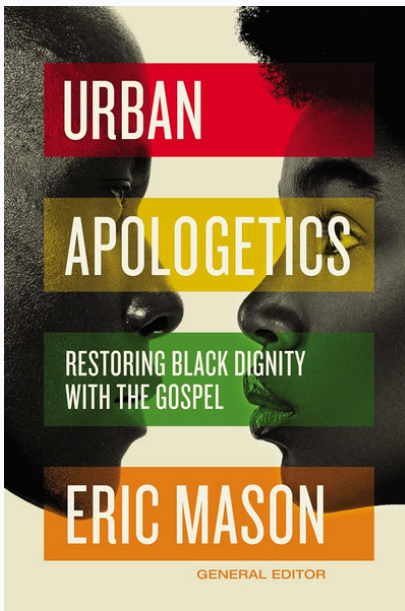
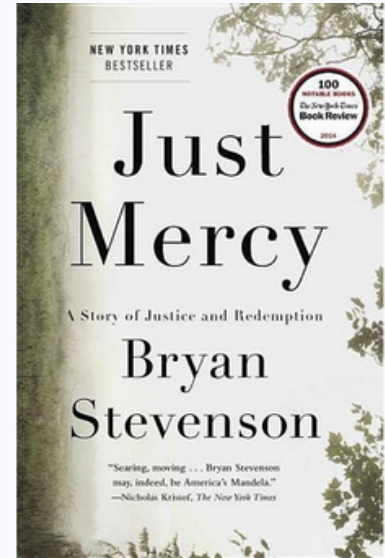
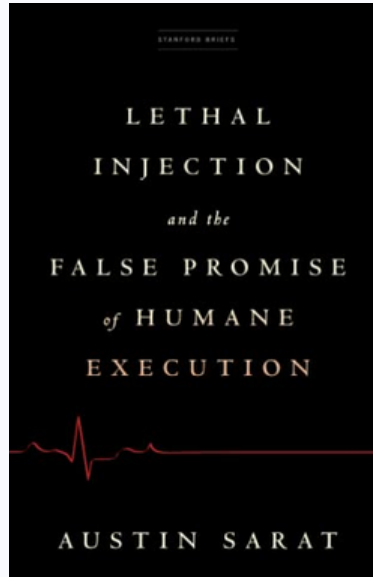
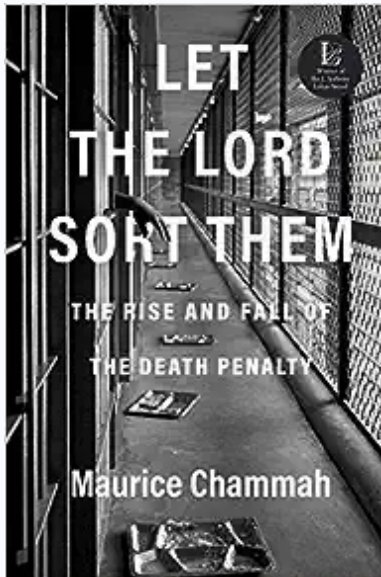
flocc recognizes the profound trauma inflicted by the death penalty on both victims' families and those involved in the system. The coalition will work toward healing, reconciliation and restoration.

# System Disruption & the Church

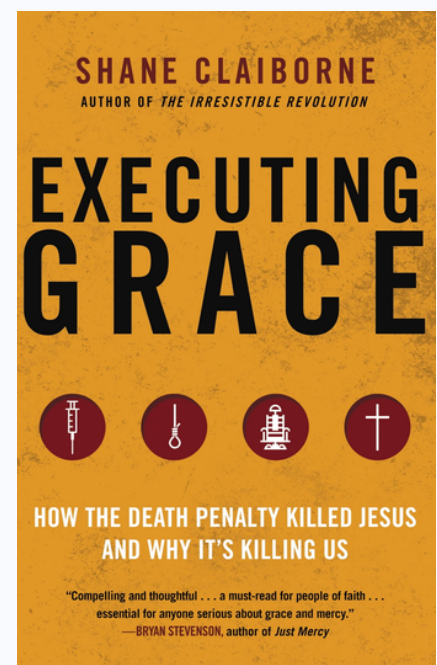
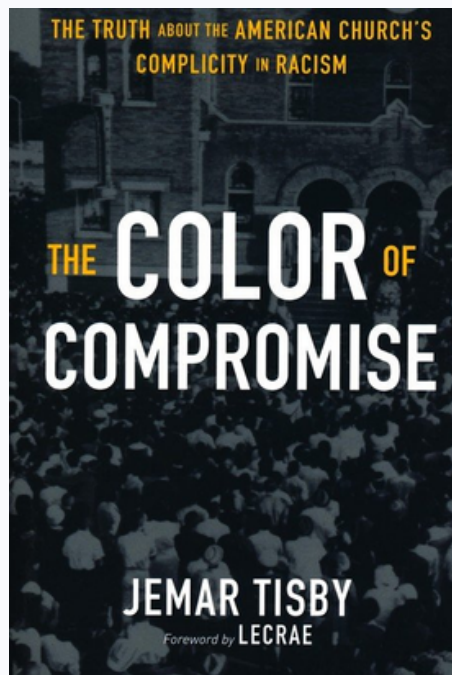
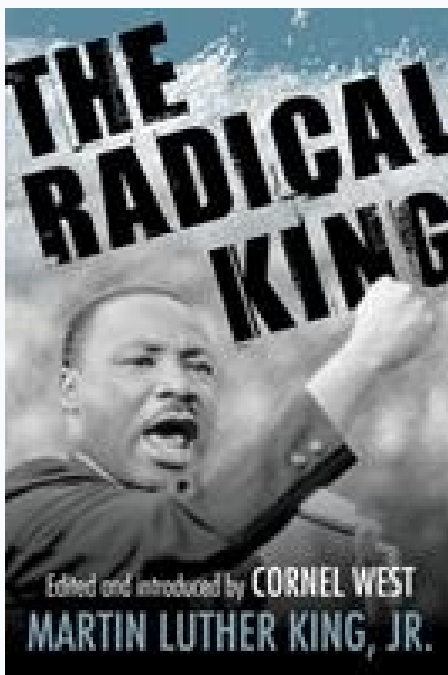
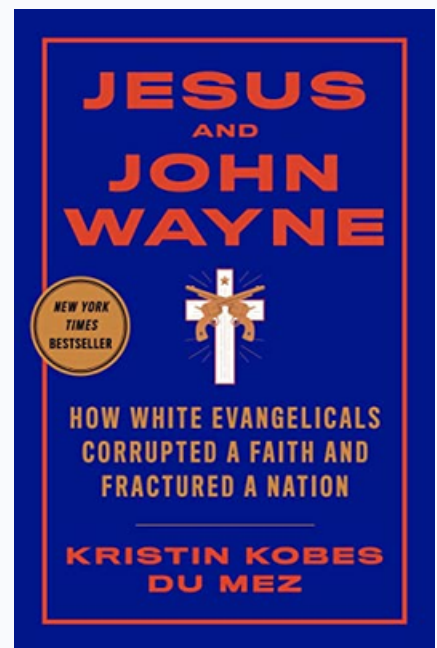
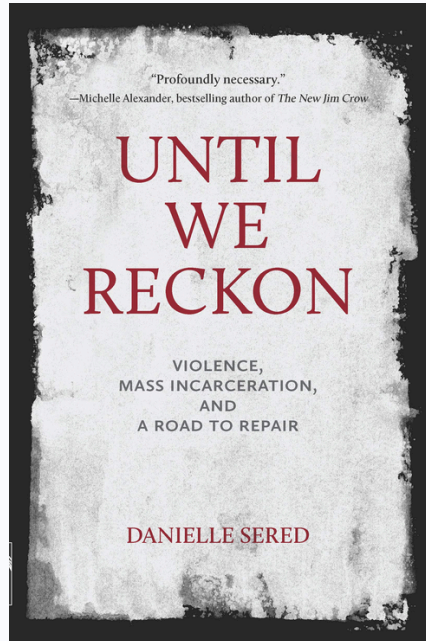
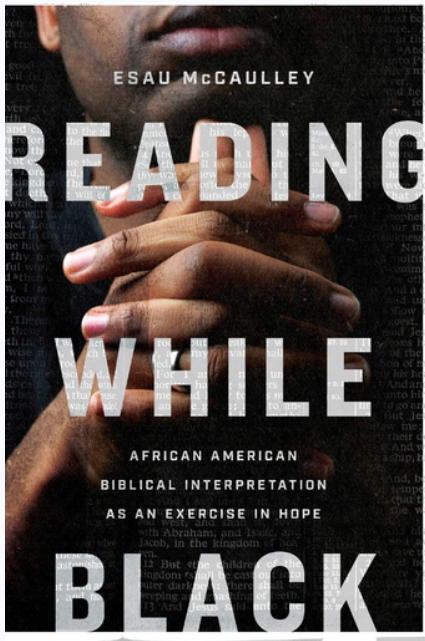
If you would like a more extensive presentation, please contact us at the information below.



# flocc recommended reading



# flocc recommended reading



# partner recommended resources

## EJUSA EVANGELICAL NETWORK

- **Right Here, Right Now: Life Stories from America's Death Row, Question Guide for Churches**
- **Death Penalty Sundays** – The EJUSA Evangelical Network has developed packets of materials designed for churches interested in hosting events, services, or speakers related to faithfully reflecting on the death penalty. These can be for churches in any state, but includes state-specific materials for [Alabama](#) and [Oklahoma](#).

**MISSION TALK RESOURCES** (for predominately Latinx communities and Spanish Speakers)

### Impact

With over 1.3 million Latino evangelicals in Florida (and millions more across the country), we are casting a new vision of social engagement for the Latino/a Church and, in little time, are seeing dramatic impact.

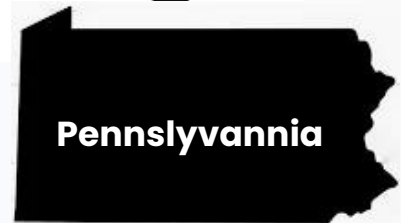
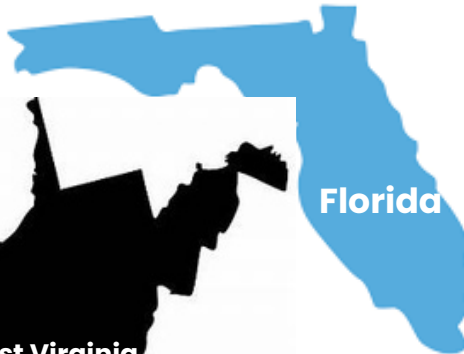
- Introduced 300 Latino church leaders to justice issues impacting their communities, through our six-week educational cohort.
- Mobilized over 1,800 Latino church leaders from over 30 counties in Florida to participate in our prophetic advocacy efforts.
- Provided coaching to 75 leaders, through our Justice Leadership Development for Community Transformation Program.

<https://www.missiontalk.us/> - Website

<https://youtu.be/bg4-80afKA0> - Mission Talk & EJI

# flocc circles

*flocc state circles include 3 or more people involved in flocc national who meet and make decisions about anti-death penalty abolition actions supporting state advocates working on various bills, cases, and/or campaigns. If your state is not represented, contact us.*





# flocc partners

flocc state/national partners have collaborated with flocc on state and federal campaigns. If you would like to be a partner email us: [joia@floccjustice.org](mailto:joia@floccjustice.org)



# flocc's 8 problems with the American Death Penalty System;

- **The death penalty is not a deterrent to violent crime** – people often offend unconscious of the death penalty as a punishment for their crimes. Some states that still have the death penalty still have high violent crime rates
- **The death penalty is arbitrarily applied to people** because of their race, the race of their victim, the skill of their attorney, their county, and/or their economic status.
- **Since 1973, at least 200 people have been exonerated from death row in the U.S.**, according to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC). A 2014 study estimated that at least 4% of those sentenced to death are innocent.
- **Race plays an outsized role in capital cases in the South** – some Black people who were given death sentences were sentenced as a result of prosecutorial misconduct and/or Jim Crow juries, “bleached juries”.
- **The torturous execution methods and the cocktail of drugs used for lethal injection are sometimes obtained illegally by states** – Big Pharma does not want to be associated with lethal injection, therefore Mom and Pop pharmacies are often the suppliers– Methods violate the 8th Amendment).
- **The death penalty contradicts the application of grace and mercy** in major religious denominations in America. Also, the death penalty challenges moral “pro-life” arguments and redemption tenets.
- **States are still executing people with intellectual disabilities after the ruling of Atkins v. Virginia** where the Supreme Court, in a 6–3 decision, ruled that executions of intellectually disabled incarcerated persons are “cruel and unusual punishments” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.
- **The Death Penalty is fiscally irresponsible**– a 2022 study revealed that Louisiana spent more than 7.7 million dollars to sustain its death row, even though there hasn't been an execution in over 13 years. Fiscal responsibility remains a strong argument for how states could apply these resources to better social/community services.

# Social Media Guide

## Hashtags

#CommuteTheRow #BlackClergyUnitedtoCommuteTheRow #flocc  
#floccjustice

Join me and other #BlackClergy to address the racist death penalty system

Today, 57% of those under a federal death sentence are people of color, and 40% are Black. There are Black men under federal death sentences who were convicted by all-white juries. Click Here to add your name as Black Clergy United: <https://forms.gle/xXpJMoWXthcxnPqJ8>


If you have questions about the American Capital Punishment System, follow @floccjustice

## Images

#COMMUTE THE ROW | flocc

“I am asking President Biden to commute all federal death sentences because the death penalty closes the door to repentance, salvation, and second chances.”


**REV. DARRYL GRAY**  
Greater Fairfax Missionary Baptist Church



#COMMUTE THE ROW | flocc

“I am asking President Biden to commute all federal death sentences because doing so would acknowledge and help redress the racial bias built into the federal death penalty system.”

**JOIA ERIN THORNTON**  
Faith Leaders of Color Coalition



#COMMUTE THE ROW | flocc

Federal death sentences are concentrated in a handful of states and circuits. Texas, Virginia, and Missouri alone account for 43% of current federal death sentences. Justice shouldn't depend on geography.

Source: Federal Capital Habeas Project

#COMMUTE THE ROW | flocc

**63%**

of those federally executed were sentenced for killing white victims, even though most murder victims in the U.S. are Black. This racial bias in sentencing reflects a deep injustice.

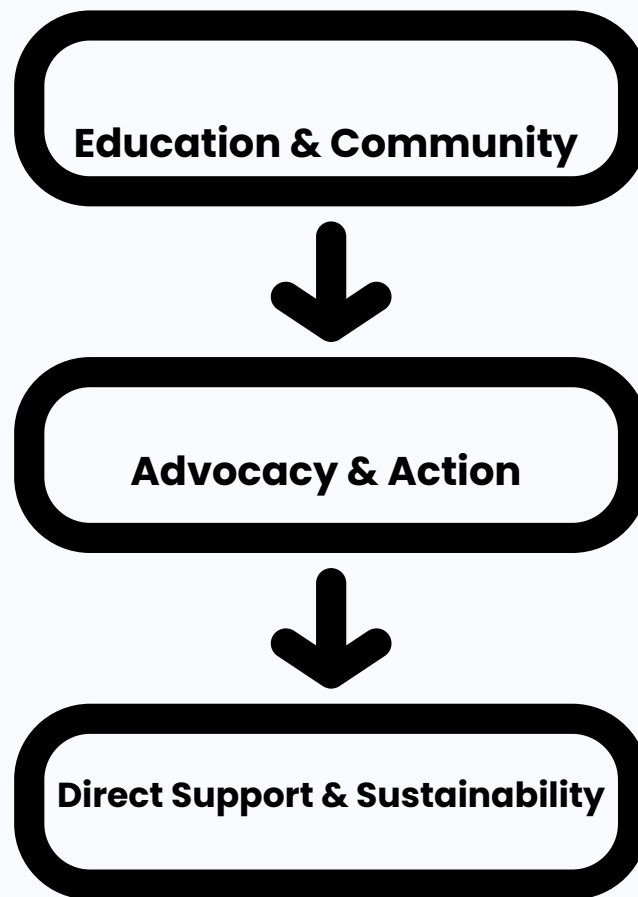
Source: Federal Capital Habeas Project

#COMMUTE THE ROW | flocc

The federal death penalty is error-prone and racially biased. Black adults make up only 10% of the U.S. population but represent a shocking 38% of those currently on federal death row.

Source: Federal Capital Habeas Project

# floc theory of change



In order to influence and affect change toward ending the American Death Penalty System on a state and federal level we believe that Black & Indigenous clergy must be included in conversations, coalitions, decisions and actions directly related to its end. We believe floc circles will be the catalyst to raising visibility on the abolition of the American Death Penalty System.

floc circles will directly and intentionally engage Black & Indigenous clergy and communities through education, advocacy, and actions related to ending the death penalty. floc circles are led by 2-3 circle leaders and sustained through remaining floc partners. In order to build a floc circle, states must have 5-10 engaged partners. floc circles usually meet 1x a month or every other month. floc national supports all floc circles.

# flocc engagement start-up activities

**Prayer Brunch**

**Book Discussion**

**Townhall Meeting**

**Teach-in**

## **Additional Organizing Support:**

- Find out who your state representatives are
- Find out who your state senators are
- Find out who your District Attorney is
- Find out who your Attorney General is
- Court Watch in your General Sessions and Criminal Courts
- Become a Pen Pal with someone on death row

# flocc leadership



Joia Erin Thornton

## **Founder & National Director**

Joia is a Policy Strategist/Analyst, Writer, and Storyteller. She has a unique hometown experience growing up in Memphis, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana; two cities that have wrestled with class, race, economic, and overall systemic challenges. Joia formed the Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) to honor the work of Black and Indigenous faith leaders who have contributed to civil/human rights movements throughout history. Joia uses the framework of faith, race, and historical accounts from the Southern diaspora to boldly confront America's relationship with the death penalty system.

[floccjustice.org](http://floccjustice.org)

[faithleadersofcolor@gmail.com](mailto:faithleadersofcolor@gmail.com)

IG: @floccjustice

Twitter: @floccjustice

YT: floccjustice

FB: The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition

page left intentionally blank