

Martin Luther King Jr. Day worship resources

Calls to Worship

Call to Worship

Sisters and brothers, rejoice.

We live sustained by God's presence and love.

Thanks be to God.

As we mourn the wounds of God's children,

God weeps with us.

As we give thanks for brothers and sisters who have lived in faith,

God gives thanks with us.

As we struggle for justice,

God struggles with us.

As we strive for peace,

God strives with us.

As we work to build the beloved community,

God works with us.

As we offer our gifts to all,

God blesses us.

Sisters and brothers, rejoice.

Sustained by God's presence and love we worship God.

Call to Worship

God created all the races and nations of the world and willed that we live together in peace and harmony.

We were made to be family.

There is strife in the human family; injustice abounds as racism, classism, sexism, cultural imperialism and other isms. We are a divided people.

We have been called to let justice roll down like waters.

We must work passionately to bridge the gulf between us, overcome the injustices that oppress us, and restore community among us.

We must be determined enough to change what we can. We must have the courage to accept what we cannot change. Above all, we must be wise enough to know the difference

Call to Worship

(from Psalm 82 and Amos 5)

A VOICE: God said: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?"

A VOICE: God said: "Give justice to the weak and the parentless child; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute."

A VOICE: God said: "Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

A VOICE: God said: "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Take away the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream."

ALL: Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for all the nations belong to you!

Prayers Of Confession

Prayer Of Confession

Most Holy and merciful God: we have condemned racial injustice in our pronouncement, yet we cling to the privileges derived from social inequities. All too often we are blind to our complicity in maintaining systems of oppression and deferring the hopes and dreams of the oppressed for freedom. Give us the courage to name our sin, give us the strength to claim responsibility for our actions. Give us the grace to pay the price for changing our behavior. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Prayer Of Confession

Most holy and merciful God: we acknowledge and confess our slowness to do good, our blindness to injustice, and our complicity in deferring the dreams and hopes of the oppressed. We have refused to heed your call to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you, our God.

We condemn racial injustice in our pronouncements, yet we cling to the privileges derived from inequity. When we ought to be ashamed of our failures, we prefer to cling to private, selfish, imprisoning desires. We participate in our own oppression.

Help us to name our sin, to claim responsibility for our actions, and to change our behavior. In accordance with the commands of Jesus Christ our savior, shake us from our sleep with you imperative to do justice; move us to action with the compassion of your grace; and give us courage to pay the price, however painful or costly, that the justice you will, may be done, on earth as in heaven. Amen.

Litany of Thanksgiving And Praise

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God of all races and nations,
we praise you for all your faithful servants
who have done justice, loved mercy,
and walked humbly with their God.
For apostles, martyrs, leaders, and saints,
and for humble folk whose names were never in the news,
but are recorded in your book of life,

We give you thanks, O God.

Especially this day we thank you for Martin Luther King Jr.,
for his courage and conviction, for his passion for peace,
and for his tireless quest of a nation that keeps faith with its promises,

We give you thanks, O God.

For Coretta Scott King and the King family; for the memory of Martin Luther King Sr. and Mrs. King; for Medgar Evers, Rosa Parks, James Meredith, Malcolm X, and countless others who stood in the front lines and marched, integrated schools and restaurants, or sat in buses and refused to move,

We give you thanks, O God.

For nameless multitudes who suffered the tortures of slavery and the tyranny of oppression, who were beaten, raped, and lynched; and for the nameless multitudes today whose lives are stunted and cut short by economic and social structures of brutality.

We grieve and promise to work for justice, O God.

And for children, women, and men of every race who are denied education, health care, jobs, housing, and hope in our land,

We grieve and promise to work for justice, O God.

In the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Litany of Celebration

LEADER: Martin King had a dream. The ideals of justice and freedom and the belief that all are created equal in the eyes of God are noble principles. But they are meaningless unless they become the personal possession of each one of us.

ALL: For Zion's sake I will not keep silent. I will struggle with myself. I will not rest until the dream of justice and freedom becomes my personal dream. I must realize that I am not an innocent bystander. I can help realize the dream by my action, or delay it by inaction.

LEADER: Martin's dream of a day when people from all races and nations, even the offsprings of slaves and former slave owners, can sit at a table as brothers and sisters and find ways of transforming their differences into assets. That was Martin's dream. What is your dream?

ALL: My dream is that one day soon I will find a way to stop just celebrating the dream and start living it. It must become a part of my daily life; or nothing much will change.

LEADER: The dream is not about an ideal world; it is about the real world. Martin King's poetic refrain, "I Have a Dream," is a call for us to remember the real world where injustice abounds.

ALL: When I am in the shelter of my home I must remember the homeless. When I eat, I must remember the hungry. When I feel secure I must remember the insecure. When I see injustice I must remember that it will not stop unless I stop it.

LEADER: I have a dream!

ALL: I also have a dream. I have a dream that the Holy Spirit will arouse in me that very flame of righteousness that caused Martin King to become a living sacrifice for the freedom and liberation of all of God's Children. Then I will be able to resist racial injustice everywhere I see it, even within myself.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you create us and love us; you make us to live together in a community. We thank you for Martin Luther King, Jr. and all your children who have been filled with your vision for our lives and who have worked to make bring your vision into reality. Fill us with your vision. Guide us to live by your vision, working to build the beloved community where everyone is welcomed, all are valued, power is shared, privilege is no more, and all your children know wholeness and well-being. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

A LITANY ON THE TRAGEDY OF GUN VIOLENCE
(Written for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2010)

We celebrate and give thanks for the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Who proclaimed a vision of all people living together,

And bore witness to the power of nonviolence,

We gather, to remember his words, his commitment, his life

And to rededicate ourselves to addressing the evil of gun violence

which claimed his life and which continues to plague our country and the world.

Some 30,000 Americans die by guns each year in the United States.

And we grieve.

An average of eighty people is killed by guns every day, including eight children.

And our hearts break.

Guns kill some 1,000 people each day in the developing world.

And we mourn.

An American child is twelve times more likely to die by a gun than are the children who live in all twenty-five industrialized nations combined.

And we weep.

The annual economic cost of gun violence in America is estimated to at least \$100 billion. Medical costs, decimated families, the court system, our jails and prisons, and security measures in airports, schools, and public buildings all contribute to this sum.

And sorrow sweeps over us.

Since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, more Americans have died by gun fire within our own country than American servicemen and women who were killed in all our wars of the 20th century.

And we pray.

Faced with gun violence,

We grieve for those are killed and those whose lives are forever changed;

We seek to comfort for those who have lost loved ones;

We pray for a change of heart for those who resort to violence.

Faced with gun violence, may we

Educate;

Organize;

Advocate;

And in all the ways we can, work for that day when

Guns and weapons of destruction

Are transformed into instruments of healing.

May it be so.

May we so do.

- The Rev. W. Mark Koenig
Coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

Presbyterian Peacemaking Program ■ Compassion, Peace and Justice ■ General Assembly Mission
Council
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ■ Louisville, KY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day worship resources

www.pcusa.org/peacemaking

Excerpts from the 13th Annual
Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration
January 10, 2007
Presbyterian Center Atrium
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Call to Worship

One: We gather to worship God,
All: **Who creates us and loves us;**
One: Who gifts us with diversity and makes us for community;
All: **Who gives Jesus Christ to show us how to live;**
One: Who inspires children, youth, young adults, and people of all ages,
All: **To seek justice, share power, and live together in love and equality;**
One: Who invites us to join the struggle for wholeness and wellbeing for all,
All: **And whose presence, grace, and love sustain us in our living.**
One: We gather to worship God.
All: **To God be all glory, honor, and praise!**

Purpose

Tiffany Gonzales, Racial Justice and Advocacy

We gather today to celebrate and reflect on the work of youth and young adults who have lived lives in the service of others and in the hope of a more just world for all in it. We acknowledge that the opportunity to celebrate the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. comes to us through the work of Coretta Scott King, then his wife, who fought for justice along with him as a young adult, and continued the legacy until her death. We celebrate in the spirit of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who dedicated his life to working for justice and peace for those in his community and well beyond it. And, we acknowledge that Dr. King was still a young man when he was called to this work.

At the age of 26, he was elected the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, making him the official spokesperson for the bus boycott.

At the age of 28, he formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to fight segregation and work for civil rights.

At the age of 34, he was arrested for leading a peaceful march which violated a court injunction against public demonstrations. He was jailed for eleven days.

At the age of 38, he developed the Poor People's Campaign to work for jobs and economic justice for poor persons of all races.

And, at the age of 39, he was killed in Memphis, Tennessee.

At the age of 39, Dr. King was still a young adult by Presbyterian standards.

And so, we gather to recognize the contributions of the youth and young adults who have worked in the past, and who work at present to bring about justice for those who live in the realities of oppression, discrimination and inequality. We gather to be encouraged and inspired, as we know that the work for justice is not yet finished, that there is much left to do.

Prayer of Illumination

Katie Anderson, Racial Ethnic Young Women Together/
National Network of Presbyterian College Women

Gracious One – Giver of Life for *us all*...

You have created us to love; you have created us to be a community – a beloved community. You have created us to love and to value one another; to bring fairness and justice into all of what we do, into all of who we are. Thank you for young prophets, I might even call them *extremists*, for Coretta Scott King, for Dr. King, for Judy Richardson and other SNCC activists, for those young prophets today, in our world and in this church – who spoke and continue to speak truth about your vision for our lives – who speak truth about privilege and injustice – who speak truth about hate and complacency – and who do something about it. God, we have all that we need to change the Church, to change this world. Awaken the prophetic call inside each of us to be advocates and activists for *all human rights* – empower the young people to, indeed, become “the soul of this nation.”* Thank you for grace, and goodness, and strength, and life and thank you for this day and this time, to be in community with one another.

Amen.

*Coretta Scott King

Youth, Young Adults and the Civil Rights Movement: A Responsive Reading

One: We have come a long way on the journey to justice for all people, but a hard journey still remains. We give thanks for the children, youth and young adults who have helped challenge and guide us thus far on the way.

All: **The journey continues, and their examples and voices inspire us in the struggle. We remember and give thanks:**

One: For Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, whose public roles in the struggle for justice and equality began in Montgomery when Martin was 26 and Coretta was 28;

All: **For John Lewis, Diane Nash, James Bevel, Stokely Carmichael and the youth and young adults of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee who participated in Freedom Rides, the March on Washington and campaigns for voting rights in Mississippi;**

One: For Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and the youth and young adults of the Black Panther Party, who emphasized the need for self-defense, and instituted community programs to address poverty and to provide health care in communities of need;

All: **For Alice Nishi, Dave Sugiuchi, Dan Ogata, and the youth and young adults who endured internment during World War II; for Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu and all who supported legal challenges to the internment policies;**

One: For Dolores Huerta and Caesar Chavez who founded the National Farm Workers Association; for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and all the youth and young adults engaged in efforts to achieve justice for farmworkers and all workers;

- All:** For Dennis Banks, Wilma Mankiller, Russell Means and the youth and young adults involved in the Trail of Broken Treaties protest and other campaigns seeking civil rights for indigenous people;
- One:** For Autherine Juanita Lucy at the University of Alabama, James Meredith at the University of Mississippi, Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls Lanier, Minnijean Brown-Trickey, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Thelma Mothershed-Wair, Melba Pattillo Beals at Little Rock Central High, and the youth and young adults who integrated schools and colleges;
- All:** For the children, youth, and young adults who filled the jails of Birmingham;
- One:** For Lynn Domingo, Sharon Maeda, Velma Veloria, and all the youth and young adults who worked for justice within educational systems and in unions;
- All:** For Ezell Blair, Jr., David Richmond, Joseph McNeil, and Franklin McCain who sat at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the youth and young adults who participated in sit-ins and other nonviolent direct actions;
- One:** For Rodolfo Gonzales and Reies Tijerina and the youth and young adults involved in the Chicano Movement;
- All:** For Shanti Sellz and Daniel Strauss and the youth and young adults who care for migrants entering the United States and who seek comprehensive reform of U.S. border and immigration policies;
- One:** For Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley who were murdered in the bombing of the 16th Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham; for James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner who were murdered in Mississippi; for Annie Mae Aquash who was murdered on the Pine Ridge Reservation; and all the youth and young adults who gave their lives in the struggle.
- All:** We thank you for our sisters and brothers who have participated in the struggle for justice and equality in the past and who engage in that struggle today. As we give thanks for their witness, we “rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter—but beautiful—struggle for a new world.” This is our calling as God’s children. Our sisters and brothers await our response.¹

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence,” *The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, James Melvin Washington, ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 243. Last two sentences adapted.

Roll Call Prayer

God, we give you thanks for the youth and young adults whom we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

The community is invited to say the names of youth and young adults who have participated in the struggle for justice and equality in the past and those who are engaged in that struggle today.

God, we give you thanks for youth and young adults who have engaged in the struggle for justice and equality but whose names we do not know or do not remember.

Closing Prayer

Robert Klouw, Information and Planning

Just and loving God, you call us to live in community. We know that you grant us the opportunities and the strength to be the “headlights not the taillights of society.” Yet, in our sinfulness, we become separated from one another through the wrongs we commit or allow to happen. Through your forgiveness and grace, we ask that you empower us to work toward restoring justice for all people as shown to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We pray in the name of the one that came that we might have life abundant. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Bridgett A. Green, Racial Ethnic Young Women Together

Let us celebrate the work and legacy of the youth and young adults whose lives contributed to the civil rights of all people.

Let us encourage the creativity, energy, passion, gifts, and skills of the youth and young adults who surround us.

Let us pray for wisdom and peace as *we* pursue justice, hope, and love for all people.

And what does God require of us, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God?

May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Journeying Toward the Promised Land

A chronology of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

January 15, 1929

Martin Luther King, Jr., is born in Atlanta, Georgia. In his late teens, King works a factory job alongside both Whites and Blacks.

1944-1948

King attends Morehouse College in Atlanta. His professors encourage a critical exploration of racial issues. King reads Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience* numerous times.

February 1948

At age nineteen, King is ordained and becomes assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

1948 – 1951

At Crozier Theological Seminary, King engages in "a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil," digesting various philosophies on social transformation, including Rauschenbusch, Marx, Nietzsche, Reinhold Niebuhr, and A.J. Muste. He discovers the teachings of Ghandi, from which he develops a strong belief in nonviolent resistance.

1951

King begins graduate studies in systematic theology at Boston University where he is exposed to the philosophy of personalism, “the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality.” He receives his doctorate in 1955.

June 18, 1953

King marries Coretta Scott.

September 1954

King begins a pastoral position with Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

December 1, 1955

In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refuses to vacate her bus seat for a White man and is arrested. Parks had attended training sessions in labor and civil-rights organizing.

December 5, 1955

A bus boycott begins on the same day as Parks’s trial. Several thousand gather that evening, and the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) is formed with King as president.

January 30, 1956

King's home is bombed. Addressing a crowd outside his home, King demands nonviolence.

November 13, 1956

After a year-long boycott, the U.S. Supreme court declares Montgomery and Alabama bus segregation laws unconstitutional.

January 10, 1957

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is formed, with King as president. Montgomery is rocked by a series of bombings that night.

March 1957

The Kings travel to West Africa to celebrate Ghana's independence from British colonial rule.

May 17, 1957

King delivers his first national address, "Give Us the Ballot," in Washington, D.C.

September 20, 1958

At a book signing in Harlem, King is stabbed by a mentally ill woman.

February 1959

King travels to India for one month where he meets with many of Gandhi's followers.

April 18, 1959

King meets with Kenyan leader Tom Mboya

January 1960

The King family moves to Atlanta where King becomes co-pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church with his father, Martin Luther King, Sr.

February 1, 1960

Four students in Greensboro, North Carolina, refuse to leave their seats at a lunch counter when they are denied service, sparking a sit-in movement throughout the South. On February 16, King addresses the student protestors in Durham, North Carolina, imploring them to follow the moral operative of "jail, not bail," and encouraging them to consider economic boycott.

April 17, 1960

Through the organizing efforts of Ella Baker, the longtime assistant director of SCLC, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is established to unite the sit-in protestors.

October 19, 1960

Student protestors recruit King for a sit-in demonstration in Atlanta, where he and thirty-five others are arrested.

April 10, 1961

Under a compromise reached by business owners and the Black clergy, schools and businesses in Atlanta begin to desegregate.

May 21, 1961

After suffering a series of violent attacks in Alabama, Freedom Riders on a campaign to desegregate interstate travel are addressed by King in a Montgomery church. With the church besieged by a White mob, King calls Attorney General Robert Kennedy for assistance. King begins pressuring the Kennedy's for federal civil-rights legislation.

September 22, 1961

The Interstate Commerce Commission mandates that all interstate transportation be desegregated.

October 16, 1961

King meets with President Kennedy and asks him to deliver a second Emancipation Proclamation.

December 1961

King begins a lengthy campaign in Albany, Georgia, to challenge the city's refusal to comply with the integration order. The campaign is ultimately unsuccessful.

April 1963

While in jail during a campaign to integrate Birmingham, Alabama, King writes "A Letter from Birmingham Jail" chastising liberal White clergy for their passive stance against segregation. For several months, the campaign in Birmingham includes massive civil disobedience and severe measures by city police against protestors, including high-pressure fire hoses, clubs, and dogs. Several bombings occur, including at the hotel where King had been staying.

August 28, 1963

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom uses the momentum of Birmingham to move the power of mass resistance to the national stage. King delivers his “I Have a Dream” speech.

September 15, 1963

Four young girls are killed in the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

January 17, 1964

President Lyndon Johnson meets with King to seek support for his “War on Poverty” initiative.

May – July 1964

King leads an effort to integrate St. Augustine, Florida. One day before Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, St. Augustine business leaders hammer out an agreement to comply with the new law.

July 1964

With widespread integration compliance in Alabama, King begins a tour of Mississippi where the Civil Rights Act is widely ignored.

December 10, 1964

King receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

January 2, 1965

At a mass meeting in Selma, Alabama, King introduces SCLC's plans for a voter drive. On March 3, while attempting to march from Selma to Montgomery, civil rights advocates are beaten at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.

August 1965

President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act. California's Proposition 13, seeking to block the fair housing component of the Civil Rights Act, creates a feeling of despair and injustice among the urban Black population. Rioting breaks out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, leaving dozens dead and hundreds injured. King travels to Watts where he questions the effectiveness of violence.

January 1966

King moves to Chicago's South Side where he develops Operation Breadbasket to address urban economic injustice. The campaign increases black employment, business opportunities, and housing rehabilitation while strengthening black financial institutions.

June 6, 1966

In a show of unity, King, Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC resume James Meredith's "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, after Meredith is shot and wounded.

April 4, 1967

At Riverside Church in New York City, King denounces U.S. military action in Vietnam. Subsequently, he is harshly criticized in the media and by colleagues in the civil rights movement.

November 1967

King envisions a Poor People's Campaign—poor people camping out en masse in Washington to dramatize the need for a redirection of national priorities and resources.

April 4, 1968

King is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he is helping to organize striking sanitation workers.

1998

The King family, after unsuccessfully petitioning President Clinton to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to explore the facts behind King's killing, files a wrongful-death suit. In December 1999, a twelve-person, mixed-race circuit court jury finds that Martin Luther King, Jr., was "murdered by an intricate plot that included government agencies."

Source: *The Other Side: Strength for the Journey*. Vol. 39, no. 1, January & February 2003: pgs 22-23.

Liturgy for Martin Luther King Day

Call to Worship

We worship the God who inhabits our world
and indwells our lives.
We need not look up to find God,
We need only look around:
within ourselves, beyond ourselves, into the eyes of another.
We need not listen for a distant thunder to find God,
we need only listen to the music of life,
the words of children,
the questions of the curious,
the rhythm of a heartbeat.
We worship the God who inhabits our world
and who indwells our lives.

Opening Prayer

We turn to you often, O God, as we seek through prayer to find the meaning of life. Sometimes it's a fervent prayer in the midst of serious mediation, but more often it's a fleeting prayer on the run. We pray for patience when there are too many things to be done. We pray that you will awaken us to hear the cries of the poor, the homeless, the broken-hearted. Help us to redirect more of our resources to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. Mold us, O God, and open our hearts and minds to be willing vessels of your spirit. Amen.

Hymn 472

O Sing to the Lord

Scripture Reading

Amos 5:21-24

Reflection:

Words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Covenant Prayer of Recommitment to Justice

Reader 1: O God, who has created your children to be free, we attest in word and deed that you are our God and we are your people. From our earliest days as the people whom you intend to be free, O God, you have called us forth from self-seeking bondage, comfort, complacency, and complaint, to freeing and redeeming action for justice everywhere in the world.

People: **You are our freeing God, and we would be your free and freeing people.**

Reader 2: O God of Exodus and the Burning Bush, of the Prophets and of Jesus, we hear your powerful calling to be your servants in the service of all those who are oppressed. At every turn we hear your voice in the cries of the poor, the hungry, the imprisoned, and the broken, for you made yourself one with those who seek justice, freedom, and peace. We share a vision, a promise, and a yearning for the day of your reign, O God.

People: You are our servant God, and we would be your serving people.

Reader 3: O God, Our Sustainer, search our hearts and reveal to us our sinfulness, all the ways that we contribute to injustice and to self-destroying bondage. Give us deep courage to find the true path of your way, ready to give our very selves as living sacrifices for your will. We have heard your calling. Hear us now as we make our pledge. (*All rise, if able*).

People: You are our God and we are your people. We pledge ourselves now to pursue relentlessly that living, breathing justice which transforms persons and peoples. To your will for justice we recommit ourselves and pledge ourselves, our funds, our actions. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Hymn 563

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Benediction

Go from this place to reap the harvest of God's love.

Go from this place to continue to sow seeds of justice, peace, and love.

Go from this place to nourish and to be nourished, knowing that God is ever a part of our lives. Amen

Sources:

Ruth Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, eds., *Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship*

Coretta Scott King, *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**VOICES FROM THE STRUGGLE
A LITANY FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY
CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF THE MOVEMENT**

We have come a long way on the journey to justice for all people; a hard journey still remains. We give thanks for the women who have helped challenge and guide us thus far on the way. The struggle continues and their examples and voices sustain us.

Whatever glory belongs to the race for a development unprecedented in history for the given length of time, a full share belongs to the womanhood of the race.

(Mary McLeod Bethune)

Much remains to be done to build bridges and create a united force that can challenge the system in which those with wealth and power live high off the toil and desperation of the marginalized. (Yuri Kochiyama)

Nobody's free until everybody's free. (Fannie Lou Hamer)

Mass movements always come as the product of long years of mundane work by unsung heroes, but no one can predict when the upsurge will crystallize. We cannot predict today when it will happen again. But as surely as I know that dawn will come tomorrow morning, I am convinced that it will happen. (Anne Braden)

The struggle is eternal. The tribe increases. Somebody else carries on. (Ella J. Baker)

Today's clouds can never deny yesterday's beautiful sunset. The inconvenience of today's storms can never turn us from tomorrow's harvest. We plant, we reap, we try because we are human. We hope. We continue. Our soul is rested, but it will have to get up in the morning and start again. (Nikki Giovanni)

Change will come. As always, it is just a matter of who determines what that change will be. (Winona LaDuke)

If we want to change society, we must begin by transforming ourselves; learning from one another about one another's history, culture, dreams, hopes, personal experiences. We must become one, for the future of humanity. (Yuri Kochiyama)

I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear. (Rosa Parks)

There is one thing you have got to learn about our movement. Three people are better than no people. (Fannie Lou Hamer)

Giving kids clothes and food is one thing, but it's much more important to teach them that other people besides themselves are important, and that the best thing they can do with their lives is to use them in the service of other people. (Dolores Huerta)

Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without it, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible. (Mary McLeod Bethune)

Give me a song of hope and a world where I can sing it. (Pauli Murray)

Love builds up the broken wall and straightens the crooked path. Love keeps the stars in the firmament and imposes rhythm on the ocean tides each of us is created of it and I suspect each of us was created for it. (Maya Angelou)

Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others.

(Rosa Parks)

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – An Honored Leader

By Rev. Buddy Monahan

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of dreams and visions. Within Native American communities dreams and visions are an essential part of determination and survival. A person who seeks dreams and visions knows how things once were and how they need to improve in order for all parts of creation to exist together in a loving and caring environment.

Throughout Indian country there is an unwritten checklist that exists as we seek leadership among our people. One must humble themselves as they seek equality for others. They must see their acts as a means of unselfishness so others will feel a sense of self-worth. One must be a person of courage to be able to stand up on behalf of others and not allow your ego to overcome your calling. It takes a person of intelligence to be able to know the barriers that might be ahead and how to plan for them. A leader must also possess a good heart as they seek creative ways of communicating in a peaceful manner. Many nations and tribes have and had chiefs and other leaders possessing these same qualities. Native people today are living testaments of what these qualities can accomplish for a survival of people. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also embodied these leadership qualities and is an honored leader among Native communities.

During the Civil Rights Movement the American Indian Movement was also on the rise. It was a time when many individuals began to find out more about their history and the resurgence of tribal awareness and pride. Both Movements also inspired Churches to get involved with specific causes that sought to focus on equality. For some, the energy and passion for these causes has been lost. For those who continue to live within the Movements it continues to be a positive experience of empowering people to know who they are and educate one another the power of civil rights within our own surroundings.

As Native people we have always believed the dreams and visions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We will continue to work with all parts of creation to make these things come true. We know our Creator will continue to lead us to that promise land of total equality and harmony.

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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rev. Dr. Gloria J. Tate

Any reflection on the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. calls into view particular gifts of his ministry: the application of the gospel to political and social reform; the coupling of cries for justice with public action; and the merger of passion and intellect.

Dr. King, like preachers before him, focused on agape. However, he was radical enough to merge the themes of grace and justice. He brought to the pulpit a social gospel that defined racism as a theological issue and promoted active agape love as a power that could bring political transformation to a nation steeped in discriminatory practice and ideology.

In the early 60's, many of us saw King as representing a new breed of preachers. My exposure to the church had provided a limited view of the black preacher as someone who only interpreted the gospel as a promise of salvation in the "bye and bye." Dr. King wasn't the first, but he was the most prominent symbol of a person who brought together themes of the black church tradition (emphasis on justice and hope) with the universalism of the gospel (God has created all people equal) in a style that affirmed both the passion of black preaching and the astuteness of theological training.

Certainly people who preceded him and many of his contemporaries fit that mold, however they were not as visible to the masses. Dr. King launched, through the help of television, the times and his being deemed the leader of the civil rights movement, an appreciation in the populous for a different image of the "black preacher."

His incorporation of a social gospel, a passionate call for political involvement, with a well-grounded theological perspective is still an influential model of ministry within the African American Christian community and beyond.

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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rev. J. Mark Davidson

For years, I honored Dr. King, "the drum major for justice," the passionate advocate of civil rights and apostle of non-violence. I continue to honor his essential witness and his inspiring example of moral and spiritual courage. But I am concerned about the iconization of MLK, because I believe it eviscerates our own capacities for faith and action. As I have evolved, of far more interest to me is the spiritual depths of his witness, which are not unique to him and accessible to us all.

Those of us who would follow in the wake of his dream or track the tangents of his prophecies would do well to find our way to this wellspring. The clear truth that rang forth in his sermons and speeches didn't come from his brilliant mind, his talent with language, or his powerful voice. The truth came from listening to the voice of God. Like young Samuel in the Temple, apprenticing under Eli the priest (I Samuel 3:1-10), King saw that recognizing the voice of God in the midst of all the other voices crowding in and clamoring for our attention is the most important and continuous act of discipleship. And the most neglected. We have the Word. What we need is the Voice that opens the meaning of the Word and imparts the courage to speak the truth in love.

We too are called to this listening. We face great difficulties in dismantling racism, working toward a culture of peace, and providing real alternatives to lives wasted in the pursuit of affluence. We do well to remember Dr. King's immense contribution to our understanding of ourselves, our history, and our hope. But we do even better to return to the sources that inspired him -- reverence for life, belief in basic human dignity, nonviolence, and a deep spirituality steeped in listening to the Voice of God. If we too will listen, tell the truth we have heard, and follow where the Voice leads, we will, with God's help, step out of the shadow of his greatness and create new sources of inspiration and hope ourselves.

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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rev. Marthame Sanders

Tariq got the call from his parents. His uncle's home was being demolished. He tried desperately to call them back, but the phone was dead. He was beside himself - they lived next door to his uncle, and there was no telling what could happen during a home demolition.

This was the latest in a string of bad news for the 18 year-old. Several cousins had been killed. His parents were out of work. And his town was being completely isolated, surrounded by a 25-foot high cement wall on all sides. Meanwhile, Tariq tried to focus on his studies. It was his freshman year of college, and his life seemed upside-down.

A few weeks later, an organizer came to campus, talking about "non-violent resistance." An intelligent, thoughtful young man, Tariq was by nature a skeptic. But the past few months had filled him with rage. The thought of non-violence seemed so naïve, but something grabbed him. Perhaps it was desperation, anything that could bring a glimmer of light to his darkened life.

Tariq is a Palestinian Muslim, a person too often written off as a terrorist. The kind of anger and desperation he felt can easily provide fertile soil for militancy. And yet, Tariq found himself at a non-violent protest. Israelis and Palestinians joined hands against Israel's building of the Separation Barrier and the further expropriation of Palestinian land. He found himself next to a young Israeli, the first he had ever met who wasn't carrying a gun. His eyes lit up as he recounted the story. He had found a reason to hope.

Dr. King left a legacy that non-violent resistance can change the world. Such hope glimmers as a candle in an ocean of darkness. The darkness shall not overcome it.

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Remembering Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: Rev. Dr. Unzu Lee

“Why We Can’t Wait,” in Korean were the words inscribed on the spine of one of the books found on the top shelf of a book case in my house. We had just immigrated to this country, and the book probably was my father’s. Although I knew that these words belonged to the Rev. Dr. King, Jr., I was too busy surviving day to day, and I never took the book out to read. And yet, in my mind’s eye, I still see those letters as vividly as I did then. I suspect it is because my years of encounter with the reality of racism in this country have made these words become real to me.

I know the realism of these words because forty some years since Dr. King said “I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” we are still judged by the color of our skin. Fifty years after Ralph Ellison started his famous novel with a line “I am an invisible man,” the individuality of people of color remains invisible to a dominant society that judges us only by our color.

For Asian Americans who are often praised by the dominant society as the “model minority,” this is a hard lesson to swallow. For those of us who immigrated after the civil rights era and have not been collectively subjected to overt forms of racism such as slavery or internment, it is even harder to realize the truthfulness of King’s words. We want to believe in the security of our success. We want to keep on believing in the creed that “all [men] are created equal.” After all, we have come here seeking a better life. Vulnerability is the last thing we want.

Vulnerability, however, is our reality as Asian Americans. Take the case of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwanese American scientist who was released in September 2000 with an apology from presiding US District Judge James A. Parker after spending 278 days in solitary confinement accused of passing classified information to China. His guilt? His Asianness. Take the case of James Yee, a U.S. born Chinese American who graduated from West Point and was sent to Guantanamo Bay as a Muslim chaplain. Although the charges against him were later dropped completely, he spent 76 days in solitary confinement for the suspicion of passing secrets to al-Qaeda. His guilt? His Chinese ancestry and Muslim faith that he adopted as an adult. These cases among many others challenge especially “those who think they have it made” and should “generate uncertainty and vulnerability in the Asian-American community.”¹

Dr. King’s words ring with a more heightened sense of urgency in today’s U.S. context that struggles with the fear of terrorism. As an Asian American of faith, I refuse to let fear separate us. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and I too cannot wait any longer.

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¹ <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2001/lee-0502.html>