

Litany for Z. Alexander Looby and the 60th Anniversary of Walk in Love

Written by Sara Eccleston, Johnnie Thomas, Richard Britton, and Monna Mayhall on behalf of the EDTN Beloved Community Commission.

Most merciful God, we come to you on this the 60th anniversary to remember the witness of Z. Alexander Looby, an Episcopalian whose home was bombed in an act of racial terrorism due his role as a defense attorney for civil rights demonstrators, and the resultant march to the Public Square in protest of racial violence, segregation, and injustice.

We give you thanks for the legacy of Z. Alexander Looby, a faithful member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Nashville, who courageously defended those fighting for racial equality, and who advocated and arranged for the purchase of the land for St. Anselm Episcopal Church and Student Center near the campuses of Fisk University, Tennessee State University and Meharry Medical College. Inspire us by his legacy to use our faith and resources to foster justice, healing, and reconciliation in our diocese and world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the students who participated in the Nashville Non-Violent Student Movement through lunch-counter sit-ins, peaceful marches, civil disobedience, and democratic protest; and for the institutions in Nashville, especially the HBCUs and the African American Churches, who educated, empowered, and cared for the students. Embolden us by their example and help each of us to take part in the work of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the larger and diverse Nashville community who supported the Nashville Non-Violent Student Movement through economic boycotts, shelter, and prayer; and for the attorneys and legal teams, such as Z. Alexander Looby, who fought against racial discrimination in the courts. Strengthen us to follow their examples and witness to care for and support our community's efforts for justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the courage of Mayor Ben West, who spoke up in a moment of moral strength to condemn segregation and support the years-long process of desegregating Nashville. Help us to use our voices and positions in support of justice and equality.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the long legacy of African-American Episcopalians, such as Pauli Murray, Thurgood Marshall, Barbara Harris and others, who have fought for representation and equality in the Church and in larger society. Move us to learn, remember, honor, and respect the example of those known and unknown, who have come before us, and to build upon their efforts.

Lord, hear our prayer.

May we as Christians, who honor the image of God in all people, be committed to the words of our Baptismal Covenant by loving our neighbor as ourselves, striving for justice and peace among all people and respecting the dignity of all human beings.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We ask your forgiveness for those in our city who participated in segregation, racism, violence, and discrimination, whether by action or by silence. Spur us to understand and atone for our complicities in systems of injustice, and to take steps toward justice, healing, and reconciliation.
Lord, have mercy.

We ask your forgiveness for the ways that de facto segregation remains in our cities, neighborhoods, workplaces, and churches; give us courage to be agents of reconciliation.
Lord, have mercy.

We ask your forgiveness for the policies and practices that continue to create racial disparities; give us courage to be agents of justice.
Lord, have mercy.

We ask your forgiveness for hearts and minds that are hardened and prejudiced; give us courage to be agents of healing.
Lord, have mercy.

Give us the courage and faith, like Z. Alexander Looby, to be steadfast in the face of adversity.
Amen.

Grant us peace, creativity, hope, and joy as we pursue your vision of Beloved Community in our lives, workplaces, congregations, diocese, and world.
Amen.

All this we ask through your son Jesus Christ our Lord: Lover of souls, Forgiver of sins, and Savior of the world.
Amen.