

First Congregational Church of Granby will host a community event to commemorate the Transgender Day of Remembrance on Friday, November 20th at 6 pm, to be followed immediately by a free dinner and informal Q&A session.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance is an annual event which seeks to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice in the prior year. The first event was held in the spring of 1999 in San Francisco as a memorial service to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28, 1998 kicked off the “remembering Our Dead” web project. Rita Hester’s murder – like most anti-transgender murder cases – has yet to be solved.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, and it publicly mourns and honors the lives of those who might otherwise be forgotten.

According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the National Advocacy for Local LGBTQH Communities, the recent homicide of Kiesha Jenkins of Philadelphia, PA, was the 21st reported homicide of a transgender/gender nonconforming person that the organization has responded to in 2015, 18 of whom were people of color.

The term *transgender*, which describes about 700,000 Americans,¹ has been around for almost 40 years, but most people still can’t define it. The confusion around this topic is why the program for the evening will include two parts. First, a memorial service in the sanctuary will take place with comments from the Rev. Paula Degree, a United Church of Christ minister, who will deliver an address entitled, “Transgender 101.” Immediately following the service will be a free dinner open to all, with an informal Q&A session.

The congregation of First Church has decided that over the course of the fall and winter months to explore the topic of “encountering others” in a broad sense: how do we relate to those who are not like us? Do we see their struggles? Do we play a role in their lives? Can we be silent in the face of injustice and harm? This event will address in a very candid way the struggles of the transgender community, but it will also compassionately address the struggles people face in trying to understand perspectives that might be completely foreign to them, or where they may be uncomfortable asking for help in understanding.

The event is open to all who have interest and seek to learn about this important and timely topic.

<http://tdor.info/faq/>

¹ <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/how-many-people-are-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender/> 2011 data.