

Injustice
anywhere is a
threat to justice
everywhere.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Martin Luther King Jr.
Commemoration
Sunday, January 17, 2021

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Guide My Feet”

African American Spiritual
Ferman Woodberry, voice

Call to Worship — “Call to Us Today”

God of the prophets, call to us today

Call us into your ways of love, justice and righteousness.

God of the poets, remind us again how much you love us

Sing to us your ways of love, justice and righteousness.

God of the disciples, teach us how to follow you

Teach us your ways of love, justice and righteousness.

God of all creation, help us to know your ways

We gather to hear your call,

to sing your praise,

to teach each other,

to pray and worship as the Body of Christ.

Welcome

Today we remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an outstanding champion of the struggle against oppression and social injustice. In the 1960s he was the most well-known spokesperson of the US civil rights movement. A visionary leader, who propagated civil disobedience as a tool against the political practice of racial segregation. A pacifist. On 4 April 1968 at 18:01, while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, he was fatally wounded by a bullet from a racist sniper.

Today, many of Martin Luther King's visions have become reality. Others have not. War is still omnipresent, and so is poverty. The rich still become richer at the expense of the poor. People are still treated as second-class citizens – for motives stemming from fear or hate. That is why we are remembering Martin Luther King and seeking new visions for ourselves and our world.



1 Lift ev - 'ry voice and sing till earth and heav - en ring,
2 Ston - y the road we trod, bit - ter the chas - t'ning rod,
3 God of our wea - ry years, God of our si - lent tears,



ring with the har - mo - nies of lib - er - ty.
felt in the days when hope un - born had died;
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;



Let our re - joic - ing rise high as the lis - t'ning skies,
yet with a stead - y beat, have not our wea - ry feet
thou who hast by thy might led us in - to the light,



let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea.
come to the place for which our par - ents sighed?
keep us for - ev - er in the path, we pray.



Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
We have come o - ver a way that with tears has been wa - tered;
Lest our feet stray from the plac - es, our God, where we met thee;



sing a song full of the hope that the pres - ent has brought us;
we have come, tread - ing our path through the blood of the slaugh - tered,
lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get thee;



fac - ing the ris - ing sun of our new day be - gun,
out from the gloom - y past, till now we stand at last
shad - owed be - neath thy hand, may we for - ev - er stand,



let us march on till vic - to - ry is won.
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
true to our God, true to our na - tive land.

Prayer of Confession — “Repenting and Lamenting in Times like These”

You are the God who hears:
hear our prayer today for all who lament or repent.

For those among us who face discrimination every day
because of their skin colour,
we lament.

For those among us with white skin who benefit
from racist systems sometimes even without realizing it,
we repent.

For those among us who have struggled and waited so long
for the Promised Land of freedom and equality,
we lament.

For those among us who have acted in racist ways
and have hurt people of colour,
we repent.

For those protesting injustice who face police brutality
and a justice system rigged against them,
we lament.

For those who think racism is someone else’s problem,
and not a problem for humanity,
we repent.

God of hope, show us how to work for
justice together,
standing up for what is right,
stepping in when something’s wrong,
shouldering each other’s burdens,
holding each other accountable,
righting the wrongs we’ve done,
speaking truth to power.

We pray for change, lasting change,
for protection for protesters,
for a de-escalation of violence
and for government leaders who listen.

Deliver us from evil, within and without,
in Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Holy and righteous God, you created us in your image. Grant us grace to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression. Help us, like your servant Martin Luther King, Jr. to work for justice among people and nations, to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hearing & Responding to Scripture

Psalm Interpretation

105

“A God Who Rescues” based on Psalm

From Spark Story Bible Psalm Book: Prayers and Poems for Kids

Meditation

Interim Pastor Bill Nelsen

A Reading from Hebrew Scripture — 1 Samuel 3:1-10

1Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

2At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 3the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" 5and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. 9Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Meditation

Dr. Richard Green

A Reading from the Gospels — John 1:43-51

43The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." 51And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Meditation

Alaiyah Nelsen Tobechukwu

Musical Reflection — "We Shall Overcome"

Setting by Tom Trenney
Virtual Vocal Ensemble; Steve Kidder, djembe

*From Martin Luther King's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech December 10 1964 in Oslo:
"I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land. 'And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid.' I still believe that we shall overcome."*

Litany — "Here I Am, Send Me"

A child once dreamed the Voice was calling his name. . . 'Samuel';
Fishermen once heard the Voice when a young man bid them follow;
And still the Voice beckons today. . . can you hear?

Here I am. Send me.

Moses protested vehemently as the Voice spoke at the burning bush;
Mary stood amazed as the Voice proclaimed impending birth;
And still the Voice beckons today. . .can you hear?

Here I am. Send me.

Rosa Parks followed the Voice to the front of the bus;
Martin Luther King, Jr. heard the Voice as the bullet shattered;
And still the Voice beckons today. . .can you hear?

Here I am. Send me.

The Voice beckons from humble places. . .
in the tears of hungry children,
in the cries of the frail and frightened elderly,
in the pleas of those whose dreams have been too long deferred;
and still the Voice beckons today. . .can you hear?

Here I am. Send me.

A timid believer pauses to listen to the Voice;
A struggling church hears the Voice and turns;
and still the Voice beckons today. . .can you hear?

Here I am. Send me.

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God, we pray for your holy church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts, help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

Look with mercy, gracious God, upon people everywhere who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Rouse us from our complacency and help us to eliminate cruelty wherever it is found. Strengthen those who seek equality for all. Grant that everyone may enjoy a fair portion of the abundance of the earth. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails, especially as the pandemic rages on in our world. Let us be mindful of the ways that our healthcare system is unfairly stacked against the poor and marginalized in our society, and kindle in us a passion to actively work for real change so that all may receive equal access to care. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

O God, your Son came among us to serve and not to be served, and to give his life for the life of the world. Lead us by his love to serve all those to whom the world offers no comfort and little help. Through us give hope to the hopeless, love to the unloved, peace to the troubled, and rest to the weary. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

God our Teacher, we praise you for your servant, Martin Luther King Jr., through whom you have called the church to its tasks and renewed its life. Raise up in our own day teachers and prophets inspired by your Spirit, whose voices will give strength to your church and proclaim the reality of your reign. God of unity, **hear our prayer.**

God with us, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Offering

Please remember to give financially to support our ministry.

You can write a check and mail it to the church office or give online at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=283920>.

Departing to Serve God's World

Announcements

Epiphany Blessings

May this holy season be for each of us
a time of moving beyond what is "reasonable"
and toward the star of wonder;

moving beyond grasping tight to what we have
to unclenching our hands and letting go,
following the Light where it leads;

moving beyond competition toward cooperation,
seeing that all humans are siblings;

moving beyond the anxiety of small concerns
towards the joys of justice and peace.

May the transforming acceptance of Mary
and Joseph,
the imagination of the shepherds,
and the persistence of the magi
guide us as we seek the Truth,
always moving toward the Divine promise.
always aware God can be hidden in the
frailest among us,
always open to the unexpected flash of
Grace,
to the showing forth of that Love that
embraces us all.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the call to justice. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Precious Lord, Take My Hand



1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me
2. When my way grows drear, Pre - cious Lord, lin - ger
3. When the dark - ness ap - pears And the night draws



stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
near, When my life is al - most gone,
near, And the day is past and gone,



Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the
Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I
At the riv - er I stand, Guide my feet, hold my



light, Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.
fall. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.
hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993

Tune: PRECIOUS LORD, 66 9 D; George N. Allen; arr. by Kelly Dobbs Mickus, b.1966

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Acknowledgements

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Many prayers and excerpts of this service taken from “Evening Prayer in Memory of Martin Luther King, Jr.” as posted at www.elca.org.
<https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Martin-Luther-King-2018.pdf>

“Call to Us Today” by Rev. Mindi, <http://rev-o-lution.org/>

“Repenting and Lamenting in Times like These” by Carol Penner, <https://carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship/>

“Litany: Here I Am, Send Me” by K. HawkerSelf, <http://liturgyoutside.net>

“Epiphany Blessings” from Education for Justice - www.educationforjustice.org. Adapted by J.M. Deren from “Blessings and Benedictions,” by W.L. Wallace in *Shine On, Star of Bethlehem*, CAFOD, 2004. Posted on Marianist Social Justice Collaborative website. <http://www.msjc.net/>

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Pastor/Presider: Pastor Bill Nelsen Cantor: Emily Bruflat Virtual Choral Ensemble

Lector/Assistant: Amy Ronnkvist

Guest Speakers: Dr. Richard Green, Alaiyah Nelsen Tobechukwu Guest Vocalist: Ferman Woodberry

Announcements

Resources for Anti-Racism: Would you like to learn more about the history of racism and the anti-racism movement? There are numerous resources, but the following would be a good place to start:

- *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
- *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi
 - *Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You* by Jason Reynolds, Ibram X. Kendi (good for youth)
- *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* by Lenny Duncan (The senior high youth will be reading this in an upcoming book study!)
- *Write on Race, to be Right on Race: Resource Journaling Guide* by Bukata Hayes and Stacy Wells
- For more, visit <https://www.prevention.com/life/g32767356/anti-racism-books/>, and you are encouraged to support black-owned bookstores, such as one on this list: <https://www.elitedaily.com/p/22-black-owned-bookstores-you-can-order-from-online-22952386>

Call Committee: We have begun the initial process of “bringing members of the congregation together to shares ideas, feedback and visions that will be extremely important for the work of the Call Committee and eventually the incoming Pastor.”

- A letter was sent on Thursday, Jan 14th with all the information you will need.
- Meetings will begin Jan 21 and occur twice weekly
- We are keeping the groups small (up to 12 people) to foster better communication and idea flow.
- You can also submit your thoughts in writing to five questions that are included in the letter.
- If you have questions please contact Pastor Bill at pastorflcstp@gmail.com, Council President, Bill Kautt at wjkuu@hickorytech.net or the church office 507 934-3060 or flcstpoffice@gmail.com

Red Cross Blood Drive at First Lutheran: Tuesday, February 9th from noon until 6:00pm. This drive is by appointment only and you can call **1-800-Red Cross** or visit RedCrossBlood.org and to find our location and schedule an appointment.

2021 Simpson Forum - *Re-Visioning the Role of the Christian Community in Today's Society.* Change is certainly one of the great challenges of our time –in our lives and in our families, in our communities, in our world. In a series of lectures over 4 weekly Zoom meetings in January and February, the 2021 Simpson Forum will welcome 5 scholars to speak to the ever-changing role of the Church in our world. Registration for the series is \$10 at: <https://www.trinitystpeter.org/the-simpson-forum.html> or by calling Trinity Lutheran Church at 507-934-4786. The fee is waived for any students, but registration is required to be included in the sessions. Multiple viewers are permitted at each email site. Registration deadline is Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Prayer Concerns: We are called to remember Tom Michels, Marie Benson, Dick Muesing, Abigail Christenson, Betty Gustafson, Elgene Lund, Tom Stenson, Chuck Petry, Paul Assen, Bob Cady, Marion Peterson, Joan Williams, Mark Roemhildt and one another in prayer. We lift-up prayers of healing for all others in our personal prayers this week. We also pray for the families of Jim & Karen Wendroth (the passing of their daughter/step-daughter), Charles Hendrickson, Mort & Dorothy Eliason, Vickie Seeck (mother of Bill & Cheryl Kautts daughter-in-law Catherine) and Paul Baumgartner as they mourn the loss of loved ones.